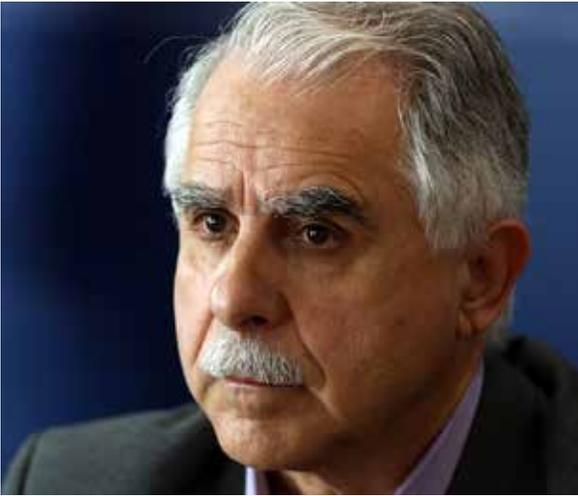




Front-page photo: Syrian refugee mother and her daughters in Greece, ANA-MPA/Mihaela Noroc.

The Romanian photographer Mihaela Noroc started in 2013 a special project titled «The Atlas of Beauty».



2015 was a landmark year for Greece, that was called upon to manage a great number of refugees and migrants arriving in the country after fleeing war at home, seeking a better life in Europe. The Greek government treated the reception of refugees and their accommodation as top priority. Right from the start, the Greek state was called upon to meet their immediate needs as well as to ensure their access to healthcare and education.

A necessary step in this direction was the development and gradual implementation of a strategy for the introduction of these people to the way of life and circumstances in Greece, starting from the moment they entered the country. For us, integration is understood not only as a combination of equal rights and formal access to citizenship, but as an essential act of engaging in and shaping a society without discrimination and exclusion. In the new National Strategy for Reception and Integration which Greece is now beginning to implement, the older models of assimilation and interculturalism are being replaced by a new model of democratic dialogue: A model that allows for participation in the public sphere and dialogue without dictating ways, recognizing the rights of migrants and refugees to retain their identity while shaping new ones, formed through their participation in the host society. In other words, it promotes the spirit of social integration that leads to a «Greek integration model», with Local Government being the key executive mechanism of integration initiatives.

The vision of the National Strategy is reflected in the HELIOS pilot project, with reference to the provision of services such as language courses, psychosocial support, vocational guidance and registration of skills. At the same time, Greek language programs aimed at refugees and migrants of over 15 years of age, are being designed and launched. Additionally, during the second half of 2018, a project that involves the recording of the educational and occupational profile of the entire refugee population residing in Greece since 2015 will be implemented, with the objective of designing effective and specialized policies and actions for their integration into work and education. The aforementioned actions include the Rural Employment Agenda for 2,000 asylum seekers and migrants.

All the above actions are being planned and promoted in full consideration of the circumstances experienced by the Greek people at the time being. It is necessary to maintain a balance of rights between Greeks, refugees and migrants, and that is exactly what we are doing!

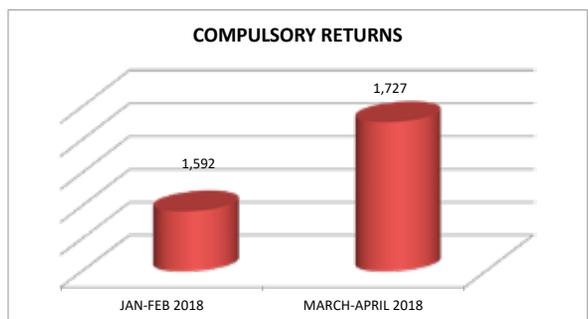
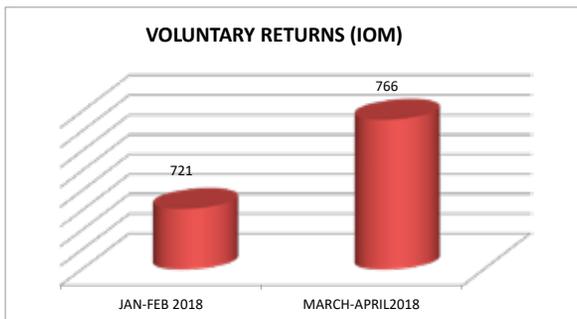
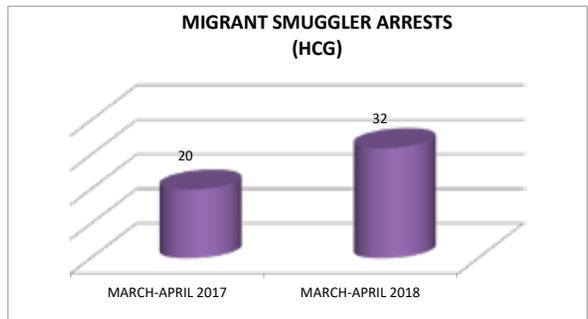
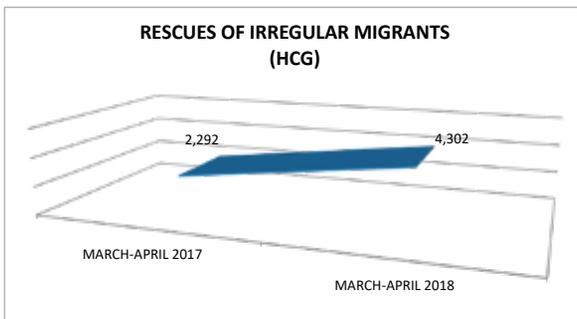
Yannis Balafas

Deputy Minister for Migration Policy

REFUGEE - MIGRATION FLOWS

The number of irregular arrivals of third-country nationals in Greece in the first four months of 2018 amounted to 25,578, compared to 14,222 in the first four months of 2017. According to the National Coordination Centre for Border Control, Immigration and Asylum, 8,522 persons entered Greece illegally through the Greek-Turkish sea borders in the first four months of 2018, compared to 5,307 in the corresponding period of 2017. Irregular inflows through Greek-Turkish land borders amounted to 5,802 in the first four months of 2018, compared to 667 in the corresponding period of 2017, with a significant decline after the end of April 2018.

	JAN-APRIL 2017	JAN-APRIL 2018
IRREGULAR INFLOWS THROUGH G/T SEA BORDERS	5,307	8,522
IRREGULAR INFLOWS THROUGH G/T LAND BORDERS	667	5,802



REFUGEE - MIGRATION FLOWS

THE ESTIA PROGRAMME

According to United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 24,487 accommodation places for vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees were set up by the end of April 2018, as part of the ESTIA Program, in 21 cities in Greece, in cooperation with the Local Government - with 97% occupancy. By the end of April, a total of 21,002 people were accommodated within the framework of this program, 3,536 of whom were granted refugee status. 48% of the beneficiaries are children, while 87% are coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Iran. 58% of the ESTIA accommodation places are located in Athens, 35% in the rest of mainland Greece and 6% on the islands.

In total, 44,753 eligible refugees and asylum seekers (21,098 households) received financial assistance by April 2018 through cash assistance, while the amount distributed was € 4.5 million.



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PROVIDING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

ASYLUM SERVICE

FIRST INSTANCE ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

During **March-April 2018**, a total of **9,810** asylum applications were lodged (**6,568** male and **3,242** female), compared to **7,584** applications submitted in the corresponding two months of **2017** (**5,387** male and **2,197** female).

The total number of asylum applications submitted in the first four months of **2018** was **18,625**, against **19,563** submissions in the corresponding period of **2017**.

FIRST INSTANCE ASYLUM DECISIONS

During **March-April 2018**, a total of **5,998** decisions were issued, **1,833** of which granted international protection status (refugee status and subsidiary protection). The recognition rate for cases examined was **41.1%** for March and **50.6%** for April.

PROCEDURE ON THE AEGEAN ISLANDS (LESVOS, CHIOS, SAMOS, LEROS, KOS)

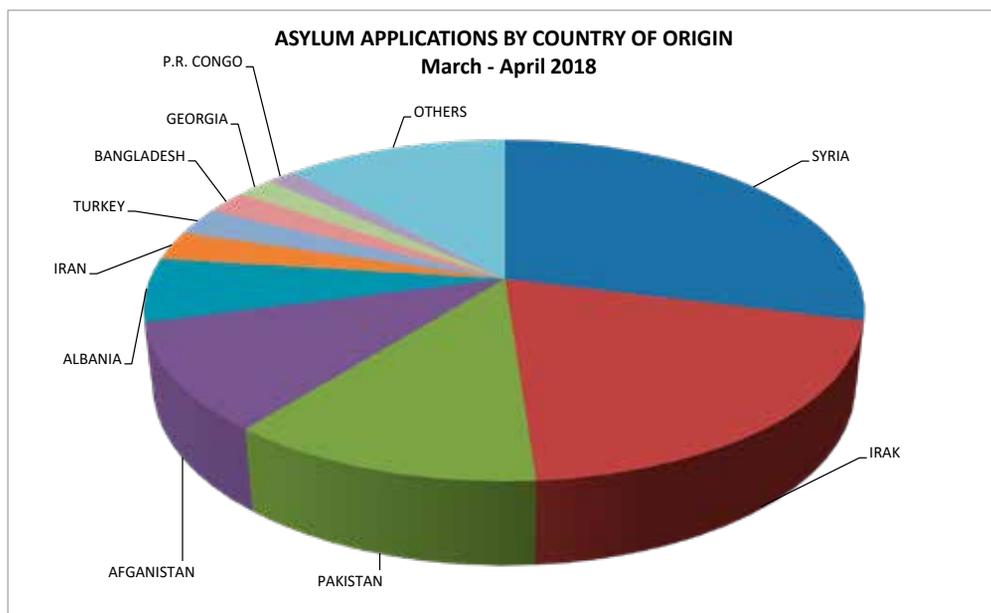
APPLICATIONS: In **March-April 2018**, the number of applications submitted on the Eastern Aegean islands was **5,029**, against **3,075** in the corresponding two months of **2017**. In total, **9,469** applications were submitted in the first four months of **2018**, while for the corresponding period in **2017** they amounted to **6,637**.

ADMISSIBILITY DECISIONS: During **March-April** of **2018**, **343** admissibility decisions were issued in the framework of the procedure on the Eastern Aegean islands, compared to **744** in the corresponding two months of **2017**. A total of **797** such decisions were issued in the first four months of **2018**, against **1,085** in the corresponding **2017** period.

DECISIONS IN SUBSTANCE (POSITIVE): During **March-April 2018**, a total of **1,135** decisions granting international protection (asylum and subsidiary protection) were issued in the framework of the procedure on the Eastern Aegean islands, compared to **842** in the corresponding two months of **2017**. In total, **2,588** such decisions were issued in the first four months of **2018**, against **1,433** for the corresponding **2017** period.

REFERRALS OF VULNERABLE PERSONS: During **March-April 2018**, a total of **3,555** referrals of vulnerable persons were made, compared to **1,872** in the corresponding two months of **2017**. Overall, **7,096** referrals were made by the end of April **2018** compared to **3,951** referrals in the corresponding period last year.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION REFERRALS: In total, **719** referrals were made during the first four months of **2018**, compared to **762** in the corresponding period of the previous year.



PROVIDING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION



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APPEALS AUTHORITY

EXAMINATION OF APPLICATIONS AT SECOND INSTANCE

In the first four months of 2018, the Appeals Authority concluded second instance examination of 3,186 cases.

The number of appeals lodged on the mainland in March-April 2018 was **2,297**, compared to **1,109** in the corresponding two months of 2017, while the total number of appeals lodged on the islands for the same two months of 2018 was **386**, compared to **275** for the same period in 2017 (the overall proportional change on both mainland and islands between 2017 and 2018 for the reported period compared stands at **72%**).

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

According to updated data from the National Centre for Social Solidarity, the estimated number of unaccompanied minors in Greece on 30 April 2018 amounted to **3,150**, of whom 96% were boys, 4% girls, whilst 5.3% were under 14 years of age.

49 Hospitality Structures for Unaccompanied Minors with a total capacity of **1,101** are currently in operation both on the islands (Lesvos, Chios, Samos and Crete) and in mainland Greece (Attica, Peloponnese, Western Greece, Epirus, Western Macedonia, Thrace, Central Greece).

80% of the total number of unaccompanied minors come from Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A call for tenders by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the creation of 2,000 permanent accommodation places for unaccompanied minors is currently in progress.

According to the recently enacted Law 4538/2018 regarding "Measures for the promotion of Fosterage and Adoption and other provisions", unaccompanied minors will be included in the National Register of Minors at the National Centre for Social Solidarity (**EKKA**).

A draft law of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, which is in the consultation process, provides for the establishment of a Directorate for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors at EKKA as well as for the establishment of **electronic registers** of Unaccompanied Minors, Professional Commissioners and Hospitality Structures. It also defines the procedure for assigning unaccompanied minors to the care of foster parents, in accordance with the provisions of recent legislation.

THE MIGRATION POLICY MINISTRY'S NEW LAW FOR ASYLUM AND RECEPTION

© ANA-MPA / Nikos Arvanitidis



Law 4540/2018 incorporates European Directive 2013/33/EU and introduces provisions aimed, inter alia, at rationalizing and accelerating the examination procedure of asylum applications, ensuring greater care for minors and unaccompanied minors, improving examination capacities and vulnerability identification as well as harmonizing the Migration Policy Code with current cohabitation legislation.

In Particular:

To speed up the procedure for examination and granting refugee status:

- Deadlines for completion of the examination of asylum applications on the islands at first instance are reduced to 30 days (from 90) and, at second instance, to 40 days (from 60).

- **Alternative modes of serving decisions are provided for** - if applicants are not found - so that second instance decisions could be served to their representative or lawyer, to the director of the Reception and Identification Centre or to the head of the structure, as well as uploaded onto a special web site.

- It is possible to replace judicial officers from the Board of Appeals Committees in the event of a significant and unjustified delay in the handling of cases.

- **Subsequent applications may be lodged** only if the applicant submits new information which through no fault of his/her own was not invoked with the initial claim. The rejection of residence in the country is provided for, if the claim is aimed at delaying or obstructing a decision to execute a return order, and when the applicant submits a second subsequent after a final decision by which the first subsequent was found to be inadmissible or groundless.

- **The decision issued by the Appeals Authority is deemed final**, provided the appeal lodged against the decision at first instance was made within deadlines. Asylum seekers have the right to appeal to the compe-

tent administrative courts. However, the application for repeal and suspension of enforcement does not in itself constitute independent grounds for suspending possible rejection of claim for asylum.

- The discussion of late appeals is foreseen only in cases where unforeseeable circumstances were responsible for them being overdue.

- **The discussion of the interim order** and of the request for repeal, as well as the delivery of a decision, all take place at a single stage, so as to speed up the procedure of granting or refusing temporary protection.

- **Greek-language staff support is provided by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to the Asylum Service** during the registration of applications for international protection and any other administrative action.

- **Change of manner of appointment of the Appeals Authority Administrative Director.** Appointment will be made by decision of the Minister for Migration Policy, following a public call for applications and a recommendation by a three-member committee within exclusive deadlines, putting an end to the Authority's operation under a Transitional Director.

Regarding reception conditions, the law incorporates provisions of European Directive 2013/33 / EU. Indicatively:

- **The possibility of geographical restrictions** on the movements of asylum seekers by a decision of the Director of the Asylum Service is provided for, when this serves the purpose of rapid processing and effective monitoring of applications for international protection. The restriction does not affect the sphere of privacy and the exercise of rights and is mentioned in the relevant registration document.

- **As regards the detention of asylum seekers**, the relevant provisions incorporate the corresponding provisions of the Directive, with **special attention being paid to vulnerable groups**. In particular, communication is ensured between detained applicants and family members, their legal representatives as well as representatives of organizations acting on their behalf. Detention takes place in premises that respect human dignity and not in the same area as prisoners of criminal law. During the detention, the mental health of the detainees is of primary concern.

- **The competent host authority**, in cooperation with the competent governmental bodies, international organizations and certified social organizations, shall **ensure the provision of material reception conditions** in goods or in the form of financial assistance to applicants for

THE MIGRATION POLICY MINISTRY'S NEW LAW FOR ASYLUM AND RECEPTION

international protection. Material reception assistance is provided on the condition that applicants are not working or their work is not providing them with sufficient resources.

- **Housing could take the following forms:** a) special accommodation structures for applicants during the examination of their application at border or transit zones b) hospitality centers managed by public or private non-profit organizations or international organizations and c) private dwellings or apartments or hotels leased as part of housing programs for applicants.

Ensuring greater care for minors and unaccompanied minors

- **Special care is taken for minors, unaccompanied minors, families and women during pregnancy and for three months after childbirth.** Especially for women, cohabitation with men is not permitted except in the case of persons from their family environment and with their own consent. The detention of unaccompanied minors may be decided only as a last resort, and always in light of their best interest or if alternative or less restrictive measures could not be implemented. Detention of minors generally cannot exceed 25 days, but may exceptionally be extended for another 20 days.

- **All third-country minor or stateless persons during their stay in the country have the right of access to all levels of public education.** Adulthood alone is not reason sufficient for loss of that right. Similarly, applicants have access to work and attendance of vocational training programs on the same terms as Greek citizens.

- **The Directorate General for Social Solidarity** of the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity is designated as the competent Authority for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors and separated Minors, under a three-month transitional provision.

Improving the possibilities for examining and identifying vulnerability

- **The reception process takes into account the applicants' vulnerability** while clearly defining the process and the organizations that could undertake the examination and assessment of vulnerability. In the case of unaccompanied minors and in order to assess their best interests, account is taken in particular of family reunification possibilities, the quality of life and the social development of the minor, security and protection issues.

- **Victims of torture, rape or other serious acts of violence** are certified by the medical opinion of qualified personnel of public health service providers only, includ-

ing forensic medical practitioners, and will receive the necessary care for the damage caused.

Compensations

Compensation procedures are provided for, for property damages of individuals and legal entities in the wider area of Souda (in Chios), the Local Community of Chalkio (Municipality of Chios), and in the area of the Municipal District of Moria (Municipality of Lesvos), due to acts of refugees or migrants, who have been registered and evaluated by relevant committees and approved by decisions of the Municipal Councils of Chios and Lesvos. Compensation for homes, business premises, vehicles and equipment covered by an insurance policy, damages from theft in homes and business premises and damages for lost profits, is excluded.

Better alignment with EU law on legal migration, in line with Directive 2014/66/EU. Indicatively:

- **The Migration Code is harmonized with relevant civil partnership/cohabitation legislation.** Cases of partners in civil partnership and children recognized under such a pact have been restored. Relative concern also exists for the parents of the companions.

- **The residence permit for exceptional reasons is amended and has a three-year validity.** The only condition for granting the permit is proof of the applicant's residence in the country for 7 years. Upon receipt of the request, the applicant shall be provided with a receipt stating that a return decision is being impeded for the time required for the processing of the request.



PROJECTS OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY A

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Recognizing the challenges of insularity and the emerging needs of increased refugee flows, the Ministry of Economy and Development is implementing a comprehensive plan to support the Aegean islands, providing substantial funding and specialized technical support.

In this framework, **the North Aegean Region, which receives the largest refugee-migrant inflow, was funded by a total of € 35 million from the national Public Investment Programme over the last three years, compared to just € 3 million funding received in 2014. Apart from that, the original budget of the North and South Aegean Sea Special Development Programmes has more than doubled to € 102 million.**

- Complete refurbishment of dormitories of medical and nursing staff at the General Hospital of the Samos Prefecture.
- Assistive software for the registration of refugees and residents
- Damage repair & reinforcement of the Malagario port superstructure in Samos
- Construction of an irrigation network in Kampos (in Chios), from the Koris Gefyri Dam
- Upgrading of the Academia School Complex of Mytilene, in the Municipality of Lesvos
- Restoration of the Valide Mosque in Lesvos, in the form that has been preserved over the past 200

A. Special Development Programmes for North and South Aegean

At the core of the effort to support the Aegean islands are the Special Development Programmes for the North and South Aegean, established by the Ministry of Economy in 2017, with funding from national resources.

To meet the increased demand, **the Deputy Minister of Economy and Development, Alexis Haritsis, more than doubled** the initial budget of € 50 million (€ 25 million for each Region) **to € 102 million.** Additional initiatives totaling € 77 million are funded by other programmes run by the Ministry of Economy.

There will be at least one project on each island, whilst all projects are based on proposals submitted by locals. Projects are funded in all sectors - water and sanitation, ports and roads, culture and tourism, health and education, as well as boosting local entrepreneurship - including critical infrastructures that enhance the development potential of the islands and improve the quality of life of citizens, such as:



ND DEVELOPMENT IN THE AEGEAN ISLANDS

- years, and installation of new, compatible facilities
- Construction of a water supply reservoir in the area of Oinousses
- Improvement of the road network of Tilos

B. National Public Investment Programme

In the past three years 2015-2017, funding for the North Aegean Region increased to a total of **€ 35 million from € 3 million in 2014. Indeed, in 2017, funding amounted to € 19.5 million, or six times higher than in 2014.**

Major projects are being funded from the national section of the Public Investment Programme, such as the **construction of the new passenger and commercial port of Sigri in Lesvos worth € 14 million, the repair of earthquake damages and the upgrading of the port of Kos worth € 29 million**, projects implemented by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, as well as **repairs for damages from last January's floods in Lesvos worth € 4 million.**

Additional funding of **€ 13.8 million** is earmarked for **road safety projects** in the North Aegean from the resources of the European Investment Bank and the Public Investment Programme.



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C. National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)

Tourism - Entrepreneurship

A total of **€ 32.6 million** is allocated to enterprises in the North Aegean Islands from the "Competitiveness - Entrepreneurship and Innovation" programme. Last year, projects amounting to **€ 12 million** have been approved under the NSRF for public infrastructures that support tourism development.

Transport

The "Construction and Upgrading of the Kalloni - Sigri Highway" project in Lesvos, with a total budget of **€ 61 million**, is coming to completion.

Environment

For **waste water management** projects, the Operational Programme "Transport Infrastructures, Environment and Sustainable Development" is allocating **€ 11.7 million** to the North Aegean Region. Two projects worth **€ 2.5 million** were included in the water sector.

Moreover, the Aegean islands receiving refugee flows are supported with € 3 million from national and European waste management resources. The relevant call for tenders is addressed to the Municipalities of Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Agathonisi, Kos, Leros, Megisti (Kastellorizo). 85% of the programme's resources are earmarked for North Aegean: Lesvos 60%, Chios 16%, Samos 9%.

Regional Programme

For the Region of North Aegean, an additional **€ 310 million** is available from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2014-2020 through the Regional Programme. Two Strategies for Sustainable Urban Development have already been approved for the **Municipalities of Lesvos & Chios**, with a total budget of **€ 20.1 million.**

The project "**OXYGEN**" (INTERREG Programme) has already been earmarked, for the permanent coverage of the needs of the Aegean islands hospitals' oxygen supplies, with simultaneous uninterrupted local production of oxygen. In the North Aegean Region, oxygen production units will be set up on the islands of Samos and Mytilene.

HEALTH



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The main activities of the Ministry of Health concern the provision of medical services to all hospitality structures as well as training for health officers in order to meet the specific needs of the refugee population.

Human resources: the staffing with 17 professionals in the following specialties continued: doctors, psychologists, social workers, nurses and interpreters.

Medical care: In March-April 2018, approximately 3,268 cases were examined.

- The day-to-day presence of a physician in the centers facilitates regular patient review and more comprehensive follow-up of regular cases, while there is immediate medical intervention in acute cases, minimizing possible complications from any delay in starting treatment.
- In most centres, cases of dermatologically transmitted diseases such as scabies have been eliminated, and all necessary instructions have been given to address and limit the spread in the event of new outbreaks.

- In cooperation with other competent bodies and psychosocial services, a procedure for age assessment of the detainees was determined and followed.
- Bulk vaccination for hepatitis B and hepatitis A at specific structures for illegal immigrants was planned.
- Information campaigns are planned to raise detainees' awareness for hygiene and health.

Psychological support: The services provided include the psychological evaluation of the beneficiaries, counseling intervention with regular individual sessions, the holding of extraordinary sessions for crisis management of beneficiaries, upon referral by the Police or Medical Officials, the referral for psychiatric assessment where necessary, conducting an age assessment interview and compiling findings in cases where the beneficiary has claimed to be a minor and, finally, conducting psychosocial assessments and writing Psychosocial referrals in cases requested by the Asylum Service.

In the period of March-April 2018, the total number of beneficiaries, to whom psychological support services were provided, was 574. More specifically, there were 420 cases in which the psychological history of the patient was recorded, 118 repeat sessions, 19 extraordinary sessions, 7 interviews regarding age assessment and 10 psychosocial referrals while a total of 73 beneficiaries were referred to a psychiatrist.

Social support: In March and April, a total of 450 encounters with beneficiaries-irregular migrants were carried out by social workers, including 314 first meetings for registration of personal health record, recording of needs and requests. Also, there were 136 reassessments of incidents concerning supply of goods, satisfaction of requests and need for re-evaluation of cases.

In cooperation with the centres' medical staff, incidents requiring hospital examination were referred to the emergency services or were scheduled an appointment. There were 62 referrals for further examination in the hospital and 31 were examined by a psychiatrist.

Equipment: The necessary procedures for medical and hotel equipment supply are reaching completion, while the IT equipment has already been delivered.

HEALTH

PHILOS PROGRAMME: ACTIONS

- Cross-sectoral training for gendered violence issues was organized within the framework of the DAPHNE program by the NGO Centre for Research on Women's Issues (DIOTIMA) in cooperation with Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) and the Secretariat General for Gender Equality (SGGE). The medical protocol of sexual and gender violence was presented, as well as basic information on HIV and sexually transmitted diseases by the Science Officer of the PHILOS program and Migrating Population Office of the Hellenic Center for Disease Control & Prevention (HCDCP).
- A training seminar was held in Athens, on March 20-23, in the framework of the MIO-H Programme. The MIO-H Training program is funded by the European Commission and is being implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), GIZ, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and ASPHEN (Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the HCDCP. The seminar was addressed to migrant health specialists, with the aim of preparing them for the training of health professionals and police officers. The subjects presented included prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases and mental health (primary mental health and psychological support), as well as occupational health and prevention of professional burnout.
- On March 26, the day of international action against tuberculosis, a conference was organised by the HCDCP and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where the Syndicated Epidemiological

Surveillance Programme of the HCDCP in refugee and migrant structures was presented along with the tools used by PHILOS for early detection of tuberculosis in the vulnerable population of refugees.

- Within the framework of the IOM program "Protecting children in the context of the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe", the IOM and the HCDCP organized two training sessions for the reception and identification staff on Samos island and at Fylakio village in Evros (Reception and Identification Centres/RIC), on the protection of refugee children. Speakers at the meeting were IOM employees and HCDCP doctors from the RICs and Headquarters.

During the two months of March and April, the PHILOS program continued to provide primary health care to centers of refugee structures in mainland Greece, in cooperation with NGOs active in the field.

In the five RICs where PHILOS is the main provider of health services, the personnel provides primary care in difficult conditions, constantly recording new arrivals, coordinating those active in the field of health assessment and vulnerability assessment according to the in-service tool developed by the HCDCP staff, contributing, in this way, to the asylum process.

Finally, in March and April 2018, a total of 2,565 vaccinations were carried out by PHILOS staff and collaborating bodies. In particular, 1,240 vaccinations were carried out by PHILOS staff, 411 vaccinations by *Health for All*, 638 vaccinations by the *Greek Red Cross* and 276 vaccinations by *Médecins Sans Frontières*.

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SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF GENDER EQUALITY

Support services to refugee women aimed at improving the protection of gender violence victims kept being provided by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality during March-April 2018. Specifically:

- The SGGE has been planning training activities in cooperation with the National Centre for Public Administration (NCPA) in order to tackle gender violence in refugee populations. These actions will involve the staff of the Reception and Identification Centers, the Open Temporary Reception Structures and the Open Temporary Hospitality Structures, the SGGE Network, the Social Services of the 1st and 2nd Grade Local Authorities and the Social Services of the Hospitals.
- The GSGE participates in the European Programme “Building a safety net for women refugees and migrant women”, with the Center for Research on Gender Equality and the Center for Women's Studies, *DIOTIMA as partners*, while at European level in cooperation with Italy through the organization *Differenza Donna* and Spain via the organization *Surt*. This project aims at the improvement of the protection of gender violence victims, the prevention and response of the collaborating countries, in the context of the refugee crisis and the mass flows of non-European citizens into European societies. A multilingual leaflet addressed to refugee women is due within a month, translated into Arabic, Farsi and English.



EDUCATION



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Data on the education of refugee children

The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, in line with its planning, implemented a number of actions for the education of refugees in March-April. Of particular importance is the launching in cooperation with the Council of Europe of a pilot program to recognize the academic qualifications of the refugees.

Analytically, participation in Reception Structures for Refugee Children Education (RSRCE) and Reception Classes (RC) was the following:

STUDENTS –2018

REFUGEE STUDENTS	JAN-FEB 2018	JAN-APRIL 2018
STUDENTS IN RSRCE	1,793	2,025
STUDENTS IN RC	4,582	5,291
TOTAL	6,375	7,316

- **Other activities of the Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs**

European Qualifications Passport for Refugees: 92 refugees were assessed and 72 European qualification passports were issued in 2017

The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, in cooperation with the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe, the Hellenic National Academic Recognition Information Centre (Hellenic NARIC) and the Centres for the Recognition of Qualifications (of the ENIC / NARIC) of Norway, the United Kingdom and Italy established in 2017 the pilot programme "qualifications passport for refugees".

The main purpose of this project is to record, through an evaluation process, the refugees' academic qualifications, even when these cannot be adequately documented.

During the pilot phase of the program in 2017, three evaluation rounds (6-10 / 03/2017, 12-16 / 06/2017,

25-29 / 09/2017) took place in Athens where **92 refugees were examined**, leading to the issuance of **72 European refugee qualifications passports**. During the interviews, the participants were informed by the evaluators about language courses (Greek and other languages) offered free of charge in the Attica district, of the current system of Higher Education in Greece, as well as the opportunity for official recognition of their academic qualifications by NARIC, provided they have the necessary official documents.

Within the same context, an International Workshop for the start of the second phase of the Programme was held on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

The Ministry will participate in the next phase of the programme, which will have a three year duration. (2018-2020).

- **Initiation of training actions to support the Education of Refugee Children by the Institute of Educational Policy**

On Friday, March 9, 2018, training sessions were launched in the framework of the implementation of Action 4 "**Educational Actions to Support the Education of Refugee Children**" by the Institute for Educational Policy (Act "Training Interventions to Strengthen School Structures of the Educational System" MIS 5004204, "Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning").

In particular, Action 4 "Training actions to support the education of refugee children" includes:

- a) Training actions organised in sections based on the Region of Education and the areas of responsibility of the School Counselors where schools with RSRCE and / or RC for refugees are operating.
- b) Support actions for preschool, primary and secondary education teachers employed in RSRCE and / or RCs attended by refugees. These actions will be implemented by scientific associates of the Institute for Educational Policy (IEP).

LABOUR

Actions of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity for Refugees

The Ministry has launched initiatives to integrate in the labor market and secure legal employment conditions for beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers. Among these the most important are the granting of Social Security Number (SSN) and special actions of the Labour Inspectorate Body aimed at protecting the rights of working third-country nationals.

Registration at Hellenic Manpower Employment Organization - Planning for integration into the labor market

The Hellenic Manpower Employment Organization, by decision of its Administrative Board, offered for the first time, registration access to the organization's Registry of Unemployed to individuals belonging to population groups who had not been able to register in the past due to their lack of documentary evidence of permanent residency, including the beneficiaries of international protection or applicants for international protection. As proof of residence of these unemployed people, the following documents are now being accepted: certificate issued by temporary accommodation facilities or certificate of residence in a concession or concession contract for unemployed refugees and asylum seekers.

Within the framework of the above initiative, the Ministry will, in the near future, activate programmes to integrate refugees into labor, through the Social and Solidarity Economy agencies, among others.

SSN to beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers

For the delivery of SSN to beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers, a circular was issued, addressing the following:

- The process of rendering an SSN to beneficiaries and applicants for international protection as well as to unaccompanied minors will be facilitated;
- Due to the special status of unaccompanied minors, it is stipulated that the SSN field of the representative is not required;
- The SSN rendering process is being simplified in case of mass representation (a responsible statement with all names is required).

Hellenic Labour Inspectorate Body actions

- In 2017, a specially targeted, nationwide campaign of inspections was set up to safeguard workers' rights, during which 206 businesses employing 1,152 employees were checked and 194 administrative penalties were imposed. The campaign was conducted in collaboration with the Hellenic Police, in the framework of the Europol Operational Action Plan "EMPACT – Trafficking in Human Beings".
- In 2018, in collaboration with jointly competent agencies, a Labor Inspectors training program will be implemented to detect and combat human trafficking.
- The Labour Inspectorate Body will, in the near future, publish information material on the labour rights of third-country nationals living and working in our country. The information will be translated into several languages and will be available in electronic and printed form.
- A plan is underway to strengthen the tackling of unregistered employment in the agricultural sector.

Social Work to Support Refugee Structures

The Ministry of Labour has supported refugee hosting structures with two social work projects. The funding came from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organization funds. The number of the first two programmes' beneficiaries was 4,139 and they were employed in refugee hosting structures, contributing to the maintenance of the facilities as well as to their day-to-day operation. The Ministry of Labour is also preparing a third program that is expected to be activated.

CULTURE

Cultural events

National Theater / The Journey: Action involving adolescent refugees

In the National Theater play titled "The Journey", that was staged on the ground floor of "Rex Theatre", co-produced by UNICEF and funded by the General Directorate for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO), adolescent refugees, whom the director Sophia Vgenopoulou had sought out in the existing hosting structures, took part. The teenagers, alongside professional actors of the National Theatre, performed through gestures and awkward hugs, with penetrating eyes, lullabies and laughs, baring images from their nightmares and fairy tales from their homeland, spoke the language of their team and demonstrated how drama art can truly transform lives.



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"We Live Together" - 21st National Student Contest on Refugees

More than 1.000 students, including refugee children, participated in this year's 21st National Student Competition, "We Live Together", organized by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in collaboration with the Youth Awareness Committee.

In 30 municipalities in the country, children from 130 primary and secondary schools have been working together, in groups or individually, and presented written texts, posters, comics, videos and photographs about coexistence with refugees at school, in the neighborhood, at work, at University.

The first prizes were awarded to a total of 63 pupils from different parts of the country, who painted, wrote poems, created original messages referring to a world that gives the opportunity to all of us - beyond national origin, religion, disability or trauma - to "We Live together".

Greek National Opera / Intercultural Choir / Alternative Stage of National Opera

The Intercultural Choir of the Greek National Opera has begun its staffing and rehearsals since December 2016. Its members come from different countries, such as Iran, Slovakia, New Guinea, Syria, Cyprus, United Kingdom, Greece, etc. This social program of the GNO aims to become a place of creativity, expression and social networking by combining traditional songs from the participants' countries of origin with the classical choral repertoire.

The Intercultural Choir visits foreign communities' premises, refugee hosting facilities and immigrant schools. Its intercultural character allows for an equitable exchange of musical repertoire among its members, while serving at the same time as a creative language-learning environment.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Vitsas-Avramopoulos Visiting Livadia & Ritsona

The Minister for Migration Policy Dimitris Vitsas, and the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos, visited Livadia and the reception center for refugees and migrants in Ritsona.

In Livadia, they met with Mayor Yiota Poulou, Secretary General for Migration Policy Miltiadis Klapas and UN High Commission for Refugees Representative in Greece Philippe Leclerc, and also visited apartments where asylum seekers are staying. They then visited the accommodation structure in Ritsona and spoke to the residents and representatives of the International Organization for Migration there. The Minister for Migration Policy, Mr. Vitsas, pointed out that the Greek government considers as its humanitarian, European and national duty to continue on the path of protecting asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants and solving their problems. The refugee and migrants issue is one that is defined as humanitarian, but at the same time requires central European management, he stressed.

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Visit of Fotini Pantiora to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

A meeting between the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Secretary for Crisis Management Communication of the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, Ms. Fotini Pantiora, was held in Fanari. The Ecumenical Patriarch welcomed the work of the Greek State and the contribution of Greek society to the refugee issue.

The Secretary thanked the Ecumenical Patriarch for his kind words and contribution in response to the refugee issue. She informed him of the Greek government's hard work and concrete actions in the management of the refugee-migrant issue, noting that this is a humanitarian question that requires the practical support and solidarity of all parties.

Ms. Pantiora further underlined that the Ecumenical Patriarch is a distinct spiritual leader who embodies in the most eloquent manner the universal messages of ecumenism, peace, cooperation and solidarity with the weak and those in need.

SOURCES:

Ministry for Migration Policy
Ministry of Interior
Ministry of Economy and Development
Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs
Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Culture and Sports
Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

***updated data until 30 April 2018**

** With special thanks to the General Secretariat for Media & Communication (M. Hatzopoulou, N. Stellos, Digital Communication Unit/Media Diplomacy Directorate) for the assistance with the Newsletter's English edition.

Special Thanks for providing photographic material to:

- Athens News Agency – Macedonian Press Agency (ANA-MPA)
- Photographers: Manolis Lagoutaris, Orestis Panagiotou, Symela Pantzartzi, Katia Christodoulou, Alexis Beltes & Mihaela Noroc
- National Theatre
 - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/ Photographers: Yorgos Kyvernitis, Alfredo D' Amato, Markel Redondo
 - Doctors of the World (Médecins du Monde)
 - Region of North Aegean



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