

English
ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ

BASIC INFORMATION
FOR PEOPLE SEEKING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN GREECE

ΒΑΣΙΚΕΣ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ
ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΙΤΟΥΝΤΕΣ ΔΙΕΘΝΗ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΣΙΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

BASIC INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE SEEKING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN GREECE

A person seeking international protection is any alien or stateless person who declares to any Greek authority, orally or in writing, that he/she is seeking asylum or requests not to be deported because he/she is in fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, participation in a particular social group or his/her political beliefs, or because he/she is in danger of suffering serious harm in his/her country of origin or country of previous residence, especially because he/she is in danger of facing death penalty or execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or his/her life or physical integrity is in danger because of an international or civil war.

Also, any alien who enters Greece upon enforcement of the "Dublin II" Regulation is regarded to be a person seeking international protection.

International Protection Application: When and where to submit it

- The competent authorities to receive your application are the Regional Asylum Offices and the of the regional Asylum Office dispatched units.

ATTENTION: We inform you that the Asylum Service is not competent to receive your application if: a) you have already submitted an application for international protection to the Police, and that application is still pending, b) If you already have a special alien asylum applicant's card (pink card).

We also inform you that in any case you will be fingerprinted so that the Asylum Service will be able to ascertain if you have already submitted an application for international protection, and it will promptly be verified whether you have such an application pending.

- In case you are detained or you remain in a First Reception and Identification Centre (KYT), the competent detention or first reception services must inform the Asylum Service regarding your wish to submit an application for International Protection.
- You must submit your application in person, orally or in writing. You may also submit applications for members of your family, provided that they are along with you in Greece and they wish to do so. They will also have to come to the Asylum Service with you.
- In case you cannot communicate with the Asylum Service employees, during the procedure of submitting your application, be informed that an interpreter will be present in order to assist you.
- When submitting your application, you will have to answer to all questions the service employee asks you, with absolute truthfulness. If you provide false evidence or claims, this is going to have a negative effect on the judgment of your case.
- If you are an unaccompanied child, i.e. if you are under 18 years old and you are not accompanied by an adult person who is responsible of looking after you, according to the Greek law or practice, the Authorities must immediately notify the competent Public Prosecutor (District Attorney). The Public Prosecutor will appoint a representative (guardian) who will be responsible for you and will act in your best interest. If you are under 15 years old your application for international protection must be submitted by the appointed

representative. If you are over 15 years old, you may submit your application yourself. The authorities will care for your protection and to ensure that you are hosted in an environment suitable for minors.

- When you submit your Application for International Protection, you and any members of your family who are over 14 years old, will be photographed and fingerprinted. Your fingerprints will be entered to the European Central Database EURODAC and, in case you have submitted an application for international protection in another state of Europe where the “Dublin III” Regulation is in force, you will be transferred there for the examination of your application.
- You will have to hand in your travel documents (passport) or any other document you may have in your possession and is relevant to the examination of your application, the verification of yours and your family members’ identity, your country and place of origin, as well as your family status.
- You may be body searched and your personal belongings may be searched. You may be submitted to medical examinations.
- The Asylum Service will determine a date for your interview and then you will receive your international protection applicant’s card which can be valid for up to six months. You must carry this card on you at all times.
- When you submit your application, the competent authorities are obliged to inform you, in a language that you understand, regarding the procedure, your rights and obligations while being an international protection applicant, as well as the deadlines that apply throughout the procedure.
- If you are a victim of torture, rape or any other serious violent act, you must inform the Authorities accordingly, so that they help you.
- You may ask to come in contact with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or an organization that provides legal, medical and psychological support.
- Throughout the procedure you have the right to ask for the support of a lawyer or other counselor of your own choice (without mediation by the Asylum Service). The fee and expenses of the lawyer or other counselor, however, will be completely at your own cost.
- If you wish, you may be provided with a short period of time in order to appropriately prepare for your interview and be counseled by a lawyer or other counselor in order to receive support during the procedure.
- If you are a woman, you may ask for your interview to be conducted by a female Asylum Service employee and a female interpreter, if available.
- In any case, you may ask for your interview and its interpretation to be conducted by an officer of the sex of your choice, in cases that there is a serious reason for such a request. Your relevant request will be assessed by the Service and will be fulfilled if possible.
- If you are an unaccompanied child, you must be informed by your representative regarding your interview. Your representative will be invited and he may be with you during the interview. The authorities may conduct medical tests in order to determine your age. Both you and your representative must be informed regarding this procedure and you or your representative must agree.

The countries which enforce the Dublin Regulation are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Withdrawal and implicit withdrawal or abandonment of an international protection application

- You may explicitly withdraw your application at any time you wish. You must go in person to the Regional Asylum Office and explicitly withdraw your application in writing. If you explicitly withdraw your application, the Service will not examine your application and you will have to abandon the country if you do not possess any other permit of legal residence in Greece.
- The Asylum Service may consider that you are not interested in the continuation of the examination of your application (implicit withdrawal of the application) and may discontinue its examination in the following cases:
 - a) if you refuse to provide information which was asked by the authorities and is of great importance for your application, or
 - b) if you do not go to your interview or
 - c) if you escape from your place of detention or
 - d) if you do not comply with the obligations the Police has imposed to you instead of detaining you or
 - e) if you leave the area of residence which was determined for you by the authorities without informing them beforehand or
 - f) if you leave the country without asking permission from the Asylum Service or
 - g) if you do not immediately inform the Asylum Service regarding changes in your address and your contact information, or
 - h) if you do not come in contact with the Asylum Service after being requested to do so, or
 - l) if you do not go to renew your card during the next business day after its expiry date at the latest.

In case the Asylum Service discontinues the examination of your application, you have the right to ask the service to resume the examination of your application. You will have to go to the Asylum Service and explain the reasons why the Service should not have considered that you were not interested in your application. The Service will decide accordingly. If the Asylum Service decides to reject your application, you have the right to make an appeal.

The examination procedure of International protection applications

- On the date determined by the Service, you will be interviewed by an Asylum Service employee. You will have to answer his questions with absolute truthfulness, testify complete descriptions of true incidents and not conceal any element that is relevant to your application. If you make false statements on any incident or claim, you are going to negatively affect the judgment of your application.
- During the interview, the Asylum Service employee is particularly going to ask you questions regarding the information mentioned in your application, your identity information, how you came to Greece, the reasons why you left your country of origin, or the country where you used to live in case you are a stateless person, and the reasons why you cannot or you do not wish to go back to that country. During the interview you may also submit any other evidence you consider necessary.
- If you are not able to communicate with the Asylum Service employee due to a language barrier, an interpreter will be present in the interview.
- You can go to the interview accompanied by a lawyer or other counselor (legal expert, doctor, psychologist or social worker).

- Everything you say during the interview is confidential.
- The interview may be recorded. In case the interview is not sound recorded, the Asylum Service employee will compose a transcript (minutes) that will include all of the questions and answers of the interview. At the end of the interview, the Asylum Service employee will write a report that will include your basic claims and all the substantial evidence of the interview. In case the interview is not recorded, the employee will write a text (minutes) to include all the questions and answers in the interview. In this case you will have to check the text of the minutes with the assistance of the interpreter, verify its contents or ask for corrections and sign. Any time you wish, you may obtain a copy of the minutes or the report and the sound recording of your interview.
- After the interview, the Asylum Service will decide to grant you refugee status, grant you a status of subsidiary protection, or reject your application.
- When a decision upon your application is issued, the Asylum Service will notify you to receive it. You will be notified based on the contact information you have declared, either by a telephone call, a letter, a fax, or an e-mail.
- The Asylum Service must notify the decision to you with the assistance of an interpreter in a language that you understand.

Obligations of international protection applicants

As an international protection applicant in Greece, it is your obligation:

- To remain in Greece until the examination of your application is completed.
- To cooperate with the Greek authorities regarding any issue in relevance with your application and the verification of your personal data.
- To go in person to the Asylum Service in order to renew your card before it expires and, at the latest, on the next business day after its expiry date.
- To immediately inform the Asylum Service regarding the address of your residence and your contact information and any change in them. The Asylum Service is going to send documents related to your case, to the address that you have declared.
- You must abide by the deadlines as determined throughout the different stages of the procedure of examination of your application.
- To reveal your real financial status in case you are provided with benefits by the State.
- To comply with the obligations that apply in case you are housed in a Reception Center or other facility.

Rights of international protection applicants

As an international protection applicant in Greece:

- Your deportation is prohibited until the examination of your application is completed.
- You may move freely across the country, unless specific areas of the country where you may move freely are determined on the card that you are provided with.
- If you are homeless, you may be hosted in a Reception Center or other facility.
- You have the right to work under the conditions set by the Greek law.
- As an employee, you have the same rights and obligations, regarding social security, as any Greek citizen.
- You have the right to receive hospital, medical and pharmaceutical treatment free of charge, provided that you are uninsured and indigent.

- Your children have access to the public educational system free of charge, and so do you, in case you are a child.
- You have access to vocational training.
- If you are a disabled person with a disability percentage of 67% and above, you have the right to receive a disability allowance, provided that your housing in a Reception Center is not possible.
- While being an asylum applicant, you **cannot** travel outside Greece.
- While being an asylum applicant, you **cannot** transfer your family from your country of origin to Greece.

Your right to appeal and the second instance examination

- If your application is rejected, or you are granted a status of subsidiary protection and you believe that you are entitled to a refugee status, you have the right to submit an appeal to the Appeals Authority.
- You will have to submit your appeal to one of the Regional Asylum Offices or to the dispatched unit of the Regional Asylum Offices that delivered the decision to you, within the deadline mentioned in the decision you received.
- This deadline starts on the next day after the date you received the decision. However, if, for any reason, the decision is not served (given) to you, the deadline to make an appeal will be 60 days from the expiry date of your card or from the date of issuance of the decision, depending on the case.
- Your appeal will be examined by an Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee usually examines appeals based on the evidence in your file and does not call you for an interview. However, you will be notified about the date that your appeal will be examined, and about when you can submit, in case you wish so, any additional evidence that the Appeals Committee should take into account.
- During the examination of your appeal, you may explicitly withdraw it at any time you wish. You must go in person to the Regional Asylum Office where you submitted your appeal and explicitly withdraw it in writing. If you explicitly withdraw your appeal, it will not be examined and you will have to abandon the country if you do not possess any other permit of legal residence in Greece.
- The Appeals Committee may consider that you are not interested in the continuation of the examination of your appeal (implicit withdrawal) and discontinue its examination in the following cases:
 - a) if you refuse to provide information which was asked by the authorities and is of great importance for your application, or
 - b) if you escape from your place of detention or
 - c) if you do not comply with the obligations the Police has imposed to you instead of detaining you or
 - d) if you leave the area of residence which was determined for you by the authorities without informing them beforehand or
 - e) if you leave the country without asking permission from the Asylum Service or
 - f) if you do not immediately inform the Asylum Service regarding changes in your address and your contact information, or
 - g) if you do not come in contact with the Asylum Service after being requested to do so, or
 - h) if you do not go to renew your card during the next business day after its expiry date at the latest.

- In case the Appeals Committee decides to call you for an interview, you will be notified accordingly five (5) business days before the date of the interview, at the latest. You have the right to go to the Appeals Committee accompanied by a lawyer or other counselor. Even if you do not go to the Appeals Committee, your appeal's examination will proceed regularly.
- The Appeals Committee will decide to either grant you refugee status, subsidiary protection status, or reject your appeal.
- The procedure in order to receive the decision issued by the Appeals Committee is the same as the procedure followed for the receipt of the decision issued by the Asylum Service.
- In case your appeal is rejected, or in case the decision grants you a status of subsidiary protection and you believe that you are entitled to a refugee status, you may submit an application of revocation (cancellation) to the appropriate court of law. The cancellation application does not have an automatic suspensive effect, meaning that your removal from the country is possible.

Detention of international protection applicants

You must be aware that:

- An international protection applicant cannot be detained solely for the reason that he entered and remains in the country illegally.
- If you submitted an international protection application while being detained for committing a criminal offence, you will remain in detention.
- If you submitted an international protection application while being detained because you entered the country illegally or your removal from the country is pending, you may remain in detention if the Police judges that no other measures can be taken regarding your case :
 - a. In order to verify information regarding your identity and origin information, or
 - b. In order to determine the elements on which the asylum application is based, in cases when it is impossible to obtain them otherwise, especially in cases that there is a danger of escape,
 - c. In case is proven there are well founded reasons to believe that the applicant is making an asylum application in order to prevent or just delay the execution of his return decision
 - d. In case you consist a danger for the national security or public order, or
 - e. In case there is a considerable danger of escape as defined in the EU Regulation Nr. 604/2013, in order to ensure the actualization of the transfer procedure in accordance with the aforementioned Regulation.
- The Greek Police may decide to detain you, even if you are not already in detention, in exceptional cases and provided that it is considered that no other measures can be taken except your detention, due to reasons related to public order or national security.
- Your detention may last from 45 days to 18 months depending on the reason for your detention.
- The Police Director decides on your detention. In his decision he must include a detailed reasoning why your detention was decided.
- You have the right to submit a complaint against the decision for your detention before the President or the competent Judge of the Administrative Court of First Instance of the Region where you are detained.

- If you are detained or you remain in the Reception and Identification Service, you must be provided with your international protection applicant's card on the day of your release, in case the examination of your application is still pending, and you must definitely go to a Regional Asylum Office within 10 days to declare your contact information and be provided with a card, in case that has not been done already.

New substantial evidence for submitting an application for international protection

- **If new, substantial evidence comes up**, either after the rejection of your appeal by the Appeals Committee or after the rejection of your international protection application by the Asylum Service and after the deadline for submitting an appeal has expired, you may submit a new application (subsequent).
- You must submit the subsequent application to one of the Regional Asylum Offices or a dispatched unit of the Regional Asylum Offices. You must bring the decision that rejected your initial application and submit in writing the new important evidence that came up. After submitting your subsequent application, you will **not** be provided with an asylum applicant's card.
- The Asylum Service will examine the new elements that you submitted and decide whether they are of importance regarding your application for international protection.
- If the Service rejects your subsequent application, you may submit an appeal before the Appeals Committee within a deadline of fifteen (15) days. The deadline starts on the next day after the day you receive the decision.
- You will be provided with an international protection applicant's card and the examination of your application by the Asylum Service will be continued only in the case that your subsequent application is accepted.

We wish to inform you that it is forbidden to carry into the premises of the Asylum Service: weapons, sharp or other objects that may be used to induce injuries, explosive or flammable materials, chemical or toxic substances. Also, entrance to persons carrying luggage or handbags will be prohibited, with the exception of briefcases and small handbags.

The use of mobile phones is only allowed at the outdoor spaces of the Asylum Service, while any photograph or video recording within or outside the premises of the Asylum Service is prohibited.



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Υπηρεσία Ασύλου

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