

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

Since 2014, the Eastern Mediterranean migration route has served as an important pathway for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants crossing to Europe from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The Eastern Mediterranean route refers to the migratory route to Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria, primarily by way of Turkey.

According to the UNHCR, a total of 7,879 asylum seekers entered in Greece via Turkey in 2021, of which 3,568 arrived by sea and 4,311 arrived by land. The majority of these asylum seekers arrived in the Evros region and on the island of Lesbos. At the end of August, 2021, some 6,650 refugees and asylum seekers resided on the Aegean islands.

Cyprus and Bulgaria, in particular, have experienced a significant increase in migration flows during 2021, with almost 11,000 migrants and asylum seekers and 8,900 new arrivals, respectively. For both countries, this was a 38% growth in new arrivals compared to 2020.

For further information:

Institutional Websites and NGOs

UNHCR - Mediterranean Situation 2021, Greece

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

IOM - Flow Monitoring (Europe)

<https://migration.iom.int/europe/arrivals#content-tab-anchor>

UNHCR- Aegean Islands Weekly Snapshot, 16 - 22 August 2021

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/86454>

MMC snapshot: Access to information among Afghans on the move towards Greece

<https://mixedmigration.org/resource/4mi-snapshot-access-to-information-among-afghans-on-the-move-towards-greece/>

Caritas - Caritas in Greece protects the rights of migrants and refugees facing Covid-19

<https://www.caritas.org/2020/06/covid-19-in-greece/>

Online Newspapers and Periodicals

SANT'EGIDIO, Afghan refugee children's kites in Lesbos

<https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30284/langID/en/itemID/43953/Afghan-refugee-children-s-kites-in-Lesbos-a-sign-of-hope-concludes-Sant-Egidio-s-summer-mission.html>

IOM, Urgent Accommodation for Over 2,500 Vulnerable Migrants, Refugees transferred from Greek Islands

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-provides-urgent-accommodation-over-2500-vulnerable-migrants-refugees-transferred-greek-islands>

AA, Number of asylum seekers on Aegean Islands drops by 76%: Greece

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/number-of-asylum-seekers-on-aegean-islands-drops-by-76-greece/2422746>

UNHCR, Pope Francis calls for solidarity with refugees and migrants on visit to Cyprus and Greece

<https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/24369-pope-francis-calls-for-solidarity-with-refugees-and-migrants-on-visit-to-cyprus-and-greece.html>

Pope Francis returns to Lesbos, Greece and pleads for action on migrant crisis

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/05/1061607883/pope-francis-lesbos-greece-refugee-crisis>