The Aegean Tragedy

Key facts and key steps

24 January 2020

Priorities this winter:

- end the humanitarian emergency on the islands
- avoid a new humanitarian emergency on the mainland
- reduce the number of people crossing the Balkan route
- ensure that there are no push backs at any border in South East Europe

For this:

- reduce the number of people crossing to the Aegean islands, and increase the probability of return to Turkey of those who arrive (currently it is below 1 percent),
- move those now on the islands to the mainland,
- create humane reception conditions on the islands.
- A coalition of EU asylum agencies to cooperate with the Greek Asylum Service to ensure that new claims on the islands are dealt with within weeks.
- Once arrivals are reduced again, restart relocation from Greek mainland to other EU member states, also to reduce pressure on the Balkan route.
- EU to reach understanding with Turkey on Phase II of the EU-Turkey Statement – guarantee another 6 billion Euros for the growing number of Syrian refugees in Turkey in the coming years. Discuss extending the EU-Turkey agreement to the land border.

To achieve these goals, learn from what has worked and what failed since 2016. This WAS achieved already in spring 2016:

- In the first 3 months of 2016, before the EU-Turkey Statement, ~ 150,000 people arrived on the islands.
- In the 3 months after the statement it was fewer than 7,000.
- In the first 3 months of 2017 it was 4,000. Numbers started to rise again from the middle of 2017.

www.esiweb.org
Sea arrivals in Greece per month 2016/17 (UNHCR)\(^1\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>67,415</td>
<td>1,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>57,066</td>
<td>1,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>26,971</td>
<td>1,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3,650</td>
<td>1,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1,721</td>
<td>2,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>2,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>2,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>3,447</td>
<td>3,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>3,280</td>
<td>4,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td>4,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1,991</td>
<td>3,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1,665</td>
<td>2,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>173,450</td>
<td>29,718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I

It is mere realism to note that the asylum applications of the high number of people now on the islands will not be processed fast. There needs to be a new cut-off date (not announced in advance), a new DAY X, when most/all people now on the islands are moved to the mainland as in March 2016.

New arrivals will be sharply reduced, as in spring 2016, if from that moment there is a high probability of returns to Turkey. Otherwise it will accelerate arrivals.

What needs to be prepared for this to work:

- Large scale evacuations from the islands to the mainland before DAY X
- Humane accommodation from DAY X for those who arrive
- Preparation of resources to process new arrivals within weeks from DAY X
- Returns of significant numbers not in need of protection to Turkey after DAY X.

II

To be able to return people who arrive after DAY X to Turkey, the following clarity is required:

- Syrians

Turkey offers all Syrian\(^{\text{a}}\) who are returned from Greece temporary protection. The EU (under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, FRIT) offers them humanitarian aid. For Syrians, the Greek Asylum Service does not need to establish whether they are refugees (they are) but whether they are protected in Turkey.

Their safety after return to Turkey needs to be verifiable for Greek asylum case workers and the Greek public: this requires a credible mechanism to confirm this.

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\(1\) UNHCR, Operational Portal Refugee Situations, Greece, accessed 23 January 2020.

www.esiweb.org
- Non-Syrians

For all non-Syrians: they CAN be returned to Turkey too – most of the people returned from Greece to Turkey since March 2016 have been non-Syrians – but only after an asylum procedure and if their claims is rejected.

Non-Syrians are not granted temporary protection in Turkey. The possibility for non-Syrians to get protection within the Turkish asylum system remains limited (though the option to apply for protection exists under the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection).

This might change once Turkey processes seriously asylum claims of Afghans, Iraqis and others returned from Greece. But this would need to start happening and be verified. Now it is not the case. However, non-Syrians who are not refugees – who are found not to be in need of protection in an asylum procedure on the Greek islands – can be returned to Turkey.

III

The challenge on the islands is to be able to carry out credible asylum status determination for all non-Syrians within a few weeks: the Dutch asylum system, when it is adequately resourced.

At first instance level: how many case workers / interpreters would be required for this? Organise a scenario planning exercise with Greek, German, Dutch and other asylum authorities, with plans for different average daily arrivals: 100 a day, 200 a day, 300 a day.

Scenario based on the experiences of 2019: on average fewer than 200 arrived.

They comprised:
- 40 percent Afghans
- 27 percent Syrians
- 33 percent other non-Syrians

Nationalities of sea arrivals in Greece in 2019 (UNHCR)\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>23,861</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>16,366</td>
<td>27 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7,165</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>4,027</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>3,598</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>3,196</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stateless</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,726</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this scenario: if 90 percent of Syrians (based on admissibility) had been returned to Turkey, and 50 percent of non-Syrians (following a normal asylum procedure), this would have meant the return of more than 36,000 people in 2019. In reality it would have reduced numbers of arrivals well before that.

IV

If the first instance decision can take place within a few weeks (the goal: within 24 days, for everyone who arrives after DAY X) the next challenge is the appeals level.

EU law allows the following: Greece abolishes the appeals panels. Appeals go directly to administrative courts (at first instance) as in Germany. An appeal does not automatically suspend return to Turkey. Appeals against returns to Turkey can be decided by ordinary (single) judges in administrative courts. Those rejected at the first instance level and returned to Turkey are waiting for the outcome of their appeal in Turkey, not on the islands.

The verification mechanism the EU needs to set up with Turkey to monitor what happens to Syrians returned there could also verify that all those returned are treated in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. Without a mechanism and credible verifiable guarantees of this, it is certain that any returns will be challenged successfully in European courts.

V

These additional steps needed from Turkey - allowing a verification mechanism to assess what happens to Syrians and non-Syrians after their return - are discussed and agreed in the context of negotiations over the next 6 billion Euro for the next four years, for refugees now in Turkey.

Note that the number of Syrians who have crossed from Turkey to Greece in 2019 so far remains low (16,366 out of 3.6 million). The money the EU is spending to help integrate Syrians in Turkey has had a huge impact.

In short: What needs to be done now has already been done once. It was possible in March 2016 to bring down the number of arrivals very fast.

In the 12 months before 1 April 2016:
- 1 million arrived on the Aegean islands
- 1,152 drowned in the Aegean

In the 12 months after 1 April 2016:
- 26,000 arrived on the Aegean islands
- 81 drowned in the Aegean

What never worked well: returning those who arrived on the islands:
- 143,936 arrived on the islands (18 March 2016 to Dec. 2019)
- 2,001 returned to Turkey under the Statement until Dec. 2019 (44 per month) (195 returned in 2019 – 16 per month)

www.esiweb.org
VI. Greece cannot cope with asylum applications alone

Since 2017 Greece received more asylum applications per capita than any other EU member state except Cyprus. Left alone, Greece will not be able to cope. At the end of 2019:

87,461 asylum applications were pending in Greece

A coalition of EU member states should restart relocation of those in need of protection from the mainland as soon as arrivals numbers have fallen again, as was done successfully in 2016-2017. And member states such as Germany should accelerate family reunification transfers under the Dublin Regulation. This would help refugees and Greece at the same time.

VII. Turkey cannot cope with growing number of Syrian refugees alone

Since 2014 Turkey has been the country in the world hosting most refugees. The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey keeps growing and currently it stands at 3.6 million. Simply through births of Syrian children this number will reach 5.2 million in 2030. It is possible that even more will arrive from Syria (Idlib) this year.

Turkey is not – some speculation to the contrary – “opening the doors” for refugees to head West. In 2019 the vast majority – 99.5 percent – of Syrians in Turkey did not go to the EU. This is also due to policies integrating children into local schools and offering access to health care, and a large share of Syrians working unofficially. It is also due to EU-funded social support, benefitting the largest group of refugees – more than 1.7 million - in any country in the world. This support must continue. At the same time resettlement of refugees from Turkey, as well as family reunification, should be accelerated.

UNHCR: Registered Syrian Refugees, 2013-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Worldwide</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What the EU funds: more than 1.7 million refugees in Turkey have an ESSN cash card (Emergency Social Safety Net), which they can use like a normal debit card. Via this card, they receive per month and person 120 Turkish lira (18 Euro). There are quarterly top-ups depending on family size. The ESSN card is the biggest humanitarian project that the EU has ever funded.

Also, 500,000 refugee children receive financial support if they go to school, as well a complementary support to prevent dropouts (Conditional Cash Transfer for Education, CCTE). The amounts depend on grade and gender and range from 35 to 60 Turkish lira per month (5-9 Euro). The EU pays the lion’s share, Norway and the US contribute.

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5 European Commission and Turkish Red Crescent, “Conditional Cash Transfer for Education Programme for Syrian and Other Refugees”, October 2019.

www.esiweb.org
Arrivals in Greece

Sea arrivals Greece (UNHCR)\(^6\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>41,038</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>856,723</td>
<td>2,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 before EU-TR statement</td>
<td>151,452</td>
<td>1,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 after EU-TR statement</td>
<td>21,998</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>29,718</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>32,494</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>59,726</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since EU-TR statement</td>
<td>143,936</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

September 2019 saw the highest number of people arrive on Greek islands in one month since the EU-Turkey statement: 10,551.

However, compared to the period before the Statement the numbers of arrivals remain low. In February 2016, 57,066 arrived.

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Sea arrivals in Greece per month (UNHCR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>1,694</td>
<td>67,415</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>1,633</td>
<td>1,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>2,873</td>
<td>57,066</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>1,256</td>
<td>1,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,501</td>
<td>7,874</td>
<td>26,971</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>2,441</td>
<td>1,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>13,556</td>
<td>3,650</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>3,032</td>
<td>1,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1,703</td>
<td>17,889</td>
<td>1,721</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>2,916</td>
<td>2,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>3,198</td>
<td>31,318</td>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>2,012</td>
<td>2,439</td>
<td>3,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>3,927</td>
<td>54,899</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>2,249</td>
<td>2,545</td>
<td>5,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>6,742</td>
<td>107,843</td>
<td>3,447</td>
<td>3,584</td>
<td>3,197</td>
<td>7,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>7,454</td>
<td>147,123</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>4,886</td>
<td>3,960</td>
<td>10,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>7,432</td>
<td>211,663</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td>4,134</td>
<td>4,073</td>
<td>8,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>3,812</td>
<td>151,249</td>
<td>1,991</td>
<td>3,215</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>8,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2,056</td>
<td>108,742</td>
<td>1,665</td>
<td>2,364</td>
<td>2,927</td>
<td>6,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41,038</td>
<td>856,723</td>
<td>173,450</td>
<td>29,718</td>
<td>32,494</td>
<td>59,726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of arrivals across the Turkish-Greek land border has also risen. This flow is not covered by the EU-Turkey Statement at present:

Land arrivals in Greece (UNHCR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrivals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>801</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>830</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,503</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3,822</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1,818</td>
<td>547</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1,226</td>
<td>937</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>834</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1,123</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>1,979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>1,987</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,014</td>
<td>14,887</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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www.esiweb.org
In negotiations with Turkey about the next 6 billion support to refugees, it could be proposed to extend the EU-Turkey Statement to the land border (it would only apply to non-Turks).

One-third of those illegally crossing the land border in 2018, and 37 percent of those in 2019, were Turkish citizens. For these, Germany and other EU countries should offer to relocate those in need of protection.

### Sea and land arrivals in Greece (UNHCR)\(^{11}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sea</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>41,038</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>43,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>856,723</td>
<td>4,907</td>
<td>861,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>173,450</td>
<td>3,784</td>
<td>177,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>29,718</td>
<td>6,592</td>
<td>36,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>32,494</td>
<td>18,014</td>
<td>50,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>59,726</td>
<td>14,887</td>
<td>74,613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sea arrivals Eastern Mediterranean route until Nov. 2019 (Frontex)\(^{12}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>11,582</td>
<td>212,286</td>
<td>41,775</td>
<td>3,713</td>
<td>9,597</td>
<td>24,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>27,025</td>
<td>489,011</td>
<td>81,570</td>
<td>13,957</td>
<td>8,173</td>
<td>15,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>90,130</td>
<td>26,573</td>
<td>6,417</td>
<td>6,029</td>
<td>3,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>6,331</td>
<td>1,972</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>1,571</td>
<td>2,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.R. Congo</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1,677</td>
<td>2,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>4,470</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>2,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>22,995</td>
<td>5,353</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>1,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23,884</td>
<td>8,682</td>
<td>1,699</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
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<td>345</td>
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<td>207</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Frontex’ Eastern Mediterranean data includes Cyprus, numbers are therefore somewhat higher than UNHCR’s for Greece only.

---


www.esiweb.org
(Less) Deadly Aegean

Deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean (IOM)\textsuperscript{13}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>803</strong></td>
<td><strong>434</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
<td><strong>174</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deaths in the whole Mediterranean (IOM)\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Mediterranean</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>3,149</td>
<td>4,581</td>
<td>2,853</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Mediterranean</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,283</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,054</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,143</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,139</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,299</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,318</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{13} IOM/Missing Migrants Project, Region: Mediterranean, accessed 23 January 2020.
\textsuperscript{14} IOM/Missing Migrants Project, Region: Mediterranean, accessed 23 January 2020.

www.esiweb.org
Ever fewer returns to Turkey

Until the end of 2019, 2,001 people were returned to Turkey under the Statement. The largest number was returned in the first month after the Statement, in April 2016: 386 people. Since then there has been a steady decrease in returns.

| Returns from Greece to Turkey (UNHCR) \(^{15}\) |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| January | - | 64 | 47 | 19 |
| February | - | 34 | 23 | 13 |
| March | - | 45 | 29 | 5 |
| April | 386 | 150 | 18 | 10 |
| May | 55 | 87 | 29 | 14 |
| June | 27 | 48 | 20 | 18 |
| July | 0 | 60 | 23 | 7 |
| August | 16 | 18 | 17 | 15 |
| September | 94 | 29 | 48 | 7 |
| October | 139 | 57 | 17 | 36 |
| November | 31 | 75 | 40 | 25 |
| December | 53 | 16 | 11 | 26 |
| Total | 801 | 683 | 322 | 195 | 2,001 |

The likelihood of being sent back to Turkey has been a mere 1.4 percent. For the three largest groups arriving – Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis – it has been even smaller.

| Likelihood of return to Turkey (until 31 Aug. 2019; UNHCR) \(^{16}\) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nationality | Arrivals | Returned | Likelihood |
| Syria | 32,100 | 351 | 1.1 % |
| Afghanistan | 25,200 | 111 | 0.4 % |
| Iraq | 16,000 | 96 | 0.6 % |
| Pakistan | 3,900 | 716 | 18.4 % |
| Algeria | 2,800 | 201 | 7.2 % |
| Iran | 2,600 | 53 | 2.0 % |

880 of the 2,001 people returned until end-2019 had undergone an asylum procedure in Greece and received a negative decision at the first instance (40 people) or the second instance (840 people). The latter number included 43 people, all Syrians, who had received a second-instance decision in an admissibility procedure declaring that Turkey is safe for them. The remaining returnees with second-instance decisions were rejected in a regular asylum procedure.

\(^{15}\) UNHCR, “Returns from Greece to Turkey as of 31 December 2019” and “Returns from Greece to Turkey (under EU-Turkey statement) as of 21 June 2017”.


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Another 880 of the 2,001 returned had never asked for asylum or withdrawn their application. (In the remaining 240 instances the cases were closed for other reasons or no information was available.)

The annual number of cases where the Greek Asylum Service (GAS) declared Turkey a safe country at the first instance has dropped year by year since 2016.

*First-instance decisions declaring Turkey a safe country for Syrians (GAS)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,857</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those returned to Turkey the largest group has been Pakistanis:

*Nationalities of those returned to Turkey (UNHCR)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,001</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

17 UNHCR, “*Returns from Greece to Turkey (under EU-Turkey statement) as of 31 December 2019*.”
18 Greek Asylum Service, “*Statistical Data of the Greek Asylum Service (from 07.06.2013 to 31.10.2019)*.”
19 UNHCR, “*Returns from Greece to Turkey (under EU-Turkey statement) as of 30 November 2019*.”
The Greek asylum system

In 2018 and 2017, Greece received more asylum applications per capita than any other EU member state except Cyprus in 2018. 2019 will be similar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>1,668</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>1,027</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28 average</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>1,797*</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Almost all of the claims in Hungary were submitted in transit, so Hungary is disregarded.

If France with its 67 million inhabitants had 624 asylum claims per 100,000 inhabitants like Greece, it would receive 417,300 claims. In fact, France received 120,425 claims in 2018, which was already a French record (and which might be slightly surpassed in 2019).

---

20 Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded) and Population on 1 January, accessed on 9 September 2019.

www.esiweb.org
At the end of December 2019 there were 87,461 pending asylum applications in the whole of Greece, including claims from 27,608 Afghans and 16,165 Syrians.\(^{21}\)

Since the Greek Asylum Service became operational in 2013, it never managed to keep up with submitted claims.

### First-instance decisions in Greece (GAS)\(^{22}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>All decisions</th>
<th>On merit</th>
<th>Inadmissibility/ Relocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4,814</td>
<td>2,338</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>9,431</td>
<td>7,417</td>
<td>5,964</td>
<td>1,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>13,187</td>
<td>10,446</td>
<td>8,428</td>
<td>2,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>51,053</td>
<td>24,516</td>
<td>9,285</td>
<td>15,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>58,637</td>
<td>44,929</td>
<td>22,480</td>
<td>22,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>66,963</td>
<td>35,577</td>
<td>30,752</td>
<td>4,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>77,287</td>
<td>35,464</td>
<td>31,044</td>
<td>4,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>281,372</strong></td>
<td><strong>160,687</strong></td>
<td><strong>110,030</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,657</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, the recognition rate in Greece has been higher than the EU average.

### Recognition rates first-instance decisions on merit (GAS and Eurostat)\(^{23}\)

(Refugee status and subsidiary protection)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Decisions</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>GR rate</th>
<th>EU rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5,964</td>
<td>1,710</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>41 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8,428</td>
<td>3,994</td>
<td>47 %</td>
<td>48 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>9,285</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>53 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>22,480</td>
<td>10,347</td>
<td>46 %</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>30,747</td>
<td>15,188</td>
<td>49 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 (-July)</td>
<td>17,705</td>
<td>9,731</td>
<td>55 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recognition rate in 2016 was low because asylum seekers with a high recognition rate (75 percent or higher) were relocated to other EU member states.

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\(^{21}\) Greek Asylum Service, “Statistical Data of the Greek Asylum Service (from 07.06.2013 to 31.12.2019).”

\(^{22}\) Greek Asylum Service, “Statistical Data of the Greek Asylum Service (from 07.06.2013 to 31.12.2019).”


[www.esiweb.org](http://www.esiweb.org)
Refugee status and subsidiary protection in 2018 (Eurostat)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>EU28</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>98 %</td>
<td>71 %</td>
<td>No decisions</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>94 %</td>
<td>81 %</td>
<td>83 %</td>
<td>82 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>93 %</td>
<td>87 %</td>
<td>85 %</td>
<td>85 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>92 %</td>
<td>48 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
<td>38 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>84 %</td>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>75 %</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>69 %</td>
<td>54 %</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td>37 %</td>
<td>31 %</td>
<td>73 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>66 %</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>7.7 %</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>7.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2.8 %</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
<td>7.4 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2.5 %</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>3.6 %</td>
<td>5.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
<td>6.4 %</td>
<td>0.5 %</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>2.9 %</td>
<td>0.4 %</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asylum procedures on the islands

38,358 Syrians arrived on the islands until 7 May 2018. Of these 26,150 (68 percent) were declared vulnerable. They could leave the islands on this basis.

Another 5,378 Syrians were found to have a right, under the Dublin Regulation, to be transferred to other EU member states (usually for family reunification). Only 2,478 (6 percent) were deemed fit to return to Turkey.

**Syrians on the Greek islands 21 March 2016 – 7 May 2018 (European Commission)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>No return to Turkey due to vulnerability</th>
<th>No return to Turkey because of Dublin</th>
<th>No return to Turkey for other reasons</th>
<th>Possible return to Turkey</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26,150</td>
<td>5,378</td>
<td>4,352</td>
<td>2,478</td>
<td>38,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The claims of non-Syrian asylum seekers are examined on merit (unless they were Dublin cases). If, after a negative decision, claimants do not appeal or their appeal is not successful, they can also be returned to Turkey.

In half of 10,620 on-merit decisions until 7 May 2018, the first-instance decisions were negative:

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25 European Commission, Migration Crisis Information Sheet, 8 May 2018.

www esiweb.org
Island asylum procedures on merit until 7 May 2018

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive decisions</td>
<td>5,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative decisions</td>
<td>5,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total decisions</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,620</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Until 7 May 2018, 6,136 appeals were filed by those who had received negative decisions on merit (5,206) on the islands or who had been told to go back under the protection scheme for Syrians in Turkey in an admissibility procedure (2,478). This means 80 percent had appealed.

The appeals committees decided 3,098 of those 6,136 appeals. On average they received 245 appeals and issued 124 decisions each month.

They confirmed 95 percent of the first-instance negative decisions on merit (2,119 of 2,242).

Concerning decisions on inadmissibility the appeals committees initially overturned all first-instance decisions. This changed after Greece’s highest administrative court, the Council of State, upheld a return decision concerning two Syrians on 22 September 2017.

By 7 May 2018, the committees had upheld 435 of 856 inadmissibility decisions to send Syrian asylum seekers back to Turkey. They overturned 421.

Appeals panels’ decisions on islands, 20 March 2016 to 7 May 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeals</th>
<th>6,136</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Decided</td>
<td>3,098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeals decisions on return to Turkey as a safe third country</th>
<th>856</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Appellant must return to Turkey</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Appellant is granted protection or case is sent back to first instance</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeals decisions on merit</th>
<th>2,242</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Appellant has no right to protection</td>
<td>2,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Appellant is granted protection</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the appeals committees confirmed Turkey’s safety for return for 435 people by 7 May 2018, only 23 of those returned to Turkey. The remaining 412 cases are likely to have absconded, irregularly reaching Greek mainland and from there possibly other EU countries.

After a failed appeal, applicants can turn to the Greek Administrative Court of Appeals. This is costly, legal aid is hard to obtain at present and it does not prevent removal.

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26 European Commission, Migration Crisis Information Sheet, 8 May 2018.
27 European Commission, Migration Crisis Information Sheet, 8 May 2018.
28 Asylum Information Database (AIDA), “Country report Greece”, March 2018, p. 101-103. From September 2017 until 7 May 2018, all decisions by the appeals committees upheld the first-instance inadmissibility decision since the number of decisions annuling the first-instance decision was 421 both at the end of August 2017 and in May 2018. See European Commission, Seventh report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, 6 September 2017, p. 6. European Commission, Migration Crisis Information Sheet, 8 May 2018.
29 European Commission, Migration Crisis Information Sheet, 8 May 2018.
30 European Commission, Migration Crisis Information Sheet, 8 May 2018.
31 www.esiweb.org
Reception crisis on the islands

The reception centres on the Greek islands overcrowded shortly after implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement began. There has never been enough staff – doctors, nurses, psychologists, interpreters, guards – to respond to the needs to the refugees and migrants. Many have had to sleep in tents and make-shifts camps, and the sanitary conditions have been dismal.

Migrant population and available accommodation on the islands on 31 Dec. 2019
(Greek government)\(^{32}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Demand met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesvos</td>
<td>20,785</td>
<td>4,061</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samos</td>
<td>8,064</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chios</td>
<td>6,078</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kos</td>
<td>4,119</td>
<td>1,503</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leros</td>
<td>2,757</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other islands</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,899</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,029</strong></td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 9,029 available places, 6,178 are in the Registration and Identification Centres (RICs) on the islands, and the remaining are offered by UNHCR, the Greek National Centre for Social Security and NGOs.\(^{33}\)

Migrant population and available accommodation on the islands on 22 Jan. 2020
(Greek government)\(^{34}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Demand met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesvos</td>
<td>21,315</td>
<td>4,070</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samos</td>
<td>7,501</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chios</td>
<td>5,918</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kos</td>
<td>4,239</td>
<td>1,503</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leros</td>
<td>2,652</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other islands</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,736</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,036</strong></td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 9,036 available places, 6,178 are in the Registration and Identification Centres (RICs) on the islands, and the remaining are offered by UNHCR, the Greek National Centre for Social Security and NGOs.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{32}\) Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Citizen Protection, “National Situational Picture Regarding the Islands at Eastern Aegean Sea (1/1/2020)”.

\(^{33}\) Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Citizen Protection, “National Situational Picture Regarding the Islands at Eastern Aegean Sea (1/1/2020)”.

\(^{34}\) Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Citizen Protection, “National Situational Picture Regarding the Islands at Eastern Aegean Sea (23/1/2020)”.

\(^{35}\) Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Citizen Protection, “National Situational Picture Regarding the Islands at Eastern Aegean Sea (23/1/2020)”.

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Transfers to the mainland

UNHCR has, since June 2016, assisted Greek authorities in transferring vulnerable asylum seekers and recognised refugees to the mainland.

| UNHCR-assisted transfers from Greek islands to the mainland |
|-------------|------|------|------|-------------------|
|             | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | Total 2016-19     |
| January     | 1,168| 2,337| 1,633|                   |
| February    | 1,581| 1,090| 831  |                   |
| March       | 512  | 680  | 2,074|                   |
| April       | 530  | 1,625| 336  |                   |
| May         | 775  | 1,087| 317  |                   |
| June        | 907  | 994  | 297  |                   |
| July        | 1,038| 1,039| 359  |                   |
| August      | 1,945| 1,547| 852  |                   |
| September   | 1,323| 2,600| 2,230|                   |
| October     | 2,067| 2,255| 1,700|                   |
| November    | 2,128| 3,060| 2,700|                   |
| December    | 3,195| 3,600|      |                   |
| **Total**   | **3,790** | **17,169** | **21,914** | **13,329** | **56,202** |

Greek authorities also transfer people on their own, without any UNHCR assistance, and some manage to leave on their own. In total, more than 100,000 people must have left the islands one way or another. (Of the 144,000 that arrived on the islands since March 2016, 40,000 are currently there; 2,001 were returned to Turkey; and up to 5,000 went back voluntarily to their home countries (assisted voluntary return\(^{37}\)).

Relocation from Greece

Between the end of 2015 and early 2018, 22,000 asylum seekers “in clear need of international protection” (EU recognition rate of at least 75 percent) were relocated from Greece to other EU and Schengen countries. The relocation programme\(^ {38}\) ended in September 2017, after that only pending cases were relocated.

From Italy, 12,700 asylum seekers were relocated under the same programme.

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\(^{36}\) Data for 2016: UNHCR’s “Fact Sheet Greece” for December 2017 mentions 20,959 transfers since June 2016. Minus the 17,169 transfers in 2017, this makes 3,790 in 2016. Data for 2017: “UNHCR Fact Sheet Greece”(or “Fact Sheet Aegean Islands”) for January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December; data for 2018: UNHCR “Fact Sheet Greece”(or “Fact Sheet Aegean Islands”) for: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December; data for 2019: UNHCR “Fact Sheet Greece” for January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October and November.

\(^{37}\) During the first three years of the EU-Turkey Statement, that is until March 2019, 3,421 returned voluntarily from the Greek islands through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme. European Commission, “EU-Turkey Statement: Three years on”, March 2019.

Asylum seekers relocated from Greece (European Commission)\textsuperscript{39}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receiving state</th>
<th>Relocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 21,999

Four member states refused to participate in relocation (Austria, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia). Denmark and the UK could – and both did – opt out. Ireland decided to participate on a voluntary basis. Greece and Italy did not have to accept refugees.

Relocations from Greece started on 4 November 2015 with 30 asylum seekers from Syria and Iraq travelling to Luxembourg.\textsuperscript{40} Until March 2016, when the EU-Turkey Statement was concluded, the figure of relocated asylum seekers reached 600. During the first year of the EU-Turkey Statement, close to 10,000 people were relocated, and in 2017 it was 11,700.

\textsuperscript{39} European Commission, “Member states’ support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism”, as of 30 October 2018, accessed 2 October 2019.

\textsuperscript{40} UNHCR, “First asylum-seekers relocate from Greece to Luxembourg”, 4 November 2015.

www.esiweb.org
Relocation from Greece to other EUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Cumulative number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Nov. 2015</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Dec. 2015</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Jan. 2016</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2016</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Dec. 2016</td>
<td>6,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Jan. 2017</td>
<td>7,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 March 2017</td>
<td>10,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Dec. 2017</td>
<td>21,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March 2018</td>
<td>21,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-March 2018</td>
<td>21,999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Dublin helps Greece

Since 2013, only 76 people have been transferred to Greece from other EU member states under the Dublin Regulation. 15,046 have been transferred from Greece to other EU member states.

Dublin requests and transfers to Greece (GAS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Requests</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5,797</td>
<td>2,236</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2,134</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>9,219</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>12,718</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30,065</td>
<td>3,325</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 30,065 requests to Greece by other member states, 15,175 (50 percent) concerned an asylum request submitted in Greece and another 11,832 (39 percent) concerned Greece as the first country of irregular arrival.

The data is taken from various European Commission documents. Where links are available, the dates are hyperlinked. The remaining figures are taken from the document “Member states’ support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism”, which was frequently updated and accessed by ESI at different times.


www.esiweb.org
Dublin requests and transfers from Greece (GAS)\textsuperscript{44}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Requests</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,113</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4,878</td>
<td>3,214</td>
<td>936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9,536</td>
<td>7,819</td>
<td>4,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5,101</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>5,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5,459</td>
<td>2,523</td>
<td>2,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,583</td>
<td>18,122</td>
<td>15,046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 27,583 Dublin requests submitted by the Greek authorities, 20,494 (74 percent) concerned family reunification.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44} Greek Asylum Service. “Asylum Service Statistical data – Dublin Regulation III Procedures (as of 31.12.2019)”.

\textsuperscript{45} Greek Asylum Service. “Asylum Service Statistical data – Dublin Regulation III Procedures (as of 31.12.2019)”.

www.esiweb.org
Resettlement of Syrians from Turkey to EU

Another provision of the EU-Turkey Statement is the resettlement of Syrian refugees from Turkey to EU member states. Since the agreement, EU member states have taken in more than 25,000. There are 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees in Turkey.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Resettlement of Syrian refugees from Turkey to EU member states as of 16 Sept. 2019 (European Commission)}\textsuperscript{47}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member State</th>
<th>Syrians resettled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>8,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Total}</td>
<td>\textbf{24,492}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten EU member states have not resettled Syrian refugees for various reasons: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the UK.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{47} European Commission, “\textit{Operational implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement}”, as of 16 September 2019, accessed 2 October 2019.
\end{footnotesize}