



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Ministry of Migration & Asylum

An Overview of International Protection Procedures in Greece

An applicant for international protection is any third-country national, or stateless person, who submits an application for international protection to the Regional Asylum Offices, or Independent Asylum Units, or Asylum Service Units located in Reception and Identification Centers. The applicant for international protection requests not to be deported because (s)he fears persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, participation in a particular social group, or political convictions, or because (s)he is in danger of suffering serious harm in his(her) country of origin, or country of previous residence, in particular because (s)he is in danger of facing death penalty, or execution, torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment, or because his(her) life or physical integrity is in danger, due to international or civil conflict.

Also, any alien who is transferred to Greece by a state enforcing the “Dublin” Regulation¹ is regarded as an applicant for international protection.

International protection application: Where and how to submit it

- The application is submitted to the Receiving Authorities, who immediately carry out a complete registration. The competent Receiving Authorities are the Regional Asylum Offices, the Independent Units, and Mobile Units of the Asylum Service.
- If you entered the country or live in Greece without legal formalities, you will be transferred to a Reception and Identification Center; if you do not carry a document from a public authority proving your citizenship and identity, you will be submitted to reception and identification procedures. In this case, in order to apply for international protection, you will be referred to the local competent Regional Asylum Office, or Asylum Unit, operating in the Reception and Identification Center where you live. You will have the obligation to stay at the Center’s facilities for as long as the process of examining your application lasts, provided that this period does not exceed twenty-five (25) days.
- The application for international protection is submitted in person. However, the application can now be submitted electronically through the self-registration app. You may also submit applications for members of your family, provided that they are with you in Greece and that they wish to do so. They will also have to come to the Asylum Service with you.

¹ The countries which enforce the Dublin Regulation are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.



- When submitting your application, you should answer the Service official's questions truthfully. Submitting untrue information or claims will adversely impact the judgment of your application.
- If you are an unaccompanied child, i.e. if you are under 18 years old and you are not accompanied by an adult person who is responsible for looking after you, according to the Greek law or practice, the Authorities must inform the competent Public Prosecutor immediately. The Prosecutor will appoint a Guardian, who will be responsible for you and will defend your best interests. If you are under 15 years old, your application for international protection must be submitted by the Guardian appointed to you. If you are over 15 years old you may submit your application yourself. The Authorities will care for your protection and ensure that you are accommodated in an environment suitable for minors.
- When you submit your application for international protection, you and any members of your family who are over 14 years old, will be photographed and fingerprinted. The fingerprints will be entered into the European Central Database EURODAC, and, in case you have submitted an application for international protection in another European country where the "Dublin III" Regulation is in force, you will be transferred to that country for the examination of your application.
- You must hand in your travel documents (passport) or any other document in your possession that is relevant to the examination of your application, the verification of your identity and that of your family members, the country you came from and your place of origin, as well as your marital status.
- You may be submitted to a body search; your personal belongings may be searched as well. You may be submitted to medical tests.
- The Asylum Service will set a date for your interview and then you will receive the international protection applicant card, which can be valid for up to six months. You must carry this card on you at all times;
 - it must not be laminated,
 - it must be kept in good condition,
 - it should not get lost, because it is very difficult to replace.
- When you submit your application, the competent authorities have the obligation to inform you, in a language that you understand, regarding the



procedure, your rights and obligations as an applicant for international protection, as well as any deadlines applicable throughout the procedure.

- If you are a victim of torture, rape or other serious acts of violence, you must inform the Authorities accordingly, so that they help you.
- You may ask to contact the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or an organization that provides legal, medical and psychological assistance.
- Throughout the procedure, you have the right to ask for the assistance of a lawyer or other counselor of your choice (without the mediation of the Asylum Service). The fee and expenses of the lawyer or other counselor will be at your charge.
- If you wish, you may be given a short period of time to prepare for the interview properly, and to consult a lawyer or other counselor to assist you during the procedure.
- In any case, you may ask for the interview and the interpretation to be conducted by an official of the gender of your choice, if there are serious reasons for this. Your relevant request will be assessed by the Service and will be satisfied, if possible.
- If you are an unaccompanied minor, you must be informed by your representative (guardian) about the interview. Your representative (guardian) will be invited and may be present with you at the interview. The Authorities may conduct medical tests in order to determine your age. Both you and your representative must be informed regarding this procedure and you or your representative must agree to it.

Withdrawal and implicit withdrawal of an application for international protection

You may withdraw your application at any time. You must go in person to the Regional Asylum Office where you submitted it, and withdraw your application in writing. If you withdraw your application, the Service will not examine it and you will have to leave the country, unless you hold another residence permit.

The Asylum Service may consider that you are not interested in the continuation of the examination of your application (implicit withdrawal) in the following cases:

- a) if you refuse to provide information which is of great importance for your application, as requested by the Authorities,
- b) if you do not appear for your personal interview scheduled by the Service,



- c) if you escape from your place of detention,
- d) if you do not comply with the obligations the Police imposed on you instead of detention,
- e) if you leave the place of residence designated for you by the Authorities without informing them,
- f) if you leave the country without asking permission from the Asylum Service,
- g) if you do not immediately inform the Asylum Service regarding changes in your address and contact information,
- h) if you fail to contact the Asylum Service after being requested to do so,
- i) if you do not provide documents that you provably have, or must have, in your possession and can provide,
- j) if you do not appear to renew your applicant card on the working day following its expiry date at the latest,
- k) if you do not cooperate with the Authorities, in breach of the obligation to cooperate,
- l) if you do not comply with a transfer decision in order to complete the reception and identification process, thereby impeding the smooth completion of the procedures for the examination of the application for international protection.

In case the deciding Authorities consider that you have implicitly withdrawn your application, they will examine it on the basis of the information available and will reject it, if they consider it unfounded. If the Asylum Service rejects your application, you have the right to appeal before the Appeals Authority.

If the Service considers that it does not have enough information available to consider your application, it will make a decision to suspend its examination. If a suspension decision is made, a procedure is applied to return you to your country. You have the right to request the continuation of the examination of your case, or to submit a new application, only once and within nine (9) months from the issuance of the suspension decision.

The examination procedure for international protection applications

- Access to the international protection procedure is open and free of charge. Any third-country national or stateless person has the right to apply for international protection.
- The complete registration of your application includes your identity information, your country of origin, the name of your father, mother, spouse and children, e-mail address if available, biometric identifiers, a full statement on the reasons why you are seeking international protection, your address of residence or stay, the language which you wish your application to be examined in and, if you wish, the appointment of an authorized representative.
- In case your full registration is not possible for any reason whatsoever, a simple registration of the minimum necessary information, including the language which you wish your application to be considered in, must be carried out within



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three (3) working days from the submission of your application. Then, your complete application will be registered on a specific date, that you will be informed about. In this case, you will obtain a document bearing your basic identity information and your photograph. Upon your final registration, you will hand in this document, which will be replaced by the International Protection Applicant Card.

- When you submit your application, an interpreter in a language you understand will be present to assist you in communicating with the Asylum Service staff.
- You must hand in your travel documents (passport) or any other document in your possession related to the examination of your application, as well as to the verification of your identity and that of your family members, your country and place of origin, and your marital status.
- On the date determined by the Service, you will be interviewed by an Asylum Service official. You should answer their questions with absolute truthfulness, only testify complete descriptions of true incidents, and not conceal any element that is relevant to your application. If you make false statements or claims, you will adversely impact the judgment of your application.
- During the interview, the Asylum Service official is particularly going to ask you questions regarding the information you provided in your application, your identity information, how you came to Greece, the reasons why you left your country of origin, or the country that you used to live in if you are stateless, as well as the reasons why you cannot or do not wish to return to that country. During the interview, you may also submit any additional evidence you deem necessary.
- If you are not able to communicate with the Asylum Service official due to a language barrier, an interpreter will also be present during the interview.
- You can go to the interview accompanied by a lawyer or other counselor (legal expert, physician, psychologist or social worker).
- Everything you say during the interview is confidential.
- The interview may be audio recorded. In case the interview is not audio recorded, the Asylum Service official will compose a report (minutes) that will include all the questions and answers of the interview. In this case, you will have to check the text of the minutes with the assistance of the interpreter, verify its contents or ask for corrections, and sign it. Any time you wish, you



may obtain a copy of the minutes, or report, and of the audio recording of your interview.

- After the interview, the Asylum Service will decide to grant you refugee or subsidiary protection status, or will reject your application.
- If you are an unaccompanied minor, your guardian must inform you regarding your interview. Your guardian will be invited and may be present with you at the interview. If in doubt about your age, the Authorities may conduct medical tests to determine your age. You and your guardian must be informed of this procedure, and you or your guardian must agree to it.
- When a decision on your application is issued, the Asylum Service will notify you to receive it. You will be notified based on the contact information you have provided, either by a telephone call, a letter or a telegram, a fax or an e-mail.
- The Asylum Service must notify the decision to you, with the assistance of an interpreter, in a language you understand.

Rights and Obligations of Applicants for International Protection

Rights of applicants for international protection

As an applicant for international protection in Greece you have the following rights:

- ✓ You have the right to remain in Greece until the examination of your application is completed; your deportation is prohibited until the examination of your application is completed.
- ✓ You may move freely across the country, unless specific areas of the country where you may move freely, i.e. geographical restrictions, are determined in the card that you are provided with.
- ✓ If you do not work and your financial resources are not enough to cover your everyday needs, you are entitled to benefits. You may also apply to be hosted in an Accommodation Center or other facility (accommodation programs in private homes or hotels). Your request will be accepted, depending on availability.



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- ✓ You have the right to work under the conditions set by the Greek law, after the lapse of six (6) months from the date of submission of the application for international protection, and provided you have an International Protection Applicant Card.
- ✓ As an employee, you have the same rights and obligations, regarding social security, as any Greek citizen.
- ✓ In order to have access to medical, pharmaceutical and hospital care, you may obtain a Temporary Insurance and Health Care Number for Aliens (PAAYPA).
- ✓ Your children have access to public education, free of charge.
- ✓ If you are an adult you have the right to access secondary education.
- ✓ You have access to vocational training.
- ✓ If you are a disabled person with a disability percentage of 67% or more, you have the right to receive a disability allowance, provided that your stay in an Accommodation Center is not possible.

Obligations of applicants for international protection

As an applicant for international protection in Greece, you have the following obligations:

- ✓ You may not travel outside Greece –with the exception of special circumstances, when serious humanitarian reasons arise dictating your presence in another country, such as provably serious health reasons. You will need to submit an application to the Asylum Service for a travel document to be issued. If you leave the country without informing the Asylum Service, the examination of your application will be discontinued.
- ✓ You must remain in Greece until the examination of your application is completed.
- ✓ You may not transfer your family from your country of origin to Greece.
- ✓ You must cooperate with the Greek Authorities regarding any issue relevant to your application and the verification of your identity information.
- ✓ You must appear before the Receiving Authorities in person and without delay, whenever called by the competent authorities.
- ✓ You must hand in your travel document and provide any other documents in your possession that are relevant to the examination of the application, as well



as to the verification of your identity, your country and place of origin, and your marital status.

- ✓ You must immediately inform the Asylum Service regarding the address of your residence and your contact information, as well as any change in them (Appendix: Link 6). You may also submit an online application for a change of contact information (online applications link). The Asylum Service will send documents related to your application to the address you have declared.
- ✓ You must abide by the deadlines determined to you throughout the various stages of the procedure for the examination of your application.
- ✓ You must arrange for your card to be renewed in time before it expires, or on the working day following its expiry date at the latest.
- ✓ You must disclose your true financial situation in case you are provided with benefits by the State.
- ✓ You are deprived of the right to free accommodation in accommodation centers or other facilities, for instance:
 - if you leave the accommodation premises without informing the competent authorities;
 - if you do not declare a change of your personal information, or do not respond to requests for information about your application, or do not appear for your personal interview within the specified date;
 - when, without a justified reason, you have not immediately submitted an application for international protection;
 - if you hide financial resources and have benefited unfairly from the material conditions of reception;
 - if you violated the accommodation centers' rules of procedure.
- ✓ Violation of the required obligation of cooperation with the competent authorities, in particular, non-communication with the authorities and non-cooperation in order to establish the evidence necessary for the examination of the application, implies obstructing the smooth completion of the international protection application examination procedures and therefore leads to interruption of the examination of your application.

The right to appeal and the second instance examination

If your application is rejected, or if you are granted a status of subsidiary protection and you consider that you are entitled to a refugee status, you have the right to submit an appeal before the Appeals Authority. You must submit the appeal to the Regional



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Asylum Office or the Regional Asylum Office Unit that notified the decision to you, within the deadline mentioned in the decision you received.

In case you live in a Center far away from the Regional Asylum Office (or Independent Unit) that issued the decision, you may submit the appeal to the nearest Regional Asylum Office. In this case, the appeal is forwarded electronically, on the same day, to the Regional Asylum Office or Independent Asylum Office Unit that issued the decision. The appeal is submitted by appearing at the competent Asylum Service office in person and providing a document (appeal) signed by you, or by your lawyer. If you are detained, you must submit your appeal to the Head of Detention Facility or Center, who will send the appeal by fax or other electronic means to the Regional Asylum Office or Independent Asylum Office Unit that issued the decision.

Upon submitting an appeal, you will be provided with an International Protection Applicant Card again. Your appeal will be examined by an Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee usually examines appeals based on the evidence in your file and does not invite you for an interview. However, you will be notified about the date on which your appeal will be examined, as well as about when you can submit, if you so wish, any additional evidence that the Appeals Committee should take into account.

On the date of the examination of your appeal, you have the obligation to be present in person at the seat of the Appeals Authority. In case you do not show up, your appeal will be rejected.

You may withdraw your appeal while its examination is pending. You must appear in person to the Regional Asylum Office where you submitted the appeal and withdraw it in writing. If you withdraw your appeal, it will not be examined and you will have to leave the country, unless you hold another residence permit.

The Appeals Committee may consider that you are not interested in continuing the examination of your appeal (implicit withdrawal) and discontinue its examination:

- 1) if you refuse to provide information which is of great importance for your application, as requested by the Authorities, or
- 2) if you escape from your place of detention, or
- 3) if you do not comply with the obligations the Police imposed on you instead of detention, or
- 4) if you leave the place of residence designated for you by the Authorities without informing them, or
- 5) if you leave the country without asking permission from the Asylum Service, or
- 6) if you do not immediately inform the Asylum Service regarding changes in your address and contact information, or
- 7) if you fail to contact the Appeals Committee after being requested to do so, or
- 8) if you do not appear to renew your applicant card on the working day following its expiry date at the latest, or
- 9) if you do not provide documents that you provably have, or must have, in your possession and can provide.



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In case the Appeals Committee decides to call you for an interview, you will be notified no later than ten (10) working days before the interview date. You have the right to appear before the Appeals Committee accompanied by a lawyer or other counselor.

The Appeals Committee will decide to either grant you refugee status, subsidiary protection status, or reject your appeal.

The Appeals Committee decision is notified to you by the same procedure as the Asylum Service decision.

The appeal decision may be issued within fifteen (15) days to three (3) months, depending on the case.

In case your appeal is rejected, or in case the decision grants you a status of subsidiary protection, yet you consider that you are entitled to a refugee status, you may submit an annulment request before the local Administrative Court of First Instance, within thirty (30) days from the day following notification of the decision. The annulment request does not have an automatic suspensive effect; this means that it is possible to remove you from the country, in case your appeal has been rejected.

Detention of applicants for international protection

If you are detained, or if you stay in a Reception and Identification Center (RIC), the detention authorities, or the reception and identification authorities, will inform the Asylum Service of your desire to apply for international protection, and your application will be scheduled for registration.

On the day of registration, you will either be transferred to the nearest Regional Asylum Office, or you will be registered by an Asylum Service Unit operating in the premises where you are located.

The registration will be carried out with the help of an interpreter, in a language that you understand; the Asylum Service staff will provide you with all the necessary information regarding the procedure.

If you have documents proving your identity, such as a passport, or other documents relating to your application, you should carry them with you. When submitting your application, you will be photographed and fingerprinted.

After registration, instead of an international protection applicant card, you will be given a document indicating the date you should attend your interview.

If you submitted an application for international protection while being detained for committing a criminal offence, you will remain in detention until you have served your sentence.



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If you submitted an application for international protection while being detained because you entered the country illegally, or because your removal from the country is pending, you may remain in detention if the Police judges that no other measures may apply in your case:

- (a) in order to ascertain your true identity information or origin;
- (b) in order to determine the evidence on which your application is founded, which would be impossible to obtain otherwise, in particular when there is a flight risk;
- (c) when there are well founded reasons to believe that you submitted the application in order to delay or impede the execution of a return decision;
- (d) in case you pose a threat to national security or public order;
- (e) when there is a significant flight risk within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, and in order to ensure the implementation of the transfer procedure in accordance with the said Regulation.

Your detention may last from fifty (50) days to eighteen (18) months, depending on the reason for your detention. The Police Director decides on your detention; in his decision he must include a detailed reasoning why your detention was decided.

You have the right to submit objections against the decision for your detention before the President, or the competent First Instance Judge, of the Administrative Court of First Instance in whose district you are detained.

If you decide to withdraw your application, you must declare so in person before the competent Asylum Service official. If an Independent Asylum Unit does not operate in or near the place where you are being detained, you must be transferred to the nearest Regional Asylum Office for this purpose.

If you are detained or if you stay in the Reception and Identification Service facilities, you must be provided with your international protection applicant card on the day of your release, or after completion of the Reception and Identification procedures, in case the examination of your application is still pending. You must immediately report to the competent Regional Asylum Office to declare your contact information and be provided with a card, in case that has not been done already.

The decision on your application is notified to you by the competent official of the Asylum Service in person, or by the Head of the Detention Authority, Center or Structure.

If the decision is rejecting the application, you may appeal it in person before the competent official of the Asylum Service.

If an Independent Asylum Unit does not operate in or near the place where you are being detained, you must be transferred to the nearest Regional Asylum Office.

If you stay in an Accommodation Structure or far away from the Regional Asylum Office that issued the decision, you may submit an appeal at the nearest Regional Asylum Office or to the Head of the Structure.



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If the decision is positive, a decision lifting your detention will be issued. You will be given the necessary documents on the day of your release. You must immediately report to the competent Regional Asylum Office to declare your contact information.

Subsequent Application

A subsequent application is an application for international protection that is submitted again, following a final rejection decision by the Police, the Asylum Service, or the Appeals Authority, or after your withdrawal of a previous application for international protection. In order to submit a subsequent application to the Asylum Service, you must have received a final rejection decision from the Hellenic Police or the Asylum Service and have new reasons for which you request to be granted international protection (asylum).

You will need to submit the subsequent application to the Regional Asylum Office or the Independent Asylum Unit located near your place of residence and submit any new evidence that has emerged. After submitting your subsequent application, you will not be provided with an international protection applicant card.

The Asylum Service will review the new evidence you submit and will decide whether it is of importance regarding your application for international protection. You will be provided with an international protection applicant card only after such acceptance; then, the examination of your application by the Asylum Service will be continued.

If the Service rejects your subsequent application, you may submit an appeal before the Appeals Authority within the deadline specified in the decision notified to you.

If you submit a second subsequent application, you will not be protected from deportation / return during the application review phase.

We would like to inform you that it is forbidden to carry into the premises of the Asylum Service: weapons, sharp or other objects that may be used to cause injury, explosives and flammable materials, chemical and toxic substances.

Also, entrance to persons carrying luggage or large bags will be prohibited, with the exception of briefcases and small handbags.

The use of mobile phones is only allowed at the outdoor spaces of the Asylum Service premises; taking photographs or recording video within or outside the premises of the Asylum Service is prohibited.