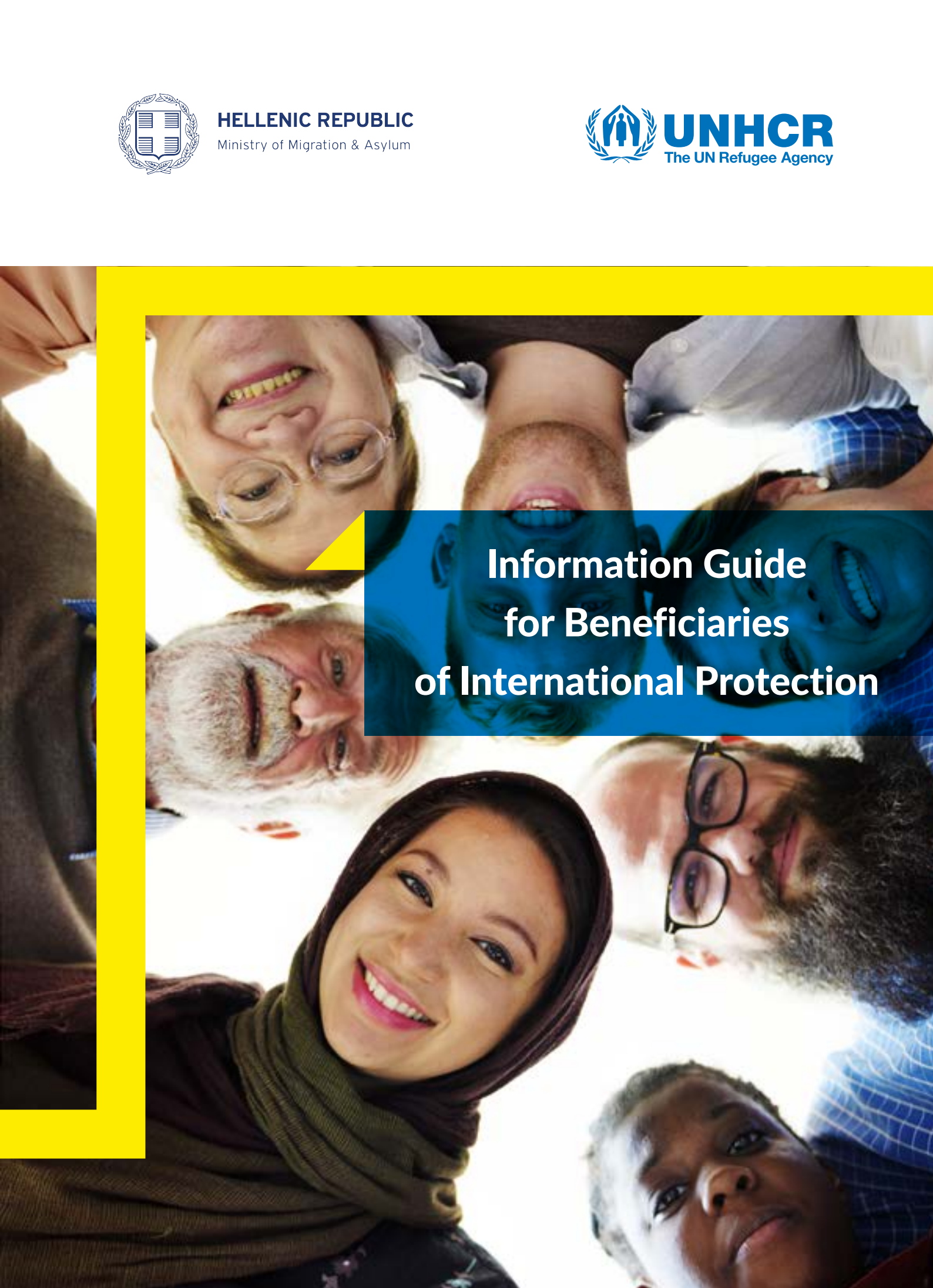




HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Migration & Asylum



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

A collage of diverse people smiling, including a woman with glasses, a man with a beard, a woman in a hijab, and a man with glasses, set against a yellow background.

Information Guide for Beneficiaries of International Protection

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CHAPTER 1

About this guide





This guide is addressed to adults who, upon their request, have been granted international protection status by the competent Greek authorities, either refugee status based on the 1951 Geneva Convention or subsidiary protection status.

According to the National Integration Strategy of the Greek government, integration is a complex and long-term process that consists of trying to adapt to a new country and a new reality. This guide has been created in order to be a useful tool at the beginning of this process, providing the basic information that is necessary for those who are in Greece under refugee status and as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status, and are trying to start a new life and to take advantage of the opportunities and possibilities offered in the country.

In this Guide you will find information about **Life in Greece, First Steps after the Granting of International Protection Status, Work/Employment, Housing, Education and Healthcare**. This information is supplemented by other available services, NGOs and other organizations.



CHAPTER 2

Information about Greece





Geographical position

Greece (official constitutional name: Hellenic Republic) is located at the southeastern tip of Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula, where Europe meets Asia and Africa. A basic feature of the country is that it includes 6,000 islands and has 15,000 kilometers of coastline, the 9th longest coastline in the world.



Political system

The political system of Greece is Unitary Parliamentary Republic. The head of state is the President of the Republic. The Constitution of Greece is the fundamental Law on which the formation of the country's legislation is based, regarding the rights and obligations of citizens, the organization and the basic rules of the Greek state and institutions.



Legislative power is exercised by the Parliament, consisting of three hundred (300) members elected by universal suffrage for a term of four (4) years, and by the President of the Republic. Executive power is exercised by the President of the Republic and the Government, headed by the Prime Minister. Information on the structure of the Government, the Prime Minister and the Ministers is available in various languages at government.gov.gr, where a translation tool is also offered. The judiciary system is independent of the legislative and executive power and is exercised by the courts (administrative, civil and criminal).

All persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honor and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and religious or political beliefs. Certain exceptions are allowed in cases provided for by international law.

Population

The population of Greece at the time of the census carried out in the year 2011¹ was 10.8 million residents, of which 912,000 were foreigners, mainly from Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Pakistan and Georgia. According to Eurostat's formal assessments, the population of the country on 1 January 2020 was estimated to be 10,691,204.



The country's capital is Athens, located in the Attica region. According to the current administrative division, there are 7 decentralized administrations, 13 regions and 325 municipalities in the country. The regions, including the municipalities, constitute the local authorities. The local authorities are responsible for local matters. Usually, the municipality is responsible for narrow local issues while the region is responsible for the broader issues. The 10 largest municipalities of the country (based on data from the year 2011) are Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Heraklion, Piraeus, Larissa, Volos, Peristeri, Rhodes and Ioannina.

Language

The official language of the Greek state is Greek, which is used throughout the territory and at all levels of education.



Religion

According to the Constitution of Greece, the prevailing religion in the country is the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ, which is embraced by the majority of the residents.



The Constitution enshrines the right to freedom of religious conscience and worship of any known religion, as long as it does not offend public policy and accepted principles of morality. In Greece, the enjoyment of civil and political rights does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs.

1. <https://www.statistics.gr/2011-census-pop-hous>. In 2021, a new population and housing census was carried out by the Greek Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). You can see the results of the census at the following link https://elstat-outsourcers.statistics.gr/Census2022_GR.pdf

Official currency

The currency of the country is the euro (€). Financial transactions can be carried out using cash, debit, or credit cards.



Official and Public Holidays

Certain days of the year are designated as holidays. Some of them are statutory (compulsory by law), while others are customary. On days that are designated as public holidays, government services and/or private businesses are closed. The statutory holidays are the following:



Name of Public Holiday	Date
New Year's Day	1 January
Epiphany	6 January
National holiday of 28 October	28 October
National holiday of 25 March	25 March
Labor Day	1 May
Easter Monday	Moving holiday
Dormition of the Mother of God	15 August
Birth of Christ; Christmas	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December

In addition, every Sunday, state's services and most private businesses and shops are closed. Finally, there are additional sector-based (Armed Forces, Schools) and place-based (local) holidays, which do not concern the general population.

Public Transportation/Travel

Public transportation offers the possibility of urban and intercity travel. In the mainland there are city and intercity buses (KTEL), suburban railway as well as a railway network. There is a subway (METRO) operating in Athens and in the wider Attica region. The islands are served by ferry connections. Ports of Attica (Piraeus, Rafina, Lavrio) are connected with almost all the islands of Greece. Many areas of the Greek territory, both mainland and on the islands, are connected by air flights. There are 39 airports serving civil aviation passengers.



Operating hours for stores

There are predetermined operating hours for stores, depending on their location and their purpose. Special stores, such as pharmacies, are open with special hours of operation and on-call schedules, so that the public can access their services 24 hours a day.



CHAPTER 3

Immediate steps after the granting of international protection status





Residence permit



If you have been granted refugee status by the Greek state, you can obtain a residence permit, valid for three (3) years, which is renewed following a relevant review. The residence permit for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection is granted for a period of one (1) year and is renewed for another two (2) years following a relevant review.

To receive your printed residence permit, you will need to apply at the competent Police Directorate/Passport Office indicated by the Regional Asylum Office where you have submitted your application for the granting of international protection. More information about the procedure of the issuance and receipt of your residence permit is available [here](#).

To renew your residence permit, you can submit an application via e-mail to this e-mail address: GAS.residencepermits@migration.gov.gr, thirty (30) calendar days before its expiration.

If you stop being a refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection, your residence permit cannot be renewed.

More information about the procedure for renewing your residence permit is available [here](#).

Travel documents



If you have been granted refugee status, and if you wish, you can obtain a travel document of the Hellenic Republic that enables you to visit other EU countries for a period of up to ninety (90) days. In the case of subsidiary protection, the Greek Authorities will grant you a travel document, upon your request, only if you are objectively unable to obtain a travel document from the authorities of your country. Remember that your travel document is strictly personal.

More information on how to apply for and how to receive your travel document is available [here](#).

In addition, you can find the detailed instructions of the steps you must follow to renew your travel document [here](#).

Basic rights

A list of the rights deriving from the granting of international protection status, distinguishing between the granting of refugee status and subsidiary protection status, is available [here \(in several languages\)](#).



If you have been granted international protection status, you have acquired the following rights:

- **The right of access to social welfare and medical care:** The Temporary Aliens Insurance and Health Care Number (PAAYPA) that was assigned to you as an asylum seeker to have access to health care must be converted into (under the so-called “transition phase”) a Social Security Number (AMKA). For this purpose, within one (1) month from the delivery of your residence permit to you, you must take all the necessary actions for its issuance, according to the law. In the meantime, you and your family members are fully covered by PAAYPA. AMKA is a unique number for every citizen of the country. With AMKA, you have access to social welfare benefits and medical care under the same conditions that apply to Greek citizens. For more information about AMKA and health care, you can see the corresponding sections below.
- **The right of access to public education** at all levels and to training programs. For more information, you can see the section “[Education](#)”.
- **The right of access to the labor market and the right to conduct business activity.** In the section “[Work and Employment](#)”, you may find more useful information. In addition, this guide briefly describes the [procedure for obtaining a Tax Identification Number \(ΑΦΜ\)](#), which is necessary both for your transactions with the Greek state and for several of your transactions with private individuals.
- **The right to apply for a long-term resident permit**, as long as you have completed five (5) years of legal and permanent residence in the country and meet all the additional conditions, as provided for in the law.
- If you have been granted refugee status, **you have, subject to specific conditions, the right to family reunification in Greece with members of your immediate family who are in your country of origin or in another third country.** If you have been granted subsidiary protection status, you do not have this right.

- **The right to apply for Greek citizenship (naturalization)**, if, as a recognized refugee or as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection status, you have lived legally and continuously in Greece for at least seven (7) years and you meet the conditions for social integration, as provided by law. For more information on obtaining Greek citizenship, see [here](#). If you have children born in Greece, who have completed primary and/or secondary education in Greece, they may be entitled to Greek citizenship under different conditions, as provided by the relevant legislation.

According to Greek legislation, the status granted to you can be revoked or not renewed. This can happen if, for example, your refugee status ceases because you regained the protection of your country of citizenship, falsified or counterfeited documents or information, endangered the country's national security or committed a serious crime.

How to obtain a Greek Social Security Number (AMKA)



The Social Security Number (AMKA) facilitates your access to hospital and medical care and ensures your employment rights. More information about AMKA is available in Greek [here](#).

If you have not yet been granted one, you can obtain an AMKA by visiting either the special offices responsible for Social Security Numbers (AMKA offices) of the e-National Social Security Fund (e-EFKA) or the Citizens Service Center (ΚΕΠ) of your area. Information on how to book an appointment with the e-EFKA office is available [here](#), and information on transactions with KEPs is available [here](#).

Along with the application, you should provide your residence permit and proof of your place of residence (Lease contract / Solemn declaration from your host or landlord / Electricity or water bill in your name). Additionally, if a child within your family was born in Greece, you must present their birth certificate.

How to obtain a Greek Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ).



The Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ) is a unique number, issued only once and consists of nine (9) digits. It is necessary to have a Greek Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ), as it is used in your transactions with public services including to open a bank account, to rent a property, to purchase a mobile phone, to have access to the labor market and several other everyday transactions.

Once your application for international protection is registered, you automatically obtain a Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ). If, however, you do not have a Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ), you can request its issuance through a video call with an employee of the competent authority. The procedure you will need to follow is described in Greek [here](#).

Alternatively, you, or a third party authorized by you, may visit the Tax Office closest to your residence. If you are not aware of the competent Tax Office you need to contact, you can search for it [here](#) by entering your address.

After the issuance of the Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ), you can obtain an account and TAXISnet codes, which are necessary for you to have online access to tax services and many other public administration services. More information about registering with the TAXISnet information system and creating an account is available [here](#). An accountant is likely the best person to assist and guide you through the process.

IMPORTANT: Do not forget to update your information!!!

If the number of your uniform format residence permit (ΑΔΕΤ) or your place of residence changes, you must inform the Tax Office of your new address. Your home address can also be changed electronically via the TAXISnet system, but to change the ΑΔΕΤ number, you must inform your tax office.

Tax return

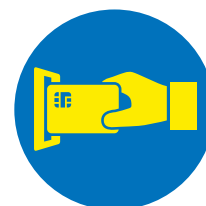
To submit a tax return, you may need help from someone who is familiar with this process. You can also seek help from an NGO or contact an accountant.

A tax return can help you claim benefits, since the granting of some allowances depends on the annual income declared within tax return.



How to open a Bank Account

Opening a bank account is important and will help you both to keep your money safe and to make and receive payments. Also, any benefits you are entitled to will be paid directly to your bank account, and when you find work, your salary will be deposited into it.



You may choose among various banks. The basic documents you should have with you when you go to a bank to open an account are the following:

- Your original, valid residence permit and a photocopy.
- Proof of your place of residence (Lease contract / Solemn declaration from your host or landlord / Electricity or water bill in your name). It is important that the address mentioned in this proof is valid, as the bank may send you important documents to the indicated address to complete the procedure.
- A bill or certificate from your mobile operator, proving that your phone number is registered in your name.
- (If you are employed) A certificate of employment and a copy of your employment contract.
- (If you are unemployed) Your original unemployment card from the Public Employment Service (Δ.ΥΠ.Α.) (former Labor Employment Office (Ο.Α.Ε.Δ.)) and a photocopy.
- A Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ) assignment certificate or other official document indicating your Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ).
- A tax clearance certificate or a solemn declaration that you have not submitted an income tax return in Greece.

Upon opening your account, the bank will usually issue you with a debit card, which you can use to withdraw money from your account using ATMs (located outside banks and at various other points) and to make your purchases in most stores.



CHAPTER 4

Work and Employment

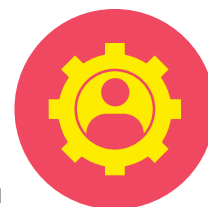




As a beneficiary of international protection, you have the right to work either as an employee or self-employed (freelancer). You can also open your own business, having the same rights and obligations as Greek citizens. You acquire the right to work after six (6) months from the date of filing your application for international protection and if you are in possession of a valid International Protection Applicant Card.

Requirements to work

A necessary requirement in order for you to be able to work in Greece is to have a Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ) and a Social Security Number (ΑΜΚΑ) (regarding the ΑΦΜ and ΑΜΚΑ issuance procedure, see [here](#)). You may also need to open a bank account for the payment of your salary by your employer (see [Chapter 3](#) regarding the required supporting documents).



Registration with the register of insured persons

When someone works for the first time, they must be registered with the Register of Insured Persons of the National Social Security Fund (ΕΦΚΑ), in order to be assigned a Social Security Member registration number (ΑΜΑ).

To be registered with the National Social Security Fund's (ΕΦΚΑ) register in order to be assigned an ΑΜΑ, you should book an appointment at any ΕΦΚΑ branch by phone at 1555, or by email.



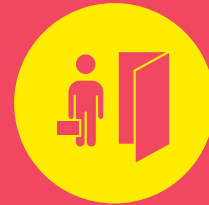
You will need the following supporting documents:

1. Your original valid uniform format residence permit (ΑΔΕΤ) and a photocopy.
2. A recruitment notice (Form Ε3) from your employer.
3. A Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ) assignment certificate (or an equivalent document indicating your Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ) and tax office, such as income tax return statement).
4. Your ΑΜΚΑ (Social Security Number).
5. A Proof of residence (Lease contract / Solemn declaration from your host or landlord / Electricity or water bill in your name)
6. A Bank Account Passbook (a photocopy of the page showing the Bank Account number) or, if you do not have a passbook, simple evidence including the IBAN of your bank account, that shows you are the primary holder of the bank account.

The AMA can be issued by you or one of your authorized representatives, at the National Social Security Fund (ΕΦΚΑ) branch closest to your residence or at the National Social Security Fund (ΕΦΚΑ) branch of your employer, from the start date of your employment onwards.

How to search for a job

Searching and finding a job in Greece is not easy; it will take time and you should be prepared for the difficulties and challenges you will face.



CV and Cover Letter

As a first step, you will need to create a Curriculum Vitae (CV), which will contain information about your studies, your professional experience, as well as the skills and any special training you have.



Specifically, your CV should include:

- Personal information such as your name, home address, phone number and a contact email;
- Your educational background;
- Your previous experience (professional or volunteering);
- Skills and training (languages, IT knowledge, etc.);
- Your interests;
- Recommendations from previous employers.

You can find a curriculum vitae template [here](#) and useful tips on how to write a CV can be found [here](#) and [here](#). In addition, you may contact and ask for help from several organizations that offer services for refugees, and provide guidance and support for writing a CV.

The interview

If your CV is positively evaluated by the employer, the next step usually will be to invite you to an interview. The interview is very important, as it is your first direct contact with the person who is interested in hiring you. Through verbal and non-verbal communication, your future employer will be able to form a first impression of you and assess whether you are suitable for the position he/she is offering. You can find useful tips and information about the interview process and your preparation for it [here](#).



Public Employment Service (Δ.ΥΠ.Α.), former Labor Employment Office (Ο.Α.Ε.Δ.)

One of the ways to contact potential employers is through public employment services dealing with employment of the workforce. The main body in Greece is the [Public Employment Service \(Δ.ΥΠ.Α.\) \(former Labor Employment Office \(Ο.Α.Ε.Δ.\)\)](#). Δ.ΥΠ.Α. operates local Employment Promotion Centers (Κ.Π.Α.), which the unemployed can contact (depending on their place of residence) in order to receive information from employment consultants on job search issues. For this reason, it is important to register with the Jobseekers' Registry of Δ.ΥΠ.Α. Registering with Δ.ΥΠ.Α. and holding an unemployment card gives you access to a number of rights and privileges, such as a free or reduced ticket for traveling by public transport, receiving unemployment benefits after a layoff and support in finding a new job. More information about the process and the necessary supporting documents is available [here](#).



Internet

The most common method of finding work is through the internet. There are sites where employers post jobs every day and it is a good idea to visit them as often as possible. Some websites where you can post your CV and find relevant job advertisements are available below:



- [Kariera.gr](#)
- [xe.gr](#)
- [Skywalker.gr](#)
- [Jobs-finder.gr](#)
- [Generation 2.0](#)

Furthermore, if you are a refugee or an asylum seeker and you are looking for a job, a training program, or a workshop, you can visit the online platform Adama Job Center, which was developed by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in partnership with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency in Greece.

Labor rights and obligations

Your rights as an employee are those established for every employee regardless of whether they are Greek or foreign and they include: employment contract, basic salary, leave, overtime, social security, medical care.



If you are hired for a job, you must (a) sign an employment contract; and (b) join the compulsory Social Security scheme. An employment contract is a type of contract between an employer and an employee. The contract shall be signed by you and your employer, and you must keep a copy. The employee and the employer are bound by the terms stipulated and agreed upon in the contract by signing it.

More information about the types of contracts, how they can be terminated and your employment rights in general is available [here](#).

Unemployment and low-income allowances

If you are a recognized refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection with a valid residence permit, you can access the National Welfare System. Information about the various benefits is available in Greek, on the website of the [Greek Organization of Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity \(ΟΠΕΚΑ\)](#).



These are some of the benefits you may be entitled to:

- Guaranteed minimum income
- Child allowance
- Housing allowance
- Social Solidarity Allowance for Uninsured Persons
- Disability allowances

The key information to know is that the granting of benefits is dependent on income, asset and residence criteria.

For information, guidance and support in matters and procedures concerning employment and your integration into the labor market, you can contact one of the Migrant Integration Centers (KEM), operating in selected municipalities. Information about KEM is available [here](#).

CHAPTER 5

Housing





Housing programs/arrangements for Beneficiaries of International Protection



“HELIOS” Project

In the context of “HELIOS” project, which is an integration support program for beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the support of the Greek state, support is provided in finding an apartment and completing the necessary procedures for concluding a lease agreement with the owner of the apartment. The possibility of subsidizing rent and moving expenses is also provided for the beneficiaries of the program. You can learn more about the criteria and registration process for the “HELIOS” project [here](#).

Monthly Housing Allowance

This program is open to various categories of beneficiaries, including beneficiaries of international protection who reside legally and permanently in Greece for at least five (5) years prior to submitting the application for participation in the program ([ΟΠΕΚΑ](#)).

More information about this allowance, such as the requirements that must be met per person or family, the amount of the allowance and the application process, is available at the local Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) (see relevant link [here](#)) or at the Community Center of the municipality of your residence (see relevant link [here](#)).

“Housing and Employment” Program

This program is aimed at individuals and families who live in homeless shelters, on the street or in inadequate accommodation. The program provides for a rent subsidy for a period of up to eighteen (18) months and coverage of basic expenses for household goods and utilities, as well as a work subsidy for a period of up to twelve (12) months. At the same time, it provides psychosocial support to the beneficiaries, with the aim of empowering and mobilizing them so that they gradually take responsibility for solving the problems of their daily lives and smoothly reintegrate into the social fabric.

The program is provided only by those municipalities that choose to participate in it. In case you are homeless and would like to know if the program in question is implemented in your municipality, you can contact the local Migrant Integration Center (KEM) or the Community Center of the municipality of your residence (see above for the relevant links).

Information on Rental Accommodation



You can search for rental accommodation:

- Online, on the dedicated website of the International Organization for Migration and the “HELIOS” project, <https://www.heliospiti.com/> (EN). There you will find listings for accommodation to rent, whose owners IOM has contacted and who have agreed to rent their property to beneficiaries of the “HELIOS” program.
- Online, on local sites with ads for finding and renting a property such as: [xe.gr](https://www.xe.gr) (EN/GR), [spitogatos.gr](https://www.spitogatos.gr) (EN/GR), [tospitimou.gr](https://www.tospitimou.gr) (EN/GR), [spiti24.gr](https://www.spiti24.gr) (EN/GR/AR/FR), [spiti360.gr](https://www.spiti360.gr) (EN/GR), [plot.gr](https://www.plot.gr) (EN/GR)
- In local and national newspapers containing a section with advertisements of properties for rent (usually under the heading “For Rent”).
- At real estate agencies. These agencies charge a fee for their services; usually the value of one month’s rent.
- On social networks such as Facebook, in the Marketplace section.
- Through information from relatives, friends, colleagues or the community.

You can visit the property you are interested in renting, after first contacting the owner or the agent who represents him/her, to see if it is in good condition. Never rent a property that you have only seen in pictures.

In order for the lease agreement to be formed and finalized, you and the owner must first agree on the terms, mainly regarding the monthly rent, the duration of the lease, the annual rent increase and the number of people that will stay in the apartment. If the property is in an apartment building, you should also ask about the communal costs that you will have to pay every month.

In case you like the apartment and agree with the terms of the owner, you should sign a private residential lease agreement. In order to sign the lease agreement, you must have a valid residence permit and a Greek Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ). Upon signing the agreement, you will have to pay the owner the first month’s rent, as well as the amount of the guarantee you will agree upon (also known as a deposit). The full amount of the guarantee will be returned to you at the end of the lease, as long as you return the property in the condition you received it.

After signing the lease contract, the owner shall electronically declare all his/her details in the TAXISnet system. After the owner completes the submission, the system will send you an email to the TAXISnet account you keep, and you will have to accept the lease agreement online.

A private lease agreement is a contract between all parties involved in the lease of a residence, which includes their rights and obligations, for the time period stated within the lease agreement. You should be sure you understand all the terms detailed within the agreement before signing it.

Renting a home entails rights and obligations with which you should comply. It is very important to pay the monthly rent on the date you have agreed with the owner. In case of a delay in payment, it is advised that you inform him/her immediately.

The tenant must pay the utility bills (such as water, electricity, telephone, etc.) for the rented property as well as a proportion of the communal costs of the apartment building / complex where the property is located.

Useful information about the process and issues of renting a property is available [here](#) and the related videos are available [here](#).



CHAPTER 6

Education





In this section you will find information about education in Greece, how to enroll your children in school if you are a parent or guardian, and how they can receive additional support. You will also find information about education and training for young people and adults, as well as opportunities for learning the Greek language and the ways in which you can acquire additional professional skills.

The Greek educational system

The Greek educational system is under the responsibility and supervision of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. Education in Greece is free for everyone and compulsory for all children from four (4) to fifteen (15) years old, boys and girls, including refugee children. Books are provided free of charge for each child, while stationery, notebooks and other supplies needed must be purchased by parents or guardians.



The following education levels are mandatory:

- Kindergarten (4-6 years old)
- Primary school (6-12 years old)
- Junior High School (12-15 years old)

Every child at the above ages must, under the supervision of its parents or guardian, be enrolled in school and attend classes daily. The school year typically runs from September to June of the following year. Refugee children have the right to access education for as long as they remain in the country.

Enrollment applications are submitted online, accompanied by specific supporting documents. If you do not have the necessary supporting documents, the persons in charge at each level of education will help you and facilitate the process for you when you choose to enroll yourself or your child in school.

More information is available [here](#).

I. Early childhood education and crèches



Enrollment in Nurseries, Daycare centers and in Kindergartens

For children under four (4) years of age, there are crèches and/or nursery schools, which accommodate infants and children from six (6) months old and daycare centers that accommodate children from two and a half (2.5) years old and up to the age of their enrollment in compulsory education. These schools can be operated privately, by the state or by the municipality. For more information, you can contact the municipality where you live.

Public kindergartens in Greece are free of charge and all four (4) and five (5) year old boys and girls, must be enrolled in them. Children who turn four (4) years old on 31 December of the year of enrollment are eligible to be enrolled in a public kindergarten. In order to apply for the enrollment of your children in a public kindergarten, you must prove that it is the first time that they attend a kindergarten and that they have not already been enrolled in another school.

You will need:

- Your personal Taxisnet access codes;
- Your mobile phone number;
- Proof of the address of your permanent residence.

In case you have questions or problems with the enrollment process, you can contact the kindergarten closest to your permanent residence.

II. Primary (Primary school) and Lower Secondary (Junior High School) Education



Enrollment in Primary School and Junior High School

If your child is between six (6) and twelve (12) years old, they should be enrolled in the primary school closest to your home, and if they are between twelve (12) and fifteen (15) years old, they should be enrolled in Junior High School. If you do not speak Greek, there are special reception classes, about which you will find more information below.

In the event that your child has attended a school in another country, you should provide a relevant certificate or indicate how many years they have attended so far and in which country.

Enrollments can take place at any time during the school year. For this purpose, you should visit the nearest Primary or Junior High School in your neighborhood and have the following documents with you:

- A birth certificate;
- A vaccination certificate;
- Proof of residence (more information is available [here](#));
- The uniform format residence permit (ΑΔΕΤ) of your child.

Additionally, during enrollment, you will be asked for the Student Individual Health Record. Information about this record is available [here](#).

When your child finishes primary school, they are automatically enrolled in the nearest junior high school.

Children are admitted to Primary School regardless of whether they are registered in municipal or other registries, and the principals of such schools are responsible for their enrollment. Principals of Primary Schools should not hinder the enrollment of children due to the lack of a certificate of permanent residence, and they should accept any evidence on the basis of which, in their opinion, the residential address of the student can be established.

More details about your child's attendance at Greek public kindergartens and primary schools are available in the School Guide drawn up by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, which you can find in Greek [here](#).

III. Non-compulsory Secondary Education

General and Vocational Senior High Schools

From sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) years old, students who have graduated from Junior High School after finishing the 3rd year can continue and complete their school education by attending Senior High School.

The General and Vocational Senior High School are for students who have completed the 3rd grade of Junior High School and are not included in compulsory education. The duration of studies at both the General and the Vocational High School is three (3) years. Both offer you the opportunity to take exams for admission to higher education. Useful information about your own or your children's enrollment is available [here](#).



IV. Special Educational Opportunities for the Refugee Population



Reception Classes - ZEP (Zones of Education Priority)

The goal of the ZEPs is the equal inclusion of all students in the education system, through the implementation of supporting actions to improve learning performance, such as the operation of Reception Classes. The school where your child will be enrolled may offer a Reception Class, in order to support your child's learning in general school subjects.

Reception and Education Facilities for Refugee Children (Δ.Υ.Ε.Π.)

Reception Facilities are a separate category for the education of refugee children, and their purpose is to support the integration of refugee children into the education system. More information about Δ.Υ.Ε.Π. is available [here](#).

V. Adult Education



Greek Language Learning and Certification

The most important asset for your integration and your life in Greece is the knowledge of the Greek language.

Greek language courses are offered by various bodies, organizations and educational institutes. Summary information about the bodies offering these courses, as well as their contact details are available [here](#).

Examinations for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek

After completing the Greek language courses, you can participate in the Greek language exams to receive the corresponding certification. More information about the Greek language certification is available [here](#).

Second chance schools

If you are over eighteen (18) years old and have not completed compulsory education, you can apply for enrollment to and join a second chance school. More information is available [here](#). The necessary supporting documents you will need, and information on the application process are available [here](#).

Lifelong Learning Centers

Lifelong Learning Centers operate in municipalities of the country. More information about Lifelong Learning Centers is available [here](#).

Vocational Apprenticeship Schools of the Public Employment Service (Δ.ΥΠ.Α.)

Information about Vocational Apprenticeship Schools of Δ.ΥΠ.Α. is available [here](#).

Vocational Training Institutes

At the Public Vocational Training Institutes of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (Δ.Ι.Ε.Κ.) courses are provided free of charge. More information about the Public Vocational Training Institutes is available [here](#).

For information, guidance, and support in matters of adult education, you can contact one of the Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) operating in selected municipalities. Information about Migrants Integration Centers is available [here](#).

VI. Access to Higher Tertiary Education

For general information, the required supporting documents and the submission of an application to a Higher Educational Institution of the country, please see [here](#).



CHAPTER 7

Health care





General information



If you have been granted international protection status in Greece, you have the right to free access to primary, secondary and tertiary health care. You can seek care in public hospitals, public medical centers, health centers and municipal clinics. In case of emergency, i.e. if you are facing a medical emergency that needs immediate and urgent medical care, you can call the national line **166**. Alternatively, you can go to the Emergency Department of a hospital. Information about which hospitals have an Emergency Department as well as their operating hours are available [here](#).

If you wish to book an appointment at a health facility, you can follow one of the following methods:

1. Call national line **1535** and follow the instructions (Greek – English)
2. Directly call the hospital that you have chosen.
1. Call national line **14900**, which concerns medical services provided at medical centers of the Social Insurance Institute (IKA) and follow the relevant instructions.

There are also Local Health Units (TO.M.Y.), which are units providing primary health care services and operate at the local level. To receive medical services from a TO.M.Y., you must register with the one located in your city or neighborhood, if available.

You can find the approved list of the Ministry of Health, including all hospitals in Greece available [here](#).

Municipal clinics



Many municipalities have medical centers, where all beneficiaries of international protection (with or without an AMKA) can have access to the primary health services offered in the specific centers (you can find more information [here](#) and [here](#)).

Medical centers operated by NGOs

There are medical centers and polyclinics operating by several NGOs that offer various medical services to beneficiaries of international protection in Greece. For more information about these clinics, including the address and available medical services, and to proceed with booking an appointment, you can call the following numbers:



Doctors of the World (Médecins du Monde/MdM): 0030 210 3213150

Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières/MSF): 0030 210 5200500

Hellenic Red Cross: 0030 210 3613848

PRAKSIS: 0030 210 8213704

Solidarity Now: 0030 210 6772500

BABEL, Mental Health Unit for migrants: 0030 210 8616280, 0030 210 8616266

Pharmaceutical Care

To access medicine and pharmaceuticals, either free of charge or for a minor fee, you must present a prescription from a doctor of a public hospital or medical center. If you have an AMKA/PAAYPA and your prescription has been issued online, you can receive your medication from any pharmacy.



In the case that you do not have an AMKA/PAAYPA, but you have a prescription from a doctor of a public hospital or medical center, even a handwritten one, you can receive your medicines free of charge from the pharmacy of the hospital or medical center where the prescription was issued.

Mental health services

If you experience anxiety, worry, sadness, loneliness, anger or depression, you should visit a specialist doctor (either a psychologist or psychiatrist). According to the existing policy in Greece, you can obtain psychiatric medicines free of charge, even if you do not have a PAAYPA or AMKA number. In Greece, these medicines are part of a special category of medicines called “psychiatric and neurological drugs” that are governed by special rules. This type of medication must be prescribed by a psychiatrist or neurologist working in a public or private hospital and/or in local primary care units or centers.



Universal Vaccination



Every year the Ministry of Health decides on the National Adult Vaccination Program, according to which vaccines are recommended or not recommended for adults depending on age, presence of an underlying disease and various other criteria. Having an AMKA gives you access to free vaccination within all public health facilities.

In addition, the Ministry of Health prepares the National Immunization Program for Children and Adolescents every year. Vaccinations are also carried out at Mother and Child Protection Centers. More details are available [here](#).



CHAPTER 8

Useful information and available services





Migrant Integration Centers (K.E.M.)



The Migrant Integration Centers (K.E.M.) are branches of the Municipal Community Centers. Their mission is to inform, serve and provide specialized services to third-country nationals. Furthermore, they shall support networking, connect all those who contact them with social integration services and programs and implement social integration actions. For instance, they provide Greek language courses and basic knowledge of Greek history, along with carrying out intercultural actions focusing on the coexistence of children and young foreigners and the local population, and actions to promote the access of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection to the labor market.

Migrant Integration Centers are currently operating in the following municipalities:

- Athens
- Piraeus
- Kallithea
- Thessaloniki
- Kordelio - Evosmos
- Thiva
- Lamia
- Andravida - Kyllini
- Heraklion
- Lesvos
- Trikala

More information about Migrant Integration Centers is available [here](#).

Migrant and Refugee Integration Councils (Σ.Ε.Μ.Π.)



Civic participation is extremely important in a society, in order to create conditions of acquaintance and mutual acceptance. To strengthen your representation in matters concerning the local community of which you are a member, provisions exist regarding the establishment and operation of special advisory bodies called Migrant and Refugee Integration Councils (Σ.Ε.Μ.Π.) in the municipality.

More information about the work and operation of Migrant and Refugee Integration Councils is available [here](#).

Collective Representation Bodies of Third-Country Nationals



Non-profit Unions and Associations of third-country nationals can be considered as recognized collective representation bodies of third-country nationals. These bodies have a very important role in the institutional mediation of the interests of migrant groups. In addition, members of these bodies can offer significant help to people who come to Greece for the first time, so that they can adapt and integrate into the Greek society.

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum, and in particular the Directorate for Social Integration, recognizes the importance and role of these bodies, and has therefore created a relevant register of these bodies. Based on this register, the following associations and unions representing third-country nationals have been officially established and are operating in Greece:

Greek Forum of Refugees, www.refugees.gr, F: @Greekforumofrefugees

Greek Forum of Migrants, www.migrant.gr, F: @GreekForumOfMigrants

Mother Teresa Association of Albanian Migrants, F: albanian.association.mother.tereza.greece

Afghan Community of Migrants and Refugees, F: @Afghans.inGreece

Association of Senegalese of Athens DIAMM AK TERANGA, F: ASSOCIATION DES SENEGALAIS D'ATHENES-GREECE

Congolese Community in Greece, F: @congolesecommunityofgreece

Committee of Afghans in Greece

Ivorian Community of Greece, <http://www.ivoirogrec.eu/>, F: @IvorianCommunityofGreece

Second Generation-Generation 2.0/Institute for Rights, Equality and Diversity, <https://g2red.org/>, @secondgenerationgreece

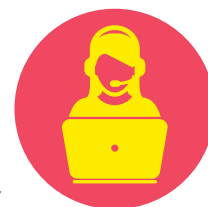
Federation of Albanian Associations in Greece, F: @federatashoqatave.shqiptaregreqi

Pak Hellenic Cultural and Welfare Society

Indian Community in Greece <http://www.indogreek.org/GICWA/index.html>, F: @indianexpats

Nigerian Community Greece, F: Nigerian Community Greece

Social Integration Help Desk



The Directorate for Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum operates a “Social Integration Help Desk” service, with the aim of managing questions of beneficiaries of international protection and providing instructions on issues related to the process of their integration in Greece, such as the availability of and access to Greek language courses, the provision of job counseling, housing options, the process of issuing a Tax Identification Number (ΑΦΜ) and a Social Security Number (ΑΜΚΑ).

More information about the “Social Integration Help Desk” service is available [here](#).

Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues (Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues – ACCMR) / Digital Platform

The Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR) operates as a coordination hub for the development and exchange of good practices and know-how between the municipality of Athens and local and international NGOs, international organizations and institutional bodies.

The ACCMR Digital Service Mapping and Interconnection Platform is a participatory mapping tool of the [services](#) and [activities](#) implemented by the ACCMR agencies, focusing on the migrant and refugee population.

More information about the ACCMR is available [here](#).

Emergency services



In case of emergency, you can contact the relevant services by calling the following phone numbers:

Emergency medical assistance / National Center for Emergency Care (EKAB): 166

Police: 100

Fire service: 199

Coast guard: 108

European Emergency Number: 112

24 Hour SOS Help Line to Address and combat violence against women: 15900

24 Hour Police line to report incidents of racist violence: 11414

Human Trafficking Hotline: 1109

Poison Control Center: 0030 210 7793777



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Ministry of Migration & Asylum

196-198 Thivon Avenue,
182 33 Ag. Ioannis Rentis – Nikaia
<https://migration.gov.gr/>



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR Representation in Greece

91 Michalakopoulou street,
115 28, Athens
Tel. 216 2007800 | Fax 210 6726417
Email: great@unhcr.org | www.unhcr.gr