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SPECIFICATIONS FOR NATIONAL REPORT PART 1

Contributing to the EMN asylum and migration overview 2024

Detailed information and guidance on how to complete this report are contained in the Part 1 Instruction document circulated and also on the EMN IES. As also mentioned there, please do not report on Pact Implementation as such. If there are concrete legal or policy developments (e.g. changing a law, building a reception centre) related to Pact implementation, please report these under the relevant question in the Template, with the Pact mentioned as the driver of the development.

1 OVERARCHING AND CROSSCUTTING CHANGES TO NATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASYLUM SYSTEMS

Note: Overarching developments are likely to result from a change of government or an overarching policy change that affects the overall approach to policymaking which in turn accounts for changes reported in the specific policy areas. This could include for example a new Programme for Government, institutional restructuring or a new migration law covering both asylum and migration etc. Crosscutting developments that impact on more than one thematic section in the template can be included under this question. This could entail for example, digitalisation strategies across more than one area of processing; resource management across more than one area of processing; customer service strategies; developments to improve preparedness; etc.

Q1. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal or policy developments in the national migration and asylum system in 2024?

National migration

Development: Entry into force, on 31st of March 2024, of the [new Migration Code](#) (L.5038/2023, GG A'81) and issuance of the [Joint Ministerial Decision](#) no. 95391/2024 (GG B' 1807) which determines the special supporting documents, by category of national entry visa and the required supporting documents for the granting and renewal of residence permits, in accordance with the provisions of the above L.5038/2023 (A' 81).

Objective: Reform of legal migration legislation and procedures.

Driver:

Asylum system

Development:

Following recent developments in Syria (fall of Assad regime), the Asylum Service (as other EU MSs) suspended the issuance of decisions on applications filed by Syrian nationals for international protection and is monitoring developments and will decide on its policy in the near future.

Objective: Gaining time for information about the situation in country of origin before issuing decisions.

Driver: Political developments in Syria.

2 LEGAL MIGRATION

2.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Note: cross-cutting developments in relation to legal migration are developments that impact on more than one policy area in the field of legal migration as outlined in Questions 3, 6, 7 and 9 (see also the explanation in Q1 for general context)

Q2. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal or policy developments in relation to legal migration in 2024?

Development: Entry into force, on 31st of March 2024, of the [new Migration Code](#) (L.5038/2023, GG A'81) and issuance of the [Joint Ministerial Decision](#) no. 95391/2024 (GG B' 1807) which determines the special supporting documents, by category of national entry visa and the required supporting documents for the granting and renewal of residence permits, in accordance with the provisions of the above L.5038/2023 (A' 81).

Objective: Reform of legal migration legislation and procedures.

Driver:

2.2 Work-Related migration

Q3. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to migrant workers (both employees and self-employed), including developments to satisfy labour market shortages and skills needs or other changes to admission rules including to combat misuse, regarding the following categories of workers in 2024?

- . Crosscutting developments affecting all migrant workers

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Highly qualified workers and intra-corporate transferees

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Low and medium skilled workers (other than seasonal workers)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Seasonal workers

Development: Issuance of an Act of Ministerial Council determining the maximum number of positions for dependent and seasonal work for third country nationals for the year 2025. The maximum number of positions for dependent

work, seasonal work and highly qualified employment of third-country nationals for the year 2025 is set at eighty-nine thousand two hundred and ninety (89,290). In particular: a) Dependent work is forty-one thousand six hundred and seventy (41,670), b) seasonal work is forty-five thousand six hundred and twenty (45,620), and c) highly qualified employment is two thousand (2,000).

Objective: Regulation of work-related migration admissions.

Driver: Necessities of workforce.

- . Self-employed and start-ups

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Other remunerated workers

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: Please note that question 70 deals with monitoring of and specific sanctions against misuse of legal migration pathways (work, study, family reunification). For question 3, please only report any changes to admission rules implemented where misuse was a driver.

Q4. Were there any legal or policy developments aimed at tackling labour exploitation of migrant workers and/or safeguarding equal treatment of migrant workers with nationals of your Member/Observer Country in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: Developments in regards to trafficking in human beings, including trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, are covered in section 10. Developments on tackling illegal employment are covered in section 9.

Q5. Were there any developments regarding bilateral labour migration agreements¹ (including Skills Mobility Partnerships/Talent

¹ According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), bilateral labour migration agreements are "formal mechanisms concluded between States, which agreements are essentially legally binding commitments concerned with inter-state cooperation on labour migration. The term is also used to describe less formal arrangements regulating the movement of workers between countries entered into by States as well as a range of other actors, including individual ministries, employer organizations, etc." (Source: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml25_1.pdf) , last accessed on 20 November 2024

Partnerships²⁾ between your Member/Observer Country and third countries in 2024? Please note circular migration schemes are to be reported under Q92 in section 12.

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note to Observer Countries for question 5: please also report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

2.3 Students and researchers

Q6. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to students, including changes to admission rules to combat misuse, in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: Please note that question 70 deals with monitoring of and specific sanctions against misuse of legal migration pathways (work, study, family reunification). For question 6, please only report any changes to admission rules implemented where misuse was a driver.

Q7. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to researchers in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q8. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to trainees, au pairs and volunteers in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

² The EMN Glossary (Version 10.0) defines talent partnership as a "Comprehensive EU policy framework as well as funding support for cooperation with third countries to better match labour and skills needs in the EU aimed at enhancing legal migration and mobility with key partners."

2.4 Family reunification

Q9. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding family reunification, including changes to eligibility criteria/rules to combat misuse, in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: This question does not refer to family reunification of beneficiaries of international protection, and UAMs, as these are covered in sections 3 (international protection) and 5 (UAMs and other vulnerable groups) of the template.

Note: Please note that question 70 deals with monitoring of and specific sanctions against misuse of legal migration pathways (work, study, family reunification). For question 9, please only report any changes to admission rules implemented where misuse was a driver.

2.5 Information provision

Q10. Were there any legal or policy developments to improve the provision of information on the pathways to and conditions of legal migration for third-country nationals, in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: examples of this are legal/policy decisions to improve provision of information through information campaigns aimed at legal migration (e.g. campaigns targeting students, highly-skilled workers, family reunification), websites, specific centres etc.

The aim here is not to obtain a detailed list of campaigns or changes to existing websites.

2.6 Other developments

Q11. Were there any other legal or policy developments regarding legal migration (e.g. other legal migration pathways not covered by the questions above such as investors, etc.) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

3 INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Note: In the global context, the actions by the international community on the basis of international law, aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of a specific category of persons outside their countries of origin, who lack the national protection of their own countries. In the EU context, protection that encompasses refugee status and subsidiary protection status. (EMN Glossary v10.0).

3.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q12. **Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal or policy developments in relation to international protection in 2024?**

1.Development: The [Ministerial Decision no 308768/31.12.2024](#) which aims to regulate individual issues concerning the internal structure and operation of the Asylum Service.

Objective: to update the existing legal framework which regulates particular issues around the internal structure and operation of the Asylum Service.

Driver: addressing the needs and responsibilities of the Asylum Service and ensuring its smooth operation.

2.Development: Issuance of guidelines of the Secretary General of Migration Policy (nr. 301704/16.12.2024) regarding the legislative framework around the acquisition of long-term resident status by a beneficiary of international protection.

Objective: To clarify the application of the legislative framework.

Driver: The effective implementation of the legislative framework and efficient case management.

<https://diavgeia.gov.gr/decision/view/96%CE%9A%CE%9446%CE%9C%CE%94%CE%A8%CE%9F-%CE%941%CE%95>

3.Development: Commencement of the operations of the Asylum Units for Vulnerable Groups of Attica and of Thessaloniki (Decision No 23576/26.01.2024, G.G. B' 600/2024). According to the aforementioned decision of the Director of the Asylum Service, the operation of i) the Asylum Unit for Vulnerable Groups of Attica with statutory seat in Athens and ii) the Asylum Unit for Vulnerable Groups of Thessaloniki with statutory seat in Thessaloniki started on 01/03/2024. The two Asylum Units are competent authorities to manage and examine international protection applications for the following groups considered as vulnerable groups. According to Art. 1 (λγ) of the Asylum Code (Law 4939/2022 - G. G. A' 111) such as) the following groups are considered as vulnerable groups: children, unaccompanied children, direct relatives of victims of shipwrecks (parents, siblings, children, husbands/wives), disabled persons, elderly, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illness, persons with cognitive or mental disability and victims of torture,

rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence such as victims of female genital mutilation. Following the assessment of vulnerability during the procedures for the reception and identification of third-country nationals or stateless persons, procedures of application for international protection of these groups will be managed by the local competent Asylum Unit, by high skilled staff.

Relevant link: https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20240200600

Objective:

Driver:

4.Development: Access to the labour market for the asylum applicants – Amendment of Art. 57 Law 4939/2022/ Asylum Code (G.G.A’ 111). See also answer to question 19.

Relevant link: https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20230100211

Objective:

Driver:

5.Development: National Coordinator against Migrant Smuggling and National Coordinator for Returns – Art. 191 Law 5078/2023 (G.G. A’ 211/2023)

According to Art. 191 of law 5078/2023, the creation of position of the National Coordinator against Migrant Smuggling was established, who coordinates the efficient application of the key national and EU priorities against irregular migration and organised crime. The National Coordinator will promote better operational cooperation and data sharing, in order to break the smugglers' business model. With the same law, the position of the National Coordinator for Returns was introduced to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, who is responsible for planning, cooperating, coordinating and implementing national and EU return policy in cooperation with all relevant national services, authorities and bodies, including the Ombudsman, as well as the services of the European Commission and other European and international organisations and institutions.

https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20230100211

The competencies conferred on the National Coordinators and all the necessary relevant details concerning the exercise of his competences against Migrant Smuggling as well as the powers conferred on the National Coordinator for Returns were provided for as firstly regulated by the Joint Ministerial Decision no. 264465/01.11.2024 [G.G.B’6046] were amended by the joint Ministerial Decision No 148763/28.05.2024 (G.G. B’ 3013).

[Relevant link: [Φ.Ε.Κ. - Εθνικό Τυπογραφείο](#)]

[Relevant link:

<https://dirlars.migration.gov.gr/storage/uploads/01JDPKDP07WWBTZ9XGM2DXHCP6.pdf>]

The aforementioned Joint Ministerial Decision which was based on the enabling provision of paragraph 3 (b') of article 191 of Law 5078/2023 specifies the responsibilities of the National Coordinator against Migrant Smuggling and all the necessary relevant details concerning the exercise of his competences, the establishment of an office of the National Coordinator and his designation as National Contact Point within his competences.

In May 2024 there was an overall amendment of the first Joint Ministerial Decision (of November 2024) with Joint Ministerial Decision No 148763/28.05.2024 (G.G. B' 3013).

[Relevant link: [Φ.Ε.Κ. - Εθνικό Τυπογραφείο](#)]

Objective:

Driver:

3.2 International protection procedure

Q13. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to access to the procedure for international protection in 2024?

1. Development:

Two Asylum Units for Vulnerable Groups in Attica and Thessaloniki started their operation by way of [Decision No. 23576/2024 of the Director of Asylum Service \(Gov. Gaz. B' 600/26.01.2024\)](#). Their responsibility is to receive and manage applications for international protection submitted by persons belonging to vulnerable groups as defined in paragraph xxxiii (λγ) of article 1 of Law 4939/2022 and within their local jurisdiction. According to [Circular no. 62739/20.02.2024 of the General Secretary of Migration Policy](#), and for the smooth initial operation of the aforementioned Asylum Units, only the registration of the international protection applications from unaccompanied and separated minors would take place for the first three months. This function was further extended by [Circular no. 170612/13.06.2024 of the General Secretary of Migration Policy](#) and [Circular no. 218389/23.08.2024 of the General Secretary of Migration Policy](#).

Objective: The targeted registration and management of applications for international protection from vulnerable groups.

Driver: The need for the effective management of applications for international protection from third country nationals who are vulnerable.

2. Development: Circular no. 276496/12.11.2024 of the Secretary General of Migration Policy stipulated that the initial registration of applications for international protection following legal entry is the sole responsibility of the Asylum Service, as those applicants are exempt from the procedures related to reception and identification.

Objective: To provide clarifications regarding the conditions and the verification of legal entry by personnel of the Asylum Service.

Driver: The need to clarify the conditions and the verification of legal entry by personnel of the Asylum Service.

Note: this concerns making, registering and lodging an application. As per the Asylum Procedures Directive 2013/32/EU: Making an application: during this phase the person expresses the intention to apply for international protection; registering an application: the applicant's intention to seek protection is registered, which may be done by an authority not competent for the asylum procedure itself, such as the border police; lodging an application: the asylum application is formally lodged at the competent authority for the asylum procedure.

3.Development: Instructions for the conduct of reception and identification procedures: the Reception and Identification Service of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum published on 15/7/2024 guidelines for the implementation of Articles 38-42 of Law 4939/2022 regarding the conduct of reception and identification procedures at Reception and Identification Centers, the Closed Controlled Access Centers and the Mobile Registration and Transfer's Coordination Units

Objective:

Driver:

Q14. **Were there any legal or policy developments regarding admissibility of applications³ in 2024?**

Development: issuance of the Joint Ministerial Decision no. 305652 (G.G. B' 7117/2024) for the establishment of a National List of countries designated as "safe countries of origin" according to the paragraph 5 of article 92 of Law 4939/2022. On 27 December 2024, following the mandatory revision of up-to-date international sources, the JMD recasts national list of "safe countries of origin". For a particular applicant, a country of origin is safe only if, after an individual examination of the application, it is demonstrated that the applicant (a) has the nationality of that country or is a stateless person and was previously a habitual resident of that country; and (b) has not submitted any serious grounds for considering the country not to be a safe country of origin in his or her particular

³ An application for international protection which an EU Member State authority may decide not to examine in the following cases:

(a) another EU Member State has granted international protection;

(b) a country which is not an EU Member State is considered as a first country of asylum for the applicant;

(c) a country which is not an EU Member State is considered as a safe third country for the applicant;

(d) the application is a subsequent application, where no new elements or findings relating to the examination of whether the applicant qualifies as a beneficiary of international protection by virtue of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) have arisen or have been presented by the applicant; or

(e) a dependant of the applicant lodges an application after they have, in accordance with Art. 7(2), consented to have their case be part of an application lodged on their behalf, and there are no facts relating to the dependant's situation which justify a separate application. (Source: Art. 33 of Directive 2013/32/EU (Recast Asylum Procedures Directive)).

circumstances and in terms of his or her qualification as a beneficiary of international protection. The following countries are characterized as safe countries of origin: Egypt, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Georgia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Morocco, Bangladesh, Benin, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Moldova, Angola.

[relevant URL] <https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=77529>

Objective: Article 92 of Law 4939/2022 and specifically par. 5[5] of this Article titled "Safe countries of Origin" is the national enabling provision transposing art. 37 of Directive 2013/32/EU regulating the national designation of safe countries of origin for the purposes of examining applications for international protection. The assessment of whether a country is a safe country of origin based on a range of relevant and up-to-date information, derived from sources of information, including, in particular, information from other Member States, EASO, UNHCR, the Council of Europe and other relevant international organisations. The national list of safe countries of origin is updated each year in November.

Driver:

Note: An admissibility examination determines whether the application is inadmissible to the international protection procedure. The reasons for determining an application as inadmissible are covered in Article 33 of the Procedures Directive.

Q15. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding Dublin procedures in 2024?

Development: In March 2024, new guidelines on the administrative management of cases of asylum seekers who reside in Reception and Identification Service (RIS) facilities and who may be falling under the Dublin Regulation, were published by RIS Governor.

Objective:

Driver:

Q16. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding types of procedures to examine a claim in 2024?

- . Regular procedure

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

- . Border procedure

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

- . **Accelerated procedures (including application of the safe country of origin concept or safe country of origin lists)**

Development: The Joint Ministerial Decision no 305652/27.12.2024 provides that the same 16 countries included in the previous list of safe countries of origin continue to be designated as safe, i.e. Egypt, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Georgia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Morocco, Bangladesh, Benin, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo, and Tynisia. A further two countries were added, namely Angola and Moldova, raising the total number of countries to 18.

Objective: The timely update of the national list of safe countries of origin.

Driver: The legislative provision for the annual renewal of the national list of safe countries of origin.

Q17. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding first instance appeals in 2024?

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

Q18. Were there any legal or policy developments in 2024 regarding operational aspects of the international protection procedure (including appeals) covering the following aspects:

a. Procedural safeguards (e.g. access to information and legal counselling/representation; provision of interpretation)

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

b. Timeframes and case management including backlog management, caseload management tools e.g. prioritisation procedures. omitting of the personal interview in specific circumstances

Development: Since September 2023, under art. 82(7) Law 4939/2022 [art. 14(2) Directive 2013/32/EU], the Greek Asylum Service started issuing decisions granting international protection status, without conducting personal interviews, based on the available evidence, for specific profiles of applicants for international protection, namely nationals of Afghanistan, Yemen, Eritrea (military age), Sudan (non-Arab tribes), Iraq (Yezidis) and stateless Palestinians (from the Gaza Strip and West Bank). This practice was suspended in 2024 for nationals of Syria and for stateless Palestinians with Syria as their last place of residence.

Objective: effective backlog and caseload management by taking into account recent developments in Syria.

Driver: increased number of arrivals

c. Digitisation of the procedure/Data management elements

Development: Individual improvements in the database of the Asylum Service.

Objective: the increased quality and efficiency of the asylum system.

Driver: identify the best way to operate and manage the existing database.

d. Other Aspects (e.g. country of origin information)

Development: The suspension of the issuing of international protection decisions following recent developments in Syria as a country of origin until the current situation is re-assessed.

Objective: to collect and assess of relevant information concerning the country of origin.

Driver: recent developments in the country of origin

3.3 Reception of applicants for international protection

Q19. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to reception of applicants for international protection, including access to basic services, in 2024?

- . Accommodation

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Other material reception conditions including allowances

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Access to the labour market (this question only covers the criteria for the legal right to work)

Development: Implementation of the provision regarding access to the labour market of applicants of international protection. At the end of 2023, an amendment of Art. 57 Law 4939/2022 (Asylum Code, G.G. A' 111) was issued by art. 192 of [L.5078/2023](#) (G.G. A' 211), according to which, applicants have access to the labour market as employees or service or work providers within 60 days from the moment the application has been formally lodged and they have obtained an asylum seeker's card. This right is granted if no first instance decision has been taken within the aforementioned period, through no fault of the applicant. Before the amendment, access to labour market was granted after 6 months.

Objective: Curtailment of waiting period for access to the labor market.

Driver: To facilitate the integration of asylum seekers.

- . Access to healthcare, including mental health

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Access to education

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Maintaining family unity

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

- . Measures in relation to child protection/safeguarding

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q20. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to pre-integration measures (e.g. labour market orientation, language training) for applicants for international protection in 2024?

Development: In April, Reception and Identification Service of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum issued a Circular on access to employment for asylum seekers, who reside in its facilities. The Circular provides guidelines regarding the obligation of residents to inform the management of the facility about a new employment, the potential adjustment of material reception conditions to those who are working, as well as instructions for facilitating access to legal employment.

Objective:

Driver:

Q21. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the assessment of and response to special reception needs in relation to vulnerabilities in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

3.4 Detention

Q22. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding (alternatives to) detention of applicants for international protection in 2024?

Development: The provision of Article 52 of the Law 4939/2022 has been amended in its fifth paragraph to correctly transpose paragraph 6 of Article 11 of the recast Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU). This is foreseen in the new Law 5130/2024, Article 47, par. 1 (Gov. Gazette A' 127).

Specifically, Article 52 of Law 4939/2022 (Gov. Gazette A' 111) stipulates that, in duly justified cases and for a reasonable period of time, there may be a derogation from the rule of providing separate accommodation for families of applicants for international protection who are in detention. With the amendment foreseen under law 5130/2024, a location element is added to the same paragraph, specifying that such derogation may occur only when detention is taking place at the borders and in the transit zones of the country's ports or airports.

Objective: To clarify that such derogation may be implemented only at the borders or transit zones.

Driver: To correctly transpose Article 11 (6) of the recast RCD.

3.5 Family reunification

Q23. **Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to maintaining family unity⁴ (including granting family reunification) for beneficiaries of international protection in 2024?**

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

3.6 Withdrawal of international protection

Q24. **Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to withdrawal (both revocation and cessation) of international protection status in 2024?**

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

3.7 Relocation, resettlement, humanitarian admission and other pathways to protection

⁴ The EMN Glossary (Version 10.0) defines the right to family unity, in the *context of a refugee*, as a right provisioned in Art. 23 of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) and in Art. 12 of Directive 2013/33/EU (Recast Reception Conditions Directive) obliging EU Member States to ensure that family unity can be maintained. (Source EMN Glossary v.10.0).

Q25. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to resettlement⁵ and humanitarian admission⁶ programmes in 2024, including for unaccompanied minors?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: please distinguish clearly between UNHCR resettlement programmes and other types of humanitarian admission programmes/pathways to protection in your answer.

Please report on pledges made in 2024; new national programmes introduced; new policy approaches to resettlement, developments regarding community sponsorship; developments in relation to pre-departure programmes, reception, supports for and legal status of persons accepted under such schemes, development of innovative pathways linked to education or work.

Q26. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to other developments regarding relocation, resettlement and humanitarian admission in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

3.8 Other developments

Q27. Were there any other legal and policy developments in the field of international protection in 2024 which were not covered above?

1.Development: in 2024, the Asylum service of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum continued to prepare for the implementation and application of the new Pact on migration and asylum, making use of the various building blocks used by the European Commission to simplify the implementation of the Pact. In particular, the national interministerial working group for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the project "Implementation, operational planning and delivery

⁵ In the EU context, admission following a referral from the from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of third-country nationals or stateless persons from a third country to which they have been displaced, to the territory of the EU Member States, and who are granted international protection and have access to durable solutions in accordance with Union and national law (Source: EMN Glossary v10.0).

⁶ In the EU context, the admission following, where requested by an EU Member State, a referral from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or another relevant international body, of third-country nationals or stateless persons from a third country to which they have been forcibly displaced to the territory of EU Member States, and who are granted international protection or humanitarian protection under national law that provides for rights and obligations equivalent to those of Art. 20 to 34 of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (Source: EMN Glossary v10.0).

of the pact” submitted to the Eur.Commission the National Implementation Plan, in December 2024.

Objective: to establish a well prepared system by the end of the transitional period for the implementation of the Pact.

Driver: the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

2.Development: Circular nr. 301704/16.12.2024 “Instructions for the implementation of the legislative framework in the case of obtaining long-term resident status by a beneficiary of international protection status” provides guidance for the process of applications of beneficiaries of international protection to fall under the long-term resident status. In order to receive long-term resident permit, beneficiaries of international protection are required to deliver the residence permit they obtain as refugees (ADET), which is forwarded to the Asylum Service that issued it and the permit automatically becomes invalid.

Objective: Distribution of relevant information.

Driver:

<https://diavgeia.gov.gr/decision/view/96%CE%9A%CE%9446%CE%9C%CE%94%CE%A8%CE%9F-%CE%941%CE%95>

4 TEMPORARY PROTECTION AND OTHER MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Observer Countries operating outside of the EU legal framework of the Temporary Protection Directive are invited to report on similar measures that have been applied in their respective countries in response to the war in Ukraine.

4.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q28. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal and policy developments in 2024 regarding temporary protection of persons fleeing Ukraine?

Development: There were not any overarching and/ or crosscutting legal and policy developments in 2024 regarding temporary protection of persons fleeing Ukraine. In 2022, following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, and the Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council Implementing Decision (2022/C 126 I/01), (a) the Decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum no. 131035/04.03.2022 was issued and activated P.D. 80/2006, which transposed Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EC) into national law, and (b) the Ministerial Decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum no. 172172/28.03.2022 specified the procedure for granting temporary protection.

In 2023, pursuant to the Decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum no 81645/08.02.2023 and the Decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum no 392634/20.08.2023, the force of the Decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum no. 131035/04.03.2022 was suspended initially for a period of six months and specifically from March 4, 2023, to September 4, 2023, and subsequently for a further period of six months, and specifically from September 4, 2023, to March 4, 2024.

Act No. 64419/21.02.2024 of the Minister of Migration and Asylum extended the validity of temporary protection to displaced persons from Ukraine until 4 March 2025, following the Council's Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2409 of 19 October 2023 extending temporary protection as introduced by Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382.

Objective: The protection of displaced persons from Ukraine and compliance with the Council's Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382.

Driver: The need to protect displaced persons from Ukraine continues to exist due to the continuation of the war. The Council has not issued any decision establishing that the situation in Ukraine allows for the safe and permanent repatriation of persons granted temporary protection.

4.2 Legal Status

Q29. Were there any changes made in 2024 regarding the legal status of persons to whom temporary protection applies in accordance with Council Implementing Decision 2022/382 (e.g. extension of scope of temporary protection, registration, type of documentation, renewal of residence permits following the extension, access to other statuses)?

1.Development: Extension of Temporary Protection: by [Decision](#) No 64419 of 21.02.2024 of the Minister of Migration and Asylum, posted on the database "DIAVGEIA" (ΑΔΑ: 90Ι346ΜΔΨΟ-89Β), the validity of the temporary protection status for persons displaced from Ukraine is further were automatically extended until 4 March 2025. During the above-mentioned extension period, Residence Permits already in possession of the beneficiaries are valid and no further action needs to be taken.

Objective: The continuation of legal residence of beneficiaries of temporary protection.

Driver: Continuation of Russia-Ukraine conflict.

2.Development: issuance of the Circular of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum No 24261/22.01.2024 [ΑΔΑ: Λ4ΜΧ46ΜΔΨΟ-ΦΤΔ] it was regulated⁹, in which cases and under what conditions it will be possible for a beneficiary and holder of a temporary protection residence permit to obtain a residence permit of the Migration Code (Law 5038/2023 as in force) based on articles 97 and 190-194 of Law 5038/2023.

Relevant link:

<https://diavgeia.gov.gr/decision/view/%CE%9B4%CE%9C%CE%A746%CE%9C%CE%94%CE%A8%CE%9F-%CE%A6%CE%A4%CE%94>

Objective:

Driver:

4.3 Rights

Q30. Were there any legal or policy developments in 2024 in relation to access to rights and basic services for beneficiaries of temporary protection?

. Access to suitable accommodation and/or means to obtain housing?

Development: No legal or policy developments in 2024. Please note that, short-term hospitality continues to be available in the Accommodation Facility of Sintiki in Serres. Beneficiaries are able to apply for long-term accommodation electronically filling the relevant form in the Ministry of Migration and Asylum website and be provided with accommodation in the Accommodation Facilities of Serres (North Greece) and Elefsina (South Greece).

Objective:

Driver:

b. Access to medical care including in relation to mental health?

Development: No legal or policy developments in 2024. Please note that the beneficiaries when provided with the Temporary Protection Residence Permit, are also provided with a social security number and can have free of charge access to public health care services. Even before receiving Temporary Protection status and with the presentation of their passport or the relevant service note from the Greek Police received upon arrival in Greece, Ukrainian nationals have access to medical and nursing care in all public hospitals, nursing homes, municipal clinics, primary health care facilities, and Rehabilitation and Social Care Units for prescribing medicine, therapeutic operations and diagnostic examinations. Also, a telephone helpline 10306 funded by the Hellenic Ministry of Health offers free of charge mental health support and care by Ukrainian mental health professionals.

Objective:

Driver:

c. Access to assistance in terms of social welfare and means of subsistence?

Development: No legal or policy developments in 2024. Please note that with the issuing of the temporary protection permit, beneficiaries are also issued the Social Security Number (Αριθμός Μητρώου Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης- AMKA). Furthermore, [Circular No. Φ80320/25192/01.04.2024](#) was issued to clarify practicalities for the implementation of the [Joint Ministerial Decision No. Φ80320/109864, published on December 14, 2023 \(Government Gazette B' 7280/22.12.2023\)](#) on updates and regulations regarding the issuance, management and functionality of the "AMKA", which also concerns beneficiaries of temporary protection.

Objective: to clarify the proper implementation of the regulatory framework related to the AMKA.

Driver: the need to clarify the proper implementation of the regulatory framework related to the AMKA.

d. Access to education for minors (including educational support)?

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

e. Access to the labour market

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

f. Access to education for adults, including vocational training?

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

Note: Please focus answers on new developments or substantive changes, not continuation of measures that already existed.

4.4 Other developments

Q31. Were there any legal or policy developments in 2024 in relation to support for persons enjoying temporary protection who voluntarily want to go back home to Ukraine?

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

Q32. Were there any other major legal or policy developments in 2024 in relation to other aspects related to the protection of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine not covered above (e.g. family reunification, guardianship/custody)?

Development: no legal or policy developments in 2024.

Objective:

Driver:

5 UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

5.1 Unaccompanied minors

Note: this section covers unaccompanied minors in the asylum procedure and unaccompanied minors outside of the asylum procedure. If legal or policy developments only apply to one or both categories, please explicitly mention this in your description of the development.

5.1.1 Identification and registration of Unaccompanied Minors

Q33. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level in relation to identification and registration of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: this includes the collection of biometric data, identification of special needs.

Q34. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to unaccompanied minors going missing in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q35. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to age assessment or in the methods of age assessment in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

5.1.2 Reception and care of unaccompanied minors

Q36. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level in relation to the reception and care of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

1.Development: The project "Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures" is being implemented by the General Secretariat with the support of the UNHCR and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) from November 2022. By the end of 2024, a total of 8 Train-the-Trainer Trainings were conducted for 80 reference persons working in 24 different institutions. Similarly, 43 secondary trainings have already been successfully completed on a total of 380 professionals from 20 different institutions, in cooperation with each other.

In June 2024, the General Secretariat organized a Roundtable, with the contribution of the project partners, UNHCR and EUAA, and with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the Ministry of Justice, NGOs, the Institute of Child Health and the University of West Attica. Its achievement is the publication of a Policy Brief that reflects the issues discussed, the main conclusions that emerged, the proposals for strengthening synergies in the field of child protection, as well as the next steps required for the establishment, harmonization and certification of Best Interest Procedures.

Objective: The aim of the project, in line with the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, is to harmonize the best interests procedures.

Driver: The introduction of an integrated tool for the best interests assessment for unaccompanied minors and the training of professionals who use it.

2.Development: On 18th July 2024, the ministerial decision (No. 193953/9.7.2024) concerning the Standard Operating Procedures of Emergency Accommodation Facilities for Unaccompanied Minors was published in the Government Gazette (B' 4214). The purpose of these rules is to define Standard Operating Procedures regarding building specifications, premises and equipment, as well as general conditions, capacity, staffing, and the services provided.

Objective: The aim of the operation of the Emergency Accommodation Facilities is to create and provide a framework for urgent and immediate accommodation, protection and support for unaccompanied minors who are found to be living homeless or in precarious living conditions through the National Emergency Response Mechanism. Additionally, the Emergency Accommodation Facilities prepare the minors' transition to another care setting (shelter, foster care, semi-independent living, adult structures, etc.), taking into account the age criterion and their personal circumstances

Driver: The standardization of procedures contributes to a more effective response to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of unaccompanied minors living in precarious conditions/homelessness as well as to the safeguarding of their rights and legitimate interests during their accommodation in Emergency Accommodation Facilities.

Link: [Φ.Ε.Κ. - Εθνικό Τυπογραφείο](#)

3.Development: The project "Compass - Complementary Mechanism for Supporting the National Strategy for the protection of unaccompanied minors in Greece" was launched. This initiative covers a wide range of services and projects aiming at supporting unaccompanied minors, facilitating their access to their rights, and supporting and guiding the staff who assist them. The action includes the creation of five Centres for the provision of specialised services throughout Greece, with a focus on mental health, legal aid and support against school drop-out. At the same time, support will be offered to young adults who have come of age without a protective framework, as well as to professionals working in the field. (<https://tamey.gov.gr/amif-2021-2027/calls/023/>)

Objective: It was designed to create a complementary support mechanism to address identified needs and structural gaps in the existing framework of support for unaccompanied minors in the country.

Driver: The need to strengthen the existing protection framework with specialised services and interventions.

4.Development: Amendments of the ministerial decision no. 187634/31.03.2023 "Standard Operating Procedures and Licensing Framework of the Accommodation Centers for Unaccompanied Minors" (B' 2125), by the ministerial decisions no. 330659/24.06.2023 (B' 4154) and 137051/02.05.2024 (B' 2667). According to some of these amendments all unaccompanied minors should attend preparatory courses within the accommodation facilities to facilitate their admission to school, with a focus on Greek and English language learning. Greek is taught regularly for at least 6 hours per week, while additional teaching support is provided for minors with learning deficiencies. Also there is provision of promoting vocational training opportunities and access to vocational counseling services. This ensures that minors are offered guidance and opportunities for vocational training based on their individual abilities, interests, and maturity, regardless of their previous educational background, aiming to support their future employability and integration. Moreover, there was an amendment on the provisions on requests for extension of the period of accommodation for minors approaching the age of majority, on grounds of vulnerability or school attendance or both.

Objective: Ensuring the necessary building infrastructure of the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors, as well as the provision of quality services to unaccompanied minors and ultimately ensuring the best interests of the minors. Also, the amendments focus on ensuring the educational integration and vocational development of unaccompanied minors and support the minors come of age who attend school or have a vulnerability.

Driver: The provision of an adequate framework for the protection and support of unaccompanied minors and their smooth transition to adulthood.

5.Development: Amendment of no. 138529/17.03.2023 ministerial decision "Standard Operating Procedures of the Supervised Apartments for Semi-Independent Living of Unaccompanied Minors" (B' 1615) by the ministerial decision no. 3391/15.01.2024 (B' 200). There was an extension to the entry date of the decision and amendments on other provisions.

Objective: Ensuring the necessary building infrastructure of the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors, as well as the provision of quality services to unaccompanied minors and ultimately ensuring the best interests of the minors.

Driver: The need for a smooth transition and incorporation of the measures provided for in the ministerial decision.

6.Development: The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in cooperation with the Greek Telecommunications Organisation (OTE), has launched the five-digit telephone

number 15107 which is free for those who call and is an easy number to memorize, compared to the ten-digit fixed number the Ministry used to operate before. This line is designed to support the tracing and protection of unaccompanied minors, as part of the National Emergency Response Mechanism which is providing accommodation, psychosocial and legal support, as well as facilitating their registration with the competent authorities.
<https://migration.gov.gr/en/ypoyrgeio-metanasteysis-kai-asyloy-15107-ena-neo-oplo-ston-agona-gia-tin-prostasia-ton-paidion-me-arogo-ton-ote/>

Objective: Through the Tracing Hotline, which is available through the toll-free five-digit telephone number 15107, the aim is to make referrals for the transfer and accommodation of unaccompanied children in a safe environment even easier and faster.

Driver: The need to provide immediate protection to unaccompanied children found homeless or in precarious conditions.

7.Development: “FORTIFY- Empowering to protect and prevent delinquency” project was implemented and completed. Is is designed to empower Greek systems to effectively protect unaccompanied minors who present delinquent behaviour. It aims to develop comprehensive strategies that not only prevent delinquency but also promote the integration of these minors, ensuring their safety and well-being. The project is implemented by the Organisation Zeuxis and NORCAP in collaboration with the General Secretariat, funded by EEA Grants.
<https://fortifyproject.gr/>

Objective: The project aimed to develop strategies for the prevention of juvenile delinquency among the population of unaccompanied minors in Greece.

Driver: The need to develop an integrated and innovative framework for the prevention of juvenile delinquency in Greece.

8.Development: On the instructions of the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum and the Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection a cross-sectoral team of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection was set up to prevent delinquency among unaccompanied minors, which for this purpose cooperates with the Greek Police and the staff of the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors. In this context, joint actions by the Hellenic Police and the General Secretariat were implemented in 14 long-term accommodation facilities to prevent delinquency among unaccompanied minors.

Objective: The establishment of the team, as well as the joint actions, aim at informing and raising awareness among unaccompanied minors that reside in accommodation facilities under the supervision of the General Secretariat, regarding the legal framework of Greece, the rules for peaceful coexistence with the rest of the population, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

Driver: The empowerment of unaccompanied minors with aiming at their smooth integration into the community they reside in, as well as the prevention of incidents of violence and delinquency involving the unaccompanied minors themselves.

9. Development: Legislative amendment on the access of international protection applicants to the labour market. Law 5078/2023 (Government Gazette 211 / A / 20-12-2023) as in force on 1.1.2024 amended the paragraph 1 of article 57 of Law 4939/2022 (Government Gazette 111/A'/10-6-2022). Following the abovementioned legislative amendment, international protection applicants have the right to access to the labour market after sixty (60) days (instead of 6 months as previously applied) since the completion of the procedure for lodging the application for international protection, provided that no decision has been taken at first instance by the competent Authority. This provision also applies to unaccompanied minors.

Objective: Facilitating access to the labour market.

Driver: To overcome additional obstacles that applicants for international protection have in accessing the labour market.

10. Development: [Decision No. 95528/20.03.2024 of the Director of Asylum Service](#) was issued on the renewal of the International Protection Applicant's Card for unaccompanied minors. It was clarified that the Card for unaccompanied minors will have annual validity (apart from exemptions predicted in law) and it will be renewed by their guardian without the compulsory presence of the minor.

Objective: to harmonise the procedure for issuing and renewing the international protection applicant's card with the existing legislative framework and to reduce the bureaucratic burden.

Driver: the need to harmonise the procedure for issuing and renewing the international protection applicant's card with the existing legislative framework and to reduce the bureaucratic burden.

5.1.3 Guardianship

Q37. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to guardianship of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

1. Development: The implementation of the National Guardianship System for Unaccompanied Minors officially began on January 1, 2024, implementing Law 4960/2022. The National Guardianship System aims to ensure that every unaccompanied child has a designated guardian, receives care tailored to their age and needs, and has their rights protected both institutionally and in daily life.

For 2024, following a special competitive procedure, two civil society organizations have been selected to implement an annual nation-wide guardianship project (1. The Non-Profit Organisation "METAdrasi, and 2. The non-profit Association PRAKSIS). The guardianship Project is funded by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum through the National Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2021-2027. Under its agreed terms and conditions of implementation, the total number of guardianship mandated persons can reach up to 180 with the capacity to cover the needs of 2,700 unaccompanied children. The number of guardianship mandated persons reached 168 during 2024. Also, as of the beginning of 2024,

more than 4,500 unaccompanied minors have received guardianship services. The institution of guardianship and any relevant programme for its implementation is coordinated and supervised by the Institutional Protection Unit of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection.

To ensure optimal operational planning, the competent Unit first mapped the juvenile population and the specific needs of each region for the appropriate allocation of guardians. In addition, it developed tools, standard operating procedures and guidelines and participated in trainings for the staff of Guardianship Service Providers with the assistance of the EUAA on guardianship and best interest assessment. In addition, an electronic platform was developed for the operational implementation and monitoring of the Guardianship System, as well as tools for the evaluation of the National Guardianship System in order to monitor and provide feedback on the programme implemented under the institution and tools for the implementation of the Complaints Mechanism of Minors in the Guardianship System, pursuant to Decision No. 539638/2023 (B' 7143).

Moreover, a relevant circular was published (issued under No. 13539/12.01.2024), which interprets and analyses the law article by article and offers practical guidance to the guardians and the entities involved in the project (available here: [ΥΠ.ΜΕΤ.ΑΣΥΛΟΥ 13539/ΕΓΚ.1/12-1-24 - ΝΟΜΟΤΕΛΕΙΑ](#)).

Objective: Establishing a reformed national system of guardianship of unaccompanied minors and ensuring the best interests of unaccompanied minors, their overall well-being and the enjoyment and effective

protection of their rights. The project for the implementation of the National Guardianship System ensures the provision of guardianship services to unaccompanied and separated minors throughout the Greek territory.

Driver: The need for a uniform implementation of the National Guardianship System, so that every unaccompanied minor receives guardianship services.

2.Development: Publishing of the Ministerial Decision on the organisation and operation of the Guardianship Council for Unaccompanied Minors (Government Gazette 550 / B / 26-01-2024), which is one of the bodies of the Guardianship System and is composed of five members of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection. The role of the Council is advisory and decision-making, as well as, resolving, for example, disputes between the minor and the guardian or the guardian and the caregiver of the minor, examining reports and complaints, granting the minor permission to work and other actions of a financial nature for the minor.

Objective: For the smooth application and implementation of the new National Guardianship system in Greece, ministerial decisions for the operational implementation of the system were published.

Driver: The specification and more detailed formulation of the provisions of the law regarding the National Guardianship System (Law 4960/2022, as incorporated in Law 4939/2022).

5.1.4 Family reunification

Q38. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to family reunification of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

5.1.5 Safeguards for unaccompanied minors

Q39. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to improving the procedural safeguards for unaccompanied minors in the asylum procedure in 2024?

Development: based on the recommendations of the legal department regarding the legal representation of unaccompanied minors before the Asylum Service, as per art.66 A-66 LD of I.4939/2022 (GG A'111), it was deemed necessary to appoint a guardian for all proceedings before the Asylum Service, except for the lodging of an application for international protection by a minor over 15 years of age.

Objective: access of unaccompanied minors to legal representation and legal aid.

Driver: the initial stages of the implementation of the national Guardianship system for unaccompanied minors.

5.1.6 Transition to adulthood

Q40. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level in the type of support (e.g. housing, education, employment, psychological support) available to unaccompanied minors for the transition to adulthood in 2024?

Development: The preparatory actions (issuing the integration decision) for the implementation of the program HELIOS Junior which is a comprehensive integration program for young adults, former unaccompanied minors in Greece were launched. It provides personalized support, including:

- Individual Integration Plan development and guidance
- Accommodation in fully equipped supervised apartments for up to 18 months
- Relocation assistance from previous accommodation to new living spaces
- Greek language courses provided by specialized organizations
- Vocational training to enhance employment skills
- Support for obtaining certifications and official documents
- Referrals to relevant services
- A financial allowance

(<https://tamey.gov.gr/amif2021-2027/calls/grant-agreements/6010542/>)

Objective: Support the young adults, former unaccompanied minors, in their next steps after staying in accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors.

Driver: Support the independent living of young adults after their departure from accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors.

5.2 Other Vulnerable Groups

Q41. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level regarding vulnerable groups (excluding victims of trafficking in human beings) in 2024?

1.Development: Implementation of a comprehensive Summer Day Camp Program for Unaccompanied Minors in Greece: A Collaborative Initiative for Integration and Support. The largest summer day camp program for unaccompanied minors in Greece took place in 2024, offering an enriching experience for 300 boys and girls, aged 6 to 17, including all children under 12 years old hosted in the country. Held during the summer months, the program featured a diverse array of activities, blending sports and cultural experiences. These activities were specifically designed to foster integration by encouraging interaction and collaboration among the participants and their Greek peers.

Organized by the Unit for the Integration and Support of Unaccompanied Minors of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, this initiative provided a safe and supportive environment for these vulnerable children. The program was made possible through the mediation of the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum, who secured sponsorship by the Hellenic Union of Banks.

(<https://migration.gov.gr/300-asynodeytoi-anilikoi-sto-megalytero-kataskinotiko-programma/>)

Objective: Additional support to unaccompanied minors.

Driver: Support the integration of unaccompanied minors.

2.Development: Commencement of the operations of the Asylum Units for Vulnerable Groups of Attica and of Thessaloniki- Decision No 23576/26.01.2024 (G.G. B' 600/2024). According to the aforementioned decision of the Director of the Asylum Service, the operation of i) the Asylum Unit for Vulnerable Groups of Attica with statutory seat in Athens and ii) the Asylum Unit for Vulnerable Groups of Thessaloniki with statutory seat in Thessaloniki started on 01/03/2024. The two Asylum Units are competent authorities to manage and examine international protection applications for the following groups considered as vulnerable groups.

According to Art. 1 (λγ) of the Asylum Code (Law 4939/2022 - G. G. A' 111), the following groups are considered as vulnerable groups: children, unaccompanied children, direct relatives of victims of shipwrecks (parents, siblings, children, husbands/wives), disabled persons, elderly, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illness, persons with cognitive or mental disability and victims of torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence such as victims of female genital mutilation. Following the assessment of vulnerability during the procedures

for the reception and identification of third-country nationals or stateless persons, procedures of application for international protection of these groups will be managed by the competent local Asylum Unit, by high skilled staff.

Relevant link: https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20240200600

Objective: The establishment of Asylum Units especially for handling and examining international protection applications of vulnerable groups for the support and facilitation of the procedure for this group.

Driver:

Note: Other vulnerable groups include disabled people, elderly people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) people, pregnant women, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation, following the specific headings outlined below.

Please note that this subsection covers other vulnerable groups excluding victims of human trafficking; this group is covered in Section 10. Assessment of vulnerabilities in the international protection procedure is covered in section 3.

6 INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS

Note: some of the questions in this section refer to national and regional policies. Please only report on regional policies where integration is a regional competence; where integration is a competence shared between national and regional levels, please report only on any significant regional variations. Where integration is a competence shared by national/regional level with the local level, please report only on legal and policy developments in relation to the legislative and policy framework (including funding) provided by national/regional authorities for integration policies carried out by local authorities.

Integration policies can be targeted or mainstreamed. Mainstreamed meaning that a migrant integration perspective is integrated at all stages and levels of policies, programmes and projects. In your answers, please reflect your national context and please make clear if the intervention is mainstreamed or targeted to a particular group, e.g. beneficiaries of international protection.

6.1 National integration strategy

Q42. Were there any developments in or changes to the national/regional integration strategy (in general or targeting specific groups) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Where relevant, please make reference to any developments in the national strategy that support the following principles of the EU Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027: inclusion for all, targeted support where needed; mainstreaming of gender and anti-discrimination priorities; providing support at all stages of the integration process.

Q43. Were there any changes in the distribution of responsibilities for integration policy between national, regional and local authorities in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q44. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the use of any digitalisation tools that facilitate access to integration processes and services in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q45. Were there any developments in relation to the monitoring and/or evaluation(s) of your national/regional integration programmes and/or strategy during 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

6.2 Involvement of stakeholders

Q46. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/regional level targeting the involvement of stakeholders in promoting the integration of third-country nationals in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: please only include overarching programmes/developments and not individual projects.

Stakeholders may include civil society organisations, educational and other public institutions, employers and socio-economic partners, social economy organisations, churches, religious and other philosophical communities, youth and students' organisations, diaspora organisations as well as migrants themselves.

6.3 Pre-departure integration programmes

Q47. Were there any legal or policy developments targeting the integration of third-country nationals (including resettled refugees) through pre-departure integration programmes (e.g. language, civic integration) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

6.4 Education and training

Q48. Were there any legal or policy developments targeting the integration of third-country nationals through education and training in 2024, including applying new technologies and digital tools (in general or targeting specific groups)?

. Basic skills and language

1.Development: Until November 30th, 2024, the HELIOS integration program continued being implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with funding from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum through the Public Investment Program. Since then, it continues being implemented by IOM, under the title "HELIOS+", through its integration into the Regional Operational

Programs and with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF+) within the framework of the Programming Period 2021-2027.

The HELIOS+ program targets beneficiaries of international and temporary protection, providing them with integrated services. Among other services, beneficiaries are provided with Greek language learning services. Each cycle of language courses includes learning of basic vocabulary and grammar rules of the Greek language and lasts two hundred and fifty (250) hours. Following the Greek language courses is mandatory for beneficiaries to continue receiving the rental subsidy also offered by the program. Beneficiaries may participate in the official Greek language certification exam, with the cost of participation in the exam as well as any travel expenses to the exam venue covered by the program.

Objective: The development of the language skills of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection, in order to empower them in the process of their integration into Greek society.

Driver: Supporting the transition of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection from the reception stage to the process of integration into Greek society.

2.Development: In October of the reference year (2024), the implementation of the "Helios Junior" program began, aimed at supporting the integration of former unaccompanied minors aged 18–21. The program, funded by the Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund 2021–2027, was designed and is monitored by the Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The program, following a personalized approach, aims to develop and enhance each beneficiary's knowledge and skills necessary for their integration into Greek society and the labor market. Based on this approach, after reviewing and recording the profile, skills, abilities, and professional goals of each beneficiary, an Individual Integration Plan (IIP) will be designed and developed. This plan will include information related to the profile and goals of each beneficiary as well as their needs for education, training, and general support services for their integration. Within this framework, beneficiaries will be guided to either attend Greek language courses tailored to their different proficiency levels, enroll in second-chance schools, evening schools, and/or Vocational High Schools (EPAL) operating within the Greek education system, or participate in vocational training programs in various thematic fields. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to get certified for knowledge and skills they already hold (e.g., computer use, foreign language proficiency, driving ability, etc.), enabling them to leverage these skills in their integration process into the labor market.

Objective: The development and enhancement of the skills and knowledge of former unaccompanied minors legally residing in Greece, empowering them in the process of integrating into Greek society and the labour market.

Driver: The need to support this particularly vulnerable group in their transition to independent living, following their departure from previously supervised accommodation structures.

. Civic orientation programmes

Development: The integration program HELIOS+, as already mentioned above (see Q48), provides beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with integrated services. Among other services, beneficiaries are provided with group sessions of familiarization with the European way of life. Indicatively, these sessions concern issues such as: social rights and obligations, labor rights and obligations, access of minors to public education, social protection in Greece, access to public health, social life in Greece and European culture.

Objective: The familiarization of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with the European way of life, in order to empower them in the process of their integration into Greek society.

Driver: Supporting the transition of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection from the reception stage to the process of integration into Greek society.

. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. Primary and secondary education

Development: On May 31st, 2024, the "All Children in Education" program was completed. It was an initiative of Unicef Greece, co-financed by the European Union and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and in coordination with several partners. The goal of the program was to reach out to, facilitate and support migrant and refugee children in terms of improving school readiness and access to education through the operation of the so-called "Study and Creative Activities Centers". These Centers operated where migrant and refugee families reside, in order to support and facilitate the smooth access of children (4-17 years old) to school and their continued attendance. In these Centers, children were taught Greek and English by specialized teachers, educators and volunteers of the UNICEF network, among other subjects that reinforced their formal education in public schools.

Within the year 2024, the Social Integration Directorate of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum carried out all the necessary procedures so that the program continues to be implemented through funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2021-2027.

Objective: Supporting migrant and refugee children in improving school readiness and access to education.

Driver: The need to create an inclusive school environment, prevent school dropout and facilitate the integration of migrant and refugee children in schools.

. Tertiary and Adult education

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. Other forms of education/training

Development: In 2024 the project "Training Programme for intercultural mediators" was completed. The project was undertaken by initiative of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, with the cooperation of the UNHCR. The partners of the consortium for the implementation of the project were: the Scientific Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (INE GSEE), the Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning Centre of the General Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants of Greece (KEK GSEVEE – KDVM) and the NGO METAdrasi (coordinating partner) (<https://cultural-mediator.com/en/>)

The project's deliverables included the writing of the educational material and its publication in printed and e-book forms, the training of trainers for Intercultural Mediators, and the implementation of a pilot training for Intercultural Mediators in Attica. The pilot training had a duration of 200 hours (from February to April 2024) and was successfully completed by 38 persons.

Objective: The training of Intercultural Mediators in order to be employed in public services where they are needed.

Driver: The need for intercultural mediation in a variety of services targeting immigrants and refugees.

6.5 Labour market and skills

Q49. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/regional level targeting the labour market integration of third-country nationals in 2024?

Note: please include developments related to new technologies and digital tools (in general or targeting specific groups)

. Access to vocational training/other types of training as a measure aimed at labour market integration

1.Development: The integration program HELIOS+, as already mentioned above (see Q48), provides beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with integrated services. Among other services, beneficiaries are provided with Greek language learning services. Each cycle of language courses includes teaching of basic vocabulary and grammar rules of the Greek language and amounts to two hundred and fifty (250) hours. Following the language courses is mandatory in order for beneficiaries to continue receiving the rental subsidy also offered by the program. Beneficiaries may participate in the official Greek language certification exam, with the cost of participation in the exam as well as any travel expenses to the exam venue being covered by the program.

Objective: The development of the language skills of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection, in order to empower them in the process of their integration into Greek society.

Driver: Supporting the transition of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection from the reception stage to the process of integration into Greek society.

2. Development: During the year 2024, within the framework of a "Framework Agreement" between Switzerland and Greece for the provision of Swiss financial support for the implementation of programs in the field of integration, the Social Integration Directorate of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum designed and carried out the necessary administrative procedures for the approval and the start of implementation of seven (7) social integration programs. Within the year 2024, two (2) out of the seven (7) programs were approved while all procedures for the signing of the relevant Programmatic Agreement for the start of implementation of the "Bridging the Skills Gap" program were completed.

The program "Bridging the Skills Gap" will be implemented by the "Odyssea" Non-Profit, with the aim of enhancing the professional opportunities of third-country nationals who are legally residing in the country and have the right to work, including asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international and temporary protection and unaccompanied minors. The program provides targeted education, training and services of access to the labor market, such as organizing workshops of horizontal and digital skills, conducting introductory courses and providing services of vocational training in specific professional sectors with high demand, as well as providing employability services (creating a professional profile, finding a job, support during employment, etc.).

The rest programs that have been designed and/or approved are also related to the social integration of third-country nationals, primarily to the integration into the labor market, the provision of various services (such as Greek language learning, psychosocial support and familiarization with the European way of life), as well as the procedures for monitoring integration and networking stakeholders.

Objective: Supporting the integration of third-country nationals primarily in the labor market but also in other areas of daily life, through the involvement and networking of stakeholders.

Driver: The need to strengthen support for the integration of third-country nationals, in various areas of daily life, with the involvement and interconnection of the stakeholders involved and through monitoring the integration process.

3. Development: As mentioned in question 48, in October of the reference year (2024), the implementation of the "Helios Junior" program began, aimed at supporting the integration of former unaccompanied minors aged 18–21. The program, funded by the Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund 2021–2027, was designed and is monitored by the Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The program, following a personalized approach, aims to develop and enhance each beneficiary's knowledge and skills necessary for their integration into Greek society and the labor market. Based on this approach, after reviewing and recording the profile, skills, abilities, and professional goals of each beneficiary,

an Individual Integration Plan (IIP) will be designed and developed. This plan will include information related to the profile and goals of each beneficiary as well as their needs for education, training, and general support services for their integration. Within this framework, beneficiaries will be guided to either attend Greek language courses tailored to their different proficiency levels, enroll in second-chance schools, evening schools, and/or Vocational High Schools (EPAL) operating within the Greek education system, or participate in vocational training programs in various thematic fields. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to get certified for knowledge and skills they already hold (e.g., computer use, foreign language proficiency, driving ability, etc.), enabling them to leverage these skills in their integration process into the labor market.

Objective: The development and enhancement of the skills and knowledge of former unaccompanied minors legally residing in Greece, empowering them in the process of integrating into Greek society and the labour market.

Driver: The need to support this particularly vulnerable group in their transition to independent living, following their departure from previously supervised accommodation structures.

. Measures to facilitate the recognition of skills and of formal qualifications

Development: The integration program HELIOS+, as already mentioned above (see Q48), provides beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with integrated services. Among other services, beneficiaries are provided with subsidized vocational training programs in professional sectors of high demand. Upon completion of these programs, beneficiaries participate in certification exams of the knowledge and skills that they have acquired. The certification process is carried out based on the current national and European institutional framework and is specialized depending on the profession and expertise.

Objective: The acquisition of certified knowledge and skills by beneficiaries of international and temporary protection, in order to strengthen their integration into the labor market.

Driver: Supporting the transition of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection from the reception stage to the process of integration into Greek society.

c. Other measures to facilitate labour market integration of third-country nationals (including entrepreneurs)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

6.6 Basic services

Q50. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/ regional level targeting the integration of third-country nationals through access to basic services in 2024?

. Access to housing

Note: this refers to policies to promote integration of third-country nationals through access to housing as a basic service, such as access to social housing and financial assistance.

1.Development: The integration program HELIOS+, as already mentioned above (see Q48), provides beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with integrated services. Among other services, beneficiaries are provided with services that support independent living. These services include, first of all, information on the procedures and conditions for renting a residence in Greece, support for issuing the necessary documents before signing a rental agreement, support in searching for (private) housing to rent and support in moving. In addition, a rental subsidy of up to 12 months is provided, as well as financial assistance with initial moving and installation costs (e.g. guarantee, purchase of household equipment, etc.).

Objective: Supporting beneficiaries of international and temporary protection in searching for and renting (private) housing.

Driver: Supporting the transition of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection from the reception stage to the process of integration into Greek society.

2.Development: In October of the reference year (2024), the implementation of the "Helios Junior" program began, aimed at supporting the integration of former unaccompanied minors aged 18–21. The program, funded by the Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund 2021–2027, was designed and is monitored by the Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In addition to other services provided under the program (see above, section 6.4, question 48a), beneficiaries will have access to free accommodation in rented and fully equipped apartments for a maximum duration of up to 18 months. They will also be provided with support and counselling services regarding independent living, through specialized housing advisors. Moreover, they will receive a minimum monthly financial allowance of €150, via a prepaid card, to cover their basic needs in food, clothing, footwear, personal hygiene, telecommunications, local transportation, and essential school and medical expenses.

Objective: The provision of a safe and supportive environment and the enhancement of their capacity for independent living.

Driver: The need to support this particularly vulnerable group in their transition to independent living, following their departure from previously supervised accommodation structures.

b. Access to healthcare including mental healthcare

Development: The integration program HELIOS+, as already mentioned above (see Q48), provides beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with integrated services. Among other services, beneficiaries are provided with psychosocial support. More precisely, individual or group psychosocial counseling sessions are organized for adults who need further support for their smooth integration into the local society. These sessions are conducted by the beneficiaries' "Integration Counselors" and aim to create a safe framework in order to raise any sensitive issues for discussion, such as social exclusion, difficulty adapting to the new environment, dealing with collective trauma and other issues that affect social and family life. Cases that require special support are referred to the competent local social services and/or specialized bodies.

Objective: Further psychosocial support for beneficiaries of international and temporary protection.

Driver: Supporting the transition of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection from the reception stage to the process of integration into Greek society.

c. Access to social security

Development:

[Circular No. Φ80320/25192/01.04.2024](#) was issued to clarify practicalities for the implementation of the [Joint Ministerial Decision No. Φ80320/109864, published on December 14, 2023 \(Government Gazette B' 7280/22.12.2023\)](#) on updates and regulations regarding the issuance, management and functionality of the "AMKA", which also concerns beneficiaries of international protection.

Objective: to clarify the proper implementation of the regulatory framework related to the AMKA.

Driver: the need to clarify the proper implementation of the regulatory framework related to the AMKA.

d. Other

Development: Within the year 2024, the Social Integration Directorate of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum continued monitoring the operation of the "Migrant and Integration Centers" (MICs), operating in 11 different municipalities countrywide (ESF+ funding). In 2024, twelve (12) more MICs were established, increasing the total number of MICs to overall twenty-three (23).

The Migrant Integration Centers (MICs) provide a large range of services to third-country nationals who reside legally in Greece, Beneficiaries of international protection (holders of ADET residence permit) and Applicants of asylum (holders of an Applicant's Card). More precisely: a) they provide information, services and counseling to third-country nationals with regards to social integration and social networking issues, b) collaborate and refer requests to other competent associations, services or bodies (e.g. associations of migrants, non-profit organizations, social services etc.), c) organize activities, such as i) Lessons in Greek language, history, and culture which are offered to adults who are either

migrants or applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, ii) Intercultural activities which facilitate the co-existence between third-country children/young people and native children/ young and iii) activities to facilitate third-country nationals' access to the job market.

To reinforce the personnel working in MICs and more specifically the Intercultural Mediators, the project "Reinforcement/promotion of intercultural mediation services in community centers and Migrant Integration centers of Municipalities" was continued in 2024. This project was designed by the Directorate of Social Integration in collaboration with the Authority for the Coordination and Monitoring of the European Social Fund (EYSEKT) and the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (E.E.T.A.A). Through E.E.T.A.A., intercultural mediators have been trained and placed in Community Centers and Migrant Integration centers in eight (8) regions (Attica, Central Macedonia, East Macedonia-Thrace, Thessaly, Ipiros, West Greece, Central Greece and Crete). In 2024 the project was implemented in 29 Municipalities through the employment of thirty (30) Intercultural Mediators in Community Centers and MICs.

Objective: The expansion of Migrant Integration Centers (expansion of their number and expansion of the services that they provide) and their further staffing with Intercultural Mediators.

Driver: The need to enhance the operation of local integration services in the form of "one-stop-shops".

6.7 Fostering participation and encounters with the host society

Q51. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/regional level fostering participation and encounters of third-country nationals with the host society in 2024?

Note: please only include overarching programmes/developments and not individual projects.

Development: The integration program HELIOS+, as already mentioned above (see Q48), provides beneficiaries of international and temporary protection with integrated services. Among other services provided, within the framework of the program, awareness-raising and social cohesion actions are implemented, such as information, empowerment and awareness-raising events aimed at local service providers, actions that promote and strengthen the active participation of beneficiaries in social and cultural life, as well as targeted discussions and interviews with groups of beneficiaries and/or representatives of the local community on issues related to the integration of beneficiaries into local societies.

Objective: Raising awareness among the local community and stakeholders at the local and regional level, as well as informing them about the benefits of integration to a degree that facilitates the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries and promotes social cohesion.

Driver: The perception of the integration of beneficiaries of international and temporary protection into Greek society as a "two-way process", that is, as a process that concerns not only them but also the host society.

6.8 Fighting racism and discrimination

Q52. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national or regional aimed at fighting discrimination of third-country nationals, racism etc. in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Please distinguish 1) migrants as a target group within the mainstream anti-discrimination legal framework or mainstream policies and 2) any policies specifically targeting migrants. Please clarify if your legislation or policies target all migrants or third country nationals specifically.

Note: please only include overarching programmes/developments and not individual projects.

7 CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

7.1 Acquisition of citizenship

Q53. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the acquisition of citizenship for legally residing third-country nationals in 2024? (this also includes e.g. policy decisions on operational aspects such as moving applications online)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

7.2 Statelessness

Q54. Were there any developments related to the legal regulation of statelessness (e.g. ratification of international conventions; overarching changes in the legal framework, reduction of statelessness among children etc.) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q55. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to a dedicated statelessness determination procedure (SDP) or any other procedures or mechanisms by which statelessness can be identified or the status can be determined in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q56. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the issuance of a residence permit or in relation to the rights (access to the labour market, education, health care and social aid, access to citizenship, etc.) granted to recognized stateless persons in 2024?

Development: there have been no relevant developments on the legal regulation of the status of stateless persons in 2024. However, a stateless person will be dealt with the existing legal framework and s/he may apply for international protection and if s/he qualifies according to the national and European legal framework, s/he will be admitted as a refugee or subsidiary protection beneficiary.

Objective:

Driver:

8 SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN BORDER MANAGEMENT AND VISA POLICY

Note: This chapter covers developments which are applicable to countries which are part of the Schengen area and/or are bound by the Schengen acquis and developments which fall outside of the Schengen acquis. The questions are divided between 1) questions solely applicable to the Schengen acquis and 2) other developments in border management and visa policy which fall outside the Schengen acquis and may be applicable to all EMN Member and Observer countries.

8.1 Schengen area

Note: This section collects information on national developments solely relevant to the Schengen area.

8.1.1 Schengen Governance

Q57. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to Schengen evaluations during 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

8.1.2 External Dimension of Schengen

Q58. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the implementation of Schengen visas in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

8.1.3 External Schengen border management

Q59. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the European harmonisation of external border controls of the Schengen area in 2024?

. Entry/Exit System (EES)

Development: At the national level, the creation/development of the Central Infrastructure Software is underway, while the partitioning and installation of equipment at the country's border crossing points has been completed. In order for the European Commission to investigate the readiness of the Member States for a possible start of operation of the EES within the last quarter of 2024, a relevant questionnaire was sent to all Member States regarding their degree of readiness. Although the majority of the MS declared relevant readiness (including our country), however, three MS did not submit the aforementioned declarations of readiness, as a result of which, the European Commission initiated the

procedures for amending the existing Regulations concerning the EES, as well as the Schengen Borders Code, so that the System can operate within 2025.

Objective: Harmonization with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Entry-Exit System (EES).

Driver: On 09-12-2017, Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Entry/Exit System (EES) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The EES is a Large-Scale Border Information System at EU level, which aims to create a new procedure for passport control for third-country nationals when crossing the external borders of the Union and entering and exiting the Schengen area.

. European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. Schengen Information System (SIS)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. Visa Information System (VIS)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. European Interoperability Framework (Regulations 2019 /817 and 2019/818)

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. European Integrated Border Management

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

. Other

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q60. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to Local Border Traffic Regimes⁷ in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

8.1.4 Situation at the internal borders

Q61. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the situation at the internal borders in the Schengen area during 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

8.2 Other developments in border management and visa policy

Note: This section collects information on developments which fall outside or go beyond the Schengen acquis. For border management this relates to developments which fall within national competence such as bilateral agreements with third countries. Regarding visa policy this includes developments within national competence which impact both short stay or long stay visas (e.g. institutional developments) and developments in national policies regarding long stay visas.

Observer or non-Schengen countries should report their border management or visa policies in this section.

Q62. Were there any developments in relation to border management (other than Schengen borders) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q63. Were there any developments in relation to agreements or other forms of bilateral cooperation with third countries that were entered into in 2024 with an objective of strengthening operational capacity in control of external borders?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

⁷ Local Border Traffic: The regular crossing of an external land border by border residents in order to stay in a border area, for example for social, cultural or substantiated economic reasons, or for family reasons, for a period not exceeding three months (Source: EMN Glossary v.10.0).

Note: for Observer Countries you can report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

Q64. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to visa policy falling under national competence in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

9 IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Note: There is no universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is entry, stay or work in a country without the necessary authorisation or documents required under immigration regulations (Source: Note 1 to definition of Irregular Migration EMN Glossary, v10.0).

9.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q65. Were there any overarching and/ or crosscutting legal and policy developments in 2024 regarding irregular migration?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

9.2 Preventing the arrival of irregular migrants

9.2.1 Combatting facilitation of unauthorised entry (migrant smuggling)

Q66. Were there any legal or policy developments aimed at combatting facilitation of unauthorised entry (migrant smuggling) in 2024? Please include any developments aimed at combatting migrant smuggling networks.

1.Development: Greece is successfully implementing the National Operational Plan signed with Europol in March 2016 to combat organized migrant smuggling networks. This plan includes coordinated actions to tackle migrant smuggling networks and strengthen border security.

Objective: The Operational Plan's main objective is the effective response to the criminal phenomenon of migrant smuggling through the fight against organized criminal networks. It focuses on the collection, processing, analysis and more generally the management of information, mainly related to organized networks of smuggling, as well as on the implementation of secondary security checks by specially trained personnel of the national Authorities and with the support of seconded EUROPOL Officials.

Driver: The Operational Plan is the national response to a transnational, serious form of crime which tends to surpass even the drug trade, constituting a major threat to the security and stability of countries.

2.Development: Within the framework of the Priority "Migrant Smuggling" of the EMPACT Program, the Hellenic Police participates as co-driver, leading an Action, which includes conducting operations aimed at dismantling organized migrant smuggling networks from Turkey to Greece and then to Central and Northern Europe.

Objective: The Action provides for the following: a) exchange of information with involved countries, b) holding operational meetings, c) conducting joint or parallel investigations with the aim of arresting smugglers, d) identifying laboratories for

the production of false documents, e) conducting financial investigations and f) identifying suspicious Social Networking accounts that provide migrant smuggling services.

Driver: Within the framework of this Action, Greece has achieved significant operational results at the national and EU level, against criminal migrant smuggling networks, thereby contributing to a holistic approach to this criminal phenomenon.

3.Development: The enactment of Law 5172/29.01.2025 (GG A'10), which in Part IV and specifically in Articles 48, 49 and 52 includes provisions aimed at strengthening the country's presence in the European Judicial Cooperation Unit, the investigation of a greater number of cases of a cross-border nature and the harmonisation with Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018.

Objective: The expansion of the list of offenses by the joint investigation team, through the inclusion of facilitating the entry and exit from Greek territory of a third-country national for profit by two or more perpetrators and the amendment of article 13 of Law 3663/2008.

Driver: The inclusion of entry and exit facilitation in the context of organized criminal activity with the aim of enabling the establishment of a joint investigation team for the aforementioned offenses, especially when: a) the investigation requires difficult and complex actions linked to other Member States and b) the nature and complexity of the case requires coordinated and harmonized action in the interested members.

Q67. Were there any legal, policy, or practice developments in 2024 to prevent, identify and/or investigate fraudulent acquisition and use of false travel documents for travelling to your country?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

9.2.2 Preventing irregular migration through information provision

Q68. Were there any legal, policy or practice developments aimed at providing information to prevent irregular migration from countries of origin and transit through information provision in 2024?

Please focus on the legal and policy decisions rather than providing a detailed list of projects.

Note: examples of this are policy decisions to undertake new information campaigns launched, websites, new projects with grass-roots NGOs or involving the diaspora, etc.

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

9.2.3 Cooperation with third countries to prevent irregular migration

Q69. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to establishing cooperation with new or existing partner third countries in 2024 to prevent irregular migration?

Note to observer countries: please also report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

Development: In the framework of the meeting of EU Director-General for Development Cooperation in Brussels (16-17.12.2024) focusing on the EU Global Gateway Strategy, the promotion of an enhanced "Team Europe" development approach on migration and forced displacement was discussed.

Objective: The aim is to build on the Team Europe approach to ensure that relevant countries of origin, transit and destination of non-EU migrants are supported in responding to migration and forced displacement challenges, while promoting improved cooperation between these countries and the EU and its Member States in the context of mutually beneficial migration partnerships.

Driver: Exploring ways to form mutually beneficial migration partnerships between the EU and its Member States and third countries. The Council's 2014 Conclusions on Migration in EU Development Cooperation highlight migration's interconnections with areas like employment, health, education, and climate change. They recommend systematically integrating migration into dialogues and development programming at EU and Member State levels.

9.3 Preventing irregular stay

Q70. Were there any legal or policy developments introduced in 2024 regarding monitoring of or sanctions against misuse of legal migration pathways for work, study or family reunification in 2024, (including monitoring the effects of visa-free regimes in your country)?

Development:

Objective:**Driver:**

Q71. Were there any other legal or policy developments aimed at preventing irregular stay and combatting facilitation of irregular stay, including disincentives and sanctions in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q72. Were there any legal or policy developments aimed at preventing employment of irregular migrants, including sanctions against employers in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

9.4 Access to services and legal solutions for irregularly staying migrants

Q73. Were there any legal or policy developments for irregularly staying migrants in relation to 1) legal solutions (tolerated stays, regularisations) 2) access to rights (e.g. education, healthcare) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

9.5 Other developments

Q74. Were there any other legal or policy developments regarding irregular migration (i.e. developments not specifically tied to one of the categories or topics already covered above) in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

10 TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

10.1 National strategic policy developments

Q75. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding the prevention and/or the fight against trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals (e.g. new legal or institutional framework, national action plans or national strategies introduced) during 2024?

Development: The Office of National Rapporteur of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the framework of the actions of the previous National Action Plan (2019-2023) is in the process of updating it with the collaboration of all the relevant state and non-state actors.

In this vein, the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, in cooperation with the Office of the National Rapporteur of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a seminar on strengthening Greece's National Action Plan on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings.

The seminar was held on 25 - 26 June 2024, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs premises. The first day (Tuesday, 25/6/2024) was addressed to the officers of the Public Administration and the Independent Authorities, while the second day (Wednesday, 26/6/2024) was devoted to the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations.

Furthermore, the ONR/MFA has set up two working groups, with the collaboration of all the relevant state and non-state actors, to update the National Action Plan 2019-2023, considering the EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025), the amendment of the Anti-Trafficking Directive and the recommendations of all relevant international organizations (GRETA/Council of Europe, OSCE, UNODC, UNHCR, IOM, etc.). The 1st WG includes the public sector's actors and the 2nd WG consists of the NGOs and IOs participating in NRM. The first meeting of both groups took place on 11 and 12 December 2024, respectively, and our aim is for the first WG to present the proposals of public bodies for the THB and then to consult the 2nd WG, where civil society is involved. We may roughly estimate that a final draft of our new National Action Plan will be ready, the soonest, at the end of the first half of 2025.

Objective: The objectives of the NAP are: the prosecution of perpetrators, the coordination and effective cooperation between national stakeholders and between national and international ones, the victim-centred, gender-sensitive and age-specific approach, prevention policies and actions to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation related to trafficking in human beings.

Driver: The main driver of our efforts is to renew our strategy and adjust it to the ever-changing nature of the crime for successfully preventing and combating THB in all its forms at the institutional, legislative and practical levels.

10.2 Detection and identification of victims

Q76. Were there any developments in relation to the detection and identification of third-country national victims (including applicants for international protection) in 2024? Please indicate whether the development concerns detection and/or identification of victims?

. Training and awareness raising

1.Development: In 2024, the programme "Specific Action on the Provision of Services to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings who are Third Country Nationals", was launched, implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the General Secretariat for vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection and the National Center for Social Solidarity (NCSS).

Since June 2024, two-day training seminars were carried out by IOM and NCSS staff in Athens, Thessaloniki, Lesvos, Leros, Kos, and Fylakio, Evros, with 330 frontline professionals, including staff of the Reception and Identification Service of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, participating and with more in- person and online training sessions pending for Chios, Samos, and Athens. As part of the programme, the General Secretariat also contributed to the publication of the "Practical Tool for frontline professionals for the Support and Reintegration of victims of human trafficking." This particular action concerns both the identification and the detection of victims.

Objective: The design, promotion and implementation of targeted training programmes for professionals with the further aim of effectively identifying and protecting victims of human trafficking.

Driver: The complexity of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and the need to provide frontline professionals with the tools that will contribute to the identification and management of human trafficking cases.

2.Development: The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection co-organised a training conference with the Department of Preschool Education at the University of Thessaly and the NGO A21, titled: "Vulnerability of Migrants/Refugees & Child Protection." This development concerns the identification of victims.

Objective: The fight against human trafficking and the highlighting of the importance of involving school communities in the field of child protection.

Driver: The intensification of child exploitation in all its forms and the need to highlight the qualitative characteristics of children's vulnerability.

3.Development: Organisation by the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection of four empowering sessions for 44 unaccompanied girls accommodated in accommodation centers.

Objective: The workshops aimed to boost self-esteem, critical thinking, and self-protection against exploitation, abuse, and deception. Focused on three themes:

building healthy relationships, understanding internet risks (like grooming), and recognizing the "Loverboy" phenomenon, the sessions equipped the girls with tools to prevent manipulation and stay safe in both digital and physical spaces.

Driver: The intensification of the above-mentioned phenomena and the inability of many girls in vulnerable situations to recognise the existence of exploitation.

4. Development: In 2024, the Asylum Service in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) delivered one specialised training session to 18 asylum officers on the EUAA module "Trafficking in human beings". Additionally, 10 asylum officers, including case officers and quality focal points, were trained on the EUAA tailor-made training session on "Slavery and severe human exploitation as persecution". Furthermore, the Asylum Service in cooperation with EUAA delivered specialised coaching sessions to case officers. Some of these sessions focused on cases of vulnerable applicants and potential victims of trafficking.

Objective: Provide asylum officers with the knowledge and skills needed to identify potential victims of trafficking, prepare and conduct an asylum interview with a potential victim of human trafficking, provide them with the knowledge on the procedure of referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and approach decision-making in a protection claim involving such a person.

Driver: The reinforcement of the capacities of asylum officers for the early identification and safe referral of potential victims.

5. Development: During the reporting period, the EKKA (National Centre for Social Solidarity)/ NRM (Hellenic National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking) team (hereinafter EKKA/NRM team) has facilitated capacity building activities, in the form of training sessions, targeting national-authority and (I)NGO staff, both in-person and online. Training thematics have focused mostly on:

1. the definition of human trafficking and relevant forms of exploitation,
2. indicators of human trafficking,
3. effective ways to communicate and work with victims through experiential learning,
4. the existing legal framework in the EU and national context, and
5. the NRM SOPs and other useful tools.

In relation to the detection and identification of third-country national victims, the EKKA/NRM team has organised and delivered/ or participated in 21 training activities, in urban centres as well as in various regions across the country, targeting both national-authorities, including the Hellenic Asylum Service and the Hellenic Reception and Identification Service, the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality, of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the Hellenic Police, the Hellenic Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Public Healthcare Sector, and

Municipal Social Services, and (I)NGO staff organisations working with asylum seekers/refugees, including unaccompanied children, for the purpose of building capacity for front-line professionals for early detection and provision of adequate support to human trafficking victims in line with the NRM SOPs and the existing legal framework.

During 2024 the following awareness raising activities took place:

- On October 18, 2024, EKKA in collaboration with KMOP (Centre of Care for Families and Children) and Solidarity Now organised an online event entitled "Trafficking in Human Beings: Break the Chain" on the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day. The event was attended by 350 professionals from the public and private sector, with a focus on airport community, hotel industry, teachers and education staff, the Hellenic Reception and Identification Service employees (Ministry of Migration and Asylum) and Labour Inspectors, demonstrating a growing awareness on the phenomenon of human trafficking and the importance of multilateral action, including the participation of the corporate sector.

On November 26, 2024, EKKA organised a webinar on "Domestic Work & Human Trafficking", targeting NRM partners, with the aim to discuss the particular aspects of domestic servitude, with a focus on the existing legal framework and indicators of this very form of exploitation, and its social, cultural and gender dimension, including the impact of migration/refugee flows and labour law and practices regarding third-country nationals. Members of the EKKA/ NRM team moderated a panel discussion in which representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and the General Secretariat of Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, participated. The event was attended by 150 professionals. The webinar can be found [here](#).

Objective: The main objective of the capacity building activities is to raise awareness on the phenomenon of human trafficking and facilitate early victim identification, effective case management and proper referrals, where relevant.

Driver: Ongoing need for training provision due to a) continuous staff rotation and b) recent publication of an updated set of NRM SOPs (see below Q.77).

b. Measures on cooperation between national authorities

Development: Since the NRM launching, the EKKA/NRM team has coordinated a number of working groups, with the objective to:

1. report both good practices and challenges,
2. evaluate the existing NRM tools,
3. receive direct feedback from field professionals working with human trafficking victims,
4. enhance the collaboration amongst the NRM participating actors, and
5. monitor and evaluate the NRM operation on a national level.

To date, on a monthly basis, the EKKA/NRM team has been coordinating a working group meeting with the participation of legal professionals (incl. public officials)

working with human trafficking victims, with the objective to discuss good practices, detect gaps in legal services and organise advocacy interventions with regard to criminal proceedings for relevant cases.

During 2024, the EKKA/NRM team initiated a discourse on the establishment of a National Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (NSTAC) in Greece deeming survivor leaders' engagement in advisory roles as valuable for strengthening the NRM operation. To this end, EKKA has been working out some preliminary details towards organising a working group meeting with relevant agencies/organisations (incl. public officials) in order to discuss that possibility including informing stakeholders on international practices and exploring how such a mechanism could be integrated into the National Anti-trafficking Strategy.

-A core value of the NRM operation reflected in the EKKA/NRM capacity building activities (please see above under a. section) is the promotion of intersectional collaboration through encouraging participation of different actors in each training session, so as to promote harmonised practices and mutual learning from one another, a smooth cooperation and the creation of a communication pathway among various agencies and organisations, with the aim to achieve a holistic approach for combatting human trafficking.

Objective: The promotion of intersectoral cooperation for the provision of a holistic protection framework for human trafficking victims.

Driver: The need for networking among protection actors.

c. Measures on cooperation between (Member) States

Development: During 2024, EKKA partnered with ARSIS - Social Organisation for Youth Support to implement a Special Action entitled "Coordination services for victims of human trafficking in the South-Eastern Balkans", funded by the Internal Security Fund (2021-2027), aiming to offer services (i.e. social support and legal advice, including further referrals, as necessary) to human trafficking victims detected by street-workers, members of mobile units operating in Greece, in close cooperation with Bulgarian and Romanian partners for the identification and support of victims of the said nationalities, including in cases of voluntary repatriation.

Objective: The main objective of this partnership is to facilitate early victim identification and promote transnational cooperation in relation to human trafficking cases.

Driver: A high number in cases of child victims of forced begging who were nationals of Balkan states detected in Northern Greece.

Other

Development: In March the Reception and Identification Service issued a standard operation procedure on the identification and response to potential or actual victims, including children, of human trafficking within the reception and accommodation facilities. The procedure provides guidelines to the field staff regarding the steps that need to be followed so as to better support a victim - potential or actual - of human trafficking regardless their legal status

Q77. Were there any developments in 2024 in relation to national referral mechanisms (or equivalent systems) for victims of trafficking in human beings?

Development: In its sixth year of operation, since its 2019 launching, the Hellenic NRM, administered by the EKKA and supervised by the Office of National Rapporteur Against Human Trafficking, has expanded its impact through significant developments, as follows:

- NRM participating actors have familiarised with the NRM reporting procedure as proved by a steady communication pathway and a close collaboration that have been established, taking into consideration the gradual increase in the number of cases reported since the 2019 NRM launching.

- Publication of 5 annual reports, to date, presenting reliable data on victims' history of human trafficking (i.e. recruitment phase, transfer/transportation, reception and/or harbouring, exploitation phase and the specific circumstances, inter alia), as well as victims' current situation, including demographic data, information on protection services being or having been provided and on participation in criminal proceedings, which is required for the holistic assessment of each victim's vulnerability and the detection of additional needs (available [here](#)). The relevant information is gathered and analysed in the context of reports received by EKKA, referring to both adult and child victims detected in Greece regardless of the place and time of exploitation.

- Continuous update of the NRM SOPs to be applied on a national level including all necessary steps in the process of detection, identification and protection of victims (available [here](#)).

- During the reporting period, a specialised edition of SOPs was issued by the Hellenic Reception & Identification Service (RIS) of the Ministry of Migration & Asylum in consultation with EKKA and the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection; due to the special conditions and operating regulations of the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) and other accommodation facilities for asylum seekers, administered by RIS, this edition of SOPs had been developed in the past, with the aim of providing guidance to field professionals. However, recent organisational changes and legal amendments demanded the reviewing of the existing procedures to ensure their relevance to the current context.

- The EKKA/ NRM team has been working on the development of specialised SOPs for the Directorates and Departments of the General Directorate of Public Health and Social Care of Regions. A draft edition for the Department of Prevention and Health Promotion, of the Directorate of Public Health, regarding the identification and protection of victims of sexual exploitation within the scope of their duties, e.g. carrying out controls in brothels, issuing/updating health booklets, among others, has been recently developed.

The EKKA/ NRM team is currently drafting other sets of SOPs for the Department of Environmental Health and Sanitary Control, of the same Directorate, as well as for the Directorate of Social Welfare.

- The EKKA/ NRM team has recently developed guidelines for front-line professionals on the identification of victims of domestic servitude with a focus on

the particularities of this very form of human trafficking, the existing legal framework and relevant indicators; the final document is available [here](#) in Greek.

-Continuous support to front-line professionals provided by the EKKA/NRM team; it entails day-to-day contact, provision of guidelines on all protection stages for reported cases and information dissemination with constant updates on the NRM operation and services available for victims.

-Provision of trainings (please see above Q.76, section a., for further details).

To date, 59 Civil Society organisations have joined the Hellenic NRM, along numerous state agencies that might detect, identify and/or provide protection services to a (presumed) human trafficking victim in their everyday practice. A list of all NRM participating actors is available in English [here](#).

Please note that the procedure of inviting agencies/organisations to participate in the NRM is ongoing.

Objective: The main objective of the NRM operation is to ensure victims' protection, with the coordination of services and actors involved. It also aims to provide up-to-date information on the phenomenon of human trafficking through statistical data representation.

Driver: The need for strengthening the operation and the effectiveness of the NRM.

10.3 Protection of victims

Q78. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding the provision of a reflection period and/or legal residence for (presumed) third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings during 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Q79. Were there any developments regarding the provision of information to, assistance to and support of (presumed) third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings during 2024?

1.Development: Establishment of a specialised team for the protection of victims of violence and trafficking in human beings within the General Secretariat for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection.

Objective: The work of the group is structured around three pillars: prevention, protection, coordination/cooperation at national and international level. With regard to protection, this includes, inter alia, all measures and protocols implemented during criminal proceedings to avoid secondary victimisation, as well as encouraging disclosure by other victims, and the creation of a protective framework that empowers victims and guarantees their full reparation. Prevention is central to the General Secretariat's efforts, involving the review of national legal frameworks, proposing amendments to enhance victims' rights and align with international standards, raising awareness, and training frontline professionals. Additionally, collaboration with civil society organizations and NGOs aims to strengthen and coordinate protection and reintegration services, exemplified by

the National Emergency Response Mechanism—an initiative developed with UNHCR, operational since 2021, and recognised by the European Union Crime Prevention Network for its role in preventing human trafficking by protecting vulnerable minors and expanding support to homeless or at-risk adults. On a national level, cooperation among governmental institutions and relevant organisations is fostered to combat human trafficking and protect victims, with plans to establish an inter-ministerial working group to identify systemic issues, consolidate best practices, and improve state responses in prosecution and victim protection. Furthermore, strengthening international cooperation is deemed essential to effectively address human trafficking on a global scale.

Driver: The Greek government decided to establish the said team acknowledging that there is a strong nexus between human trafficking and migration flows and especially considering that vulnerable populations—particularly unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless persons—are at heightened risk of being trafficked.

2.Development: During the reporting period, EKKA has built partnerships with IOs and NGOs for the implementation of the following projects:

- PROCAP / PROtection of victims of trafficking, CAPacity building and support to key stakeholders, co-funded by the European Union under the Programme Greece – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2021-2027, as a Specific Action on the provision of services to human trafficking victims who are third-country nationals.

EKKA has partnered with Solidarity Now, a Greek NGO, and KMOP (Centre of Care for Families and Children) to ensure a holistic approach to victim protection, through (a) the operation of mobile units in Attica and Central Macedonia region providing direct services to third country national victims including psychosocial support, legal advice and representation, translation and interpretation, and social integration activities among others, and (b) the development of training material for front-line professionals.

- Educational staff seminars and skills development sessions to support Victims of Human Trafficking with the aim of their reintegration, funded by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum of the Hellenic Republic – Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund 2021-2027.

EKKA has partnered with the International Organization for Migration - Greece Mission (IOM) and the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MoMA) to implement a new Specific Action providing (a) educational trainings targeting front-line professionals, and (b) in-kind support to human trafficking victims who are third country nationals through vocational training, language and cultural orientation, healthcare services, and support for establishing small businesses, among others, with the objective to promote their social integration.

Objective: The main objective of these partnerships is to enhance both quantity and quality of direct services for human trafficking victims, and to inform front-line professionals on the multilateral dimensions of the phenomenon and facilitate early victim identification and effective case management, including the provision of adequate information and support towards victims.

Driver: Challenges and gaps and in the protection network regarding victim service provision.

10.4 Cooperation with third countries

Q80. Were there any developments involving cooperation with third countries on the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

10.5 Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection

Q81. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the fight against trafficking in human beings of beneficiaries of temporary protection in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

10.6 Other developments

Q82. Were there are any other legal or policy developments in relation to trafficking in human beings in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

11 Return and Readmission

11.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q83. Were there any overarching and/ or crosscutting legal and policy developments regarding return and readmission in 2024?

1.Development: Appointment of National Coordinators for Returns and for Smuggling. In November 2024, the two national Coordinators were appointed and also their competencies were determined.

<https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=773883>

<https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=773116>

Objective: Better coordination of return strategies and prevention of smuggling.

Driver:

2.Development: The Establishment of a National Return Coordinator – Art. 192 Law 5078/2023 (G.G. A' 211/2023). The National Return Coordinator is a novelty of the Law. Works closely with the EU High-Level Network for Returns, EU Return Coordinator, Frontex and EUAA. The National Return Coordinator focuses on providing practical and operational support to competent national authorities to increase the effectiveness of the overall return process.

[Relevant link]: https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20230100211

Objective:

Driver:

11.2 Forced return

Q84. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to forced return of irregular migrants and unsuccessful international protection applicants in 2024?

Q85. Were there any developments at national level regarding participation in Joint Return Operations in 2024?

Development: In 2024, Greece received support from Frontex - the European Border and Coast Guard Agency for the organization or participation in Joint Return Operations (JRO), in cooperation with the other MS. During 2024, our Country participated in a Joint Return Operation (JRO) with France as the organizing country, with destination Bangladesh (25-01-2024) and undertook the organization and successfully carried out seven (7) Joint Return Operations (JRO), with destination Georgia and Pakistan (20-02-2024, 09-04-2024, 25-04-2024, 21-05-2024, 20-08-2024, 24-09-2024 and 22-10-2024) and one (1) Joint Return Operation (JRO), with destination Pakistan and Bangladesh (10-12-2024). For all the above return operations, the "FAR" module of the Organization's "IRMA" platform was used.

Objective: The return of third-country nationals who do not justify or no longer justify their stay in our country, utilizing for this purpose the existing cooperation with the Frontex Agency and other Member States.

Driver: Strengthening forced returns within the framework of cooperation with the Frontex Agency.

11.3 (Assisted) Voluntary return and reintegration

Q86. Were there any legal or policy developments with regard to (assisted) voluntary return, including return counselling, in 2024?

Development: Continuation of counselling about voluntary returns (through AVRR) to the administratively detained third-country nationals against whom a return decision has been issued, in order to motivate them to depart voluntarily (through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program provided by IOM Greece).

Objective: Better implementation and increase of voluntary returns.

Driver:

Q87. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding reintegration measures in 2024?

Note: please also include developments in relation to your participation in Frontex Joint Reintegration Services

Development: Participation in the European Reintegration Program (EURP – former Joint Reintegration Services JRS). This program is intended to be a strong measure for the financial support and reintegration of third-country nationals to be returned to their country, in the context of both forced and voluntary returns. On 31-03-2024, the Directorate of Migration Management Directorate of the Hellenic Police Headquarters signed the "Agreement Acceptance Letter", which includes the acceptance of the terms and responsibilities for the use and management of the electronic platform "RIAT" and the protection of personal data as a prerequisite for the participation of the Hellenic Police in this Frontex Service and sent it to the Organization. In the context of the utilization of this Program and with regard to forced returns, cases continue to be uploaded to the RIAT platform by the Police, while it is noted that the Program is already being successfully implemented in the Pre-Removal Detention Centers (PRO.KE.KA) of Amygdaleza, Tavros and Korinthos.

Objective: Reintegration assistance as a measure under the EURP ensures that the immediate needs of third-country nationals upon their arrival in the country of return are met and sustainable return and reintegration is achieved.

Driver: Further strengthening the returns of third-country nationals to their country, which will be based on smooth reintegration procedures in their country.

11.4 Detention

Q88. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding, detention, alternatives to detention of irregular migrants and unsuccessful international protection applicants in 2024, including minors and families with children?

a. Detention

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

b. Alternatives to detention

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

11.5 Cooperation with countries of origin and transit

Q89. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding cooperation with third countries in 2024 on return and reintegration management?

Development: Following its signature in November 2023, in 2024 the process for promoting the ratification, by the Hellenic Parliament, of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Members of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), of the other part (also known as the "Samoa Agreement", which is the successor of the "Cotonou Partnership Agreement"), was initiated. Article 74 of the "Samoa Agreement" reaffirms the right of the Parties to return illegally residing migrants in their respective territories.

Objective: Establishing a legally binding framework governing returns and readmissions, resembling the legally binding nature of the "Cotonou Partnership Agreement" that had been in force previously.

Driver: Addressing and preventing the challenges posed by irregular migration.

Examples: identification of a TCN and consular cooperation, bilateral readmission agreements, bilateral implementing protocols under EU readmission agreements, etc.

Note to observer countries: please also report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

11.6 Other developments

Q90. Were there any other legal or policy developments in relation to return and readmission in 2024?

Development: Joint Ministerial Decision "Establishment of a National List of countries designated as "safe countries of origin". On 27 December 2024, after

the mandatory revision of up-to-date international sources, the JMD recasts the national list which characterize the following countries as safe countries of origin: Egypt, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Georgia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Morocco, Bangladesh, Benin, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Moldova, Angola.

[<https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=775298>]

Objective:

Driver:

12 Migration and development

Q91. Were there any developments aimed at facilitating synergies between migration and development in third countries in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note: please report on developments relating to the explicit linkage of the international development cooperation policies of your Member State to migration related issues. An example could be a fellowship scheme allowing students to undertake qualifications in EU countries and apply the learning in their home country. Another example would be development policies explicitly aimed at addressing root causes for forced and/or irregular migration. Any policies, legislation and activities related to remittances and diaspora engagement fall under this chapter as well.

Q92. Were there any developments regarding the creation of opportunities for third-country nationals to work in your country under circular migration⁸ in 2024?

Development:

Objective:

Driver:

Note to observer countries for question 92: please also report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

⁸ The EMN Glossary (v.10.0) defines circular migration as the repetition of legal migration by the same person between two or more countries.