



## Migration profile

### GREECE

#### A. Executive Summary

Situated in the most southern part of the Balkan peninsula, the Hellenic Republic is a key actor in migration and asylum. Greece achieved its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. During World War Two, Italy invaded it, and subsequently Germany occupied it while the country was torn apart by a civil war. After a period of military regime, in 1974 democratic elections were held, and a parliamentary republic was established.<sup>i</sup> It has been a member of the European Union since 1981 and the Schengen area since 2000.<sup>ii</sup>

Due to its geographical location, Greece is the gateway to Europe for people arriving from the Middle East, and has become a transit and destination country for many refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>iii</sup> In 2022, there were 147,420 people in Greece holding a refugee status, mainly coming from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine.<sup>iv</sup> Most of them arrived by sea, seeking refuge in Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Kos, and Leros.<sup>v vi</sup>

Greece has also suffered the consequences of climate change. In 2021, 66,518 forced internal displacements were recorded in the country due to climate-driven disasters.<sup>vii</sup>

As far as immigration, in 2020, there were 1,340,456 immigrants in Greece. The leading countries of origin were Albania, Germany, Georgia, Bulgaria, and Russia.<sup>viii</sup> At the same time, Greece has historically been a migrant-sending country, and because of its 2010 economic crisis a large-scale emigration resurfaced.<sup>ix</sup> Most emigrants moved to Germany, the United Kingdom, and Turkey.<sup>x</sup>

The post-World War Two years saw rapid economic and social changes in the country, with tourism and shipping becoming great income sources for the local economy. However, the 2008 global financial crisis had a devastating effect on Greece, resulting in recession and severe debt.<sup>xi</sup> In 2020, the most important sectors of the economy were the wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food services (23.8%), public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities (21.6%), and real estate activities (15.9%).<sup>xii</sup> In 2021 Greece's GDP amounted to US\$ 214,873,879,830,<sup>xiii</sup> experiencing an annual growth rate of 8.4% compared to the previous year's that had a -9 decrease, due mainly to the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>xiv</sup> In 2021, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) net inflows represented 2.9% of the country's GDP,<sup>xv</sup> and the inflation rate was 1.2% of its GDP.<sup>xvi</sup>

#### Country Profile

##### I. Basic Information

Greece is located in the southeastern part of Europe, at the confluence of three different continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It borders Albania, the Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. It also includes more than 2,000 islands and 15,021 km of coastline. There are three geographical regions: continental (mountainous), peninsular, and insular.<sup>xvii</sup> Administratively, it is divided into 13 regions.<sup>xviii</sup>

It has a total surface area of 128,900 sq. km and a population of 10,352,545.<sup>xix</sup> Athens is the capital and largest city.<sup>xx</sup> Greek is the official and most spoken language in the country. However, other regional languages are also used: Cretan, Tsakonian, Cappadocian, Maniot, Yevanic, and Pontic. Minority languages include Turkish, Macedonian, Armenian, Albanian, Romani, Bulgarian, Aromanian, and Ladino.<sup>xxi</sup> Concerning religion, 98% of the population is Orthodox, 1.3% Muslim, and 0.7% to other religions.<sup>xxii</sup> Greeks are the major ethnic group (more than 90% of the people), followed by other minorities like Albanians, Romanis, Aromanians, Macedonians, Arvanites, Turkish, and Pomaks.<sup>xxiii</sup>

## II. International and Internal Migrants

As of 2020, in Greece there were 1,340,456 immigrants (12.52% of the total population). 47.94% were male, while 52.06% were female. There has been an increasing trend: in 1990, there were 618,139 immigrants (6.06% of the population), while by 2005 they were 1,190,707 (10.83%). Albanians were by far the largest group; in fact, by 2020, they were 446,614 (33.32% of the whole migrant stock, and 4.17% of the Greek population). The following countries were Germany (116,644 people, 8.7% of the stock), Georgia (85,065, 6.35%), Bulgaria (74,359, 5.55%), and Russia (55,281, 4.12%).<sup>xxiv</sup>

Greece's porous coastline is, together with Cyprus and Bulgaria, one of the entryways to Europe from the Middle East, within the so-called Eastern Route. In recent years, the Eastern Route has become the most common path used to access the EU (in 2015, 885,386 people used it; in 2016, 182,277 people; and in 2019, 83,333 people). After experiencing a few years of decrease, in 2022 that route became once again very popular among migrants arriving from Africa and the Middle East (43,906 people). As of January 2023, the main countries of origin of these migrants were Syria, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Somalia.<sup>xxv</sup>

Many Albanians are employed in agriculture, and most of them are often temporary migrants who come in for three months to (irregularly) work in the fields and then go back to neighbouring Albania until the following year's job opportunity. In 2020, this immigration flow was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, seriously threatening both Albanian and Greek economies and prompting the Greek authorities to issue temporary work permits.<sup>xxvi</sup> <sup>xxvii</sup> Bangladeshis are also a significant presence in the Greek agrarian seasonal labour market. However, they often face abuse regarding work, wage, and housing conditions.<sup>xxviii</sup> Other sectors that host a big portion of the migrant labour force in Greece include catering and tourism. These sectors are characterised by job precariousness, discrimination, and informal labour (which at the same time has led migrants to be greatly affected by the negative effects of the economic crisis brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic).<sup>xxix</sup>

The main pattern of internal migration in Greece is known as "population deconcentration": there seem to be large migration outflows from the capital, Athens, into the rest of the country. In addition to that, there is a secondary parallel phenomenon of significant inflows of the population into other large or middle-size cities all over the country. Apparently, then, people leaving Athens are not ending up in rural areas but in different second-tier urban contexts.<sup>xxx</sup>

### III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

During most of its contemporary history, Greece has been a migrant-sending country. The 2010 Greek economic crisis caused a large-scale emigration mainly due to the country's socio economic instability, the search for job opportunities, and better living conditions abroad.<sup>xxxix</sup> Nevertheless, in 2021 the net migration average was -14,806.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The Hellenic Statistical Authority lacks data regarding emigration.<sup>xxxix</sup> However, according to the United Nations, in 2019, there were 1,039,501 Greek emigrants registered abroad.<sup>xxxix</sup> In 2019, Greek emigration to OECD countries decreased by -11% (36,000 people). Approximately 43% of them migrated to Germany, 16% to the United Kingdom, and 11% to Turkey, where in 2021 a significant increase in the number of emigrants occurred (around 11% compared to 2% of total emigration from 2009-2018). Other hosting countries were the Netherlands (9%), and Switzerland (3%).<sup>xxxv</sup> As for annual remittance inflows, they represented 0.3% of the national GDP.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Greece has been for decades a transit country for migration. Due to its geographical location, migrants identify Greece as a preferred route to reach an alternative place with greater opportunities in Europe. The main push factors for the emigration of transit migrants are the increase in police round-ups, deportations, lengthy periods of prison detention, the abuse and exploitation of migrants, and difficulties of integration in the country.<sup>xxxvii</sup> During the European migration crisis in 2015-2016, Greece was one of the main gateways to Europe. The government implemented new measures adding more personnel on the islands for asylum seekers and ensuring that the 2016 EU-Turkey agreement, intended to slow irregular migration from Turkey into Europe, was implemented.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Most of the migrants enter through the Greek islands of Lesbos and Kos near the Turkish coast, which is safer than the much longer Central Mediterranean route. Some also rely on smugglers and are exposed to dangerous routes to entry into European countries.<sup>xxxix</sup>

### IV. Forced Migrants (internally displaced, asylum seekers and refugees, climate displaced people)

As of 2022, in Greece there were 147,420 persons with refugee status.<sup>xl</sup> 19,386 of them were refugees registered within that year, and the country also received 37,362 new asylum applications.<sup>xli xlii</sup> Their main countries of origin were Afghanistan (35%), Syria (17%), Iraq (11%), and Palestine (10%). It is worth noting that 38% of the resolutions referred to minors, 48% focused on the 18-34 age group, and 14% on the 35-64 age group. 62% of refugee decisions were taken for male refugees and 38% were female.<sup>xliii</sup>

People coming from these countries are fleeing wars, conflicts, and humanitarian crises. Asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran enter Greece by land, following the Balkan route, while those from Syria and Iraq enter Greece via the Eastern Mediterranean route, crossing the sea from Turkey to Greece.<sup>xliv xlv</sup> Altogether, 12,758 of the arrivals in 2022 were by sea and 6,022 by land route, while 326 people were recorded as dead/missing on route to Greece.<sup>xlvi</sup> So far in 2023, 2,894 arrivals have been recorded in Greece, and 2,479 occurred by sea, while 415 used the land route.<sup>xlvii</sup> The places in Greece where people seeking refuge arrive are Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Kos, and Leros.<sup>xlviii xlix</sup>

The Greek law recognises refugee and asylum seeker status, and the government has a system in place to protect refugees through an independent service and an appeals authority under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The law provides access to certified interpreters throughout the process, legal assistance for appeals, and the right to remain in the country while the case is being appealed.<sup>1</sup>

Asylum seekers are entitled to reception conditions from the moment they submit an asylum application and throughout the asylum procedure.<sup>li</sup> They can either receive financial assistance, or have access to house applications (during the examination of their application for international protection), accommodation centres (which may operate in public or private buildings managed by public or private entities), international agencies and private dwellings, flats and hotels rented on housing programmes implemented by public or private non-profit entities and international agencies. Also, at the end of 2021, various shelters remained operational, including large-scale camps, initially designed as emergency shelter facilities, flats, and NGO-run facilities.<sup>lii</sup> However, the steady arrival of people seeking protection has increasingly demanded more reception places for asylum seekers and refugees, especially unaccompanied minors and other persons with special needs.<sup>liii</sup> Camps have significant overcrowding problems and a lack of privacy, resulting in many people being housed in tents and several families sharing the same space.<sup>liv</sup>

Asylum seekers are not allowed to leave the island where they arrive until the assessment procedure of their application is completed. They are also entitled to health care and education. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, staffing shortages and gaps in the vulnerability assessment process, and other bureaucratic hurdles have prevented asylum seekers from having full access to basic services.<sup>lv</sup> In the case of persons whose refugee status has been recognised, they are entitled to access the labour market. However, job offers are limited, and bureaucratic obstacles do exist, like opening a bank account or obtaining a tax or social security registration number. They also have difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents to apply for a job or to rent a house, and in obtaining a health card necessary for medical services.<sup>lvi</sup>

Finally, in 2021 66,518 internal displacements were recorded in Greece due to climate disasters caused by earthquakes, floods, storms, and wildfires.<sup>lvii</sup>

## **V. Victims of Human Trafficking**

As the EU stated, Greece has become a transit and destination country for trafficking victims, mainly involved in sexual exploitation, forced labour, and begging. In many cases, smugglers function as traffickers. Family conditions, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and irregular status of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers make them especially vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>lviii</sup>

Greece is Tier 2 in the U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report. Traffickers operating in Greece subject women and children coming from Eastern and Southern Europe, South and Central Asia, Cameroon, Georgia, Iraq, Nigeria, and Russia to sex trafficking in unlicensed brothels, on the street, in strip clubs, in massage parlours, and in hotels. Instead, victims of forced labour are mainly men and children originally from Africa, Eastern Europe, South Asia, and Syria. Migrant workers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, and Pakistan are exploited in

debt bondage and forced labour in agriculture. Romani children from Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania are employed to sell goods on the streets, beg, or commit petty thefts. Likewise, unaccompanied children from Afghanistan are engaged in survival sex in the country. Trafficking usually takes place at the islands' Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) and in migrant and refugee camps. Most migrants and asylum seekers rely on smugglers and, in some instances, are forced to exploitation upon arrival in Greece.<sup>lix</sup>

In 2021 police investigated 20 cases with allegedly 60 suspects. The government prosecuted 342 defendants, compared to only 16 of them in 2020. Courts convicted 116 traffickers, compared with 19 in the previous year. However, they never granted to-date restitution or compensation to any of the victims. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, courts experienced severe administrative and judicial delays because the government temporarily closed courts, and positive Covid-19 cases reduced their staff. In 2020, media reported that authorities investigated 15 police officers affiliated with a gang that protected casinos, brothels, and massage parlours.<sup>lx</sup>

During 2021, the government continued offering protection to victims. It identified 130 victims (59 of sex trafficking, 49 of forced labour, 2 of forced criminality, and 20 in more than one category). There were 80 women, 11 men, 18 girls, and 21 boys. Moreover, 118 were foreign victims. At the RICs, officials identified 64 possible cases involving abuse and exploitation in the country of origin or transit among undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children. Reports documented violent pushbacks of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers into Turkey, while civil society and social media alleged that some border police assaulted and harassed them. Labour inspection in rural areas and on islands was limited. The government maintained a multi-disciplinary national referral mechanism (NRM), including Standard Operating Procedures and referral forms. In 2021, it referred 37 victims for care and placements, while civil society organisations referred 73 victims. In cooperation with NGOs, the government provided shelter, medical care, legal aid, psycho-social support, and reintegration services to victims. It organised awareness campaigns to prevent human trafficking targeting children, migrants, parents, as well as public and seasonal workers.<sup>lxi</sup>

## **VI. National Legal Framework**

Law 4332/2015 regulates citizenship in Greece. It is an Amendment of provisions of the Greek Citizenship Code (Law 4521/2014) in order to adapt the Greek legislation to the directives of the European Parliament and of the Council 2011/98/EU regarding the uniform procedure of submitting an application for granting third-country nationals a residence and work permit in the territory of a member state. It further establishes a common set of rights for workers from third countries legally residing in a member state, and 2014/36/EU regarding entry conditions and residence of citizens of third countries for the purpose of seasonal work and other provisions.<sup>lxii</sup>

Law 4375/2016 sets the conditions for the organisation and operation of the Asylum Service, Appeals Authority, Reception and Identification Service establishment of a General Reception Secretariat. This law provides a faster recognition procedure and automatic access to employment for holders of asylum cards.<sup>lxiii</sup> Law 4686/2020 is the Greek law on international protection, which provides amendment of provisions of laws 4639/2019, 4375/2016, 4251/2014 and other provisions.<sup>lxiv</sup> Law 4540/2018 amends Law 4251/2014 on Migration and

Social Integration Code on the entry and residence conditions of third-country nationals.<sup>lxv</sup> Law 4825/2021 reforms the procedures for deportations and returns of citizens of third countries, the attraction of investors and digital nomads, issues of residence permits and procedures for granting international protection.<sup>lxvi</sup>

Article 323A of the Criminal Code prosecutes sex and labour trafficking, and prescribes penalties of up to 10 year imprisonment and a fine.<sup>lxvii</sup> Greece ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.<sup>lxviii</sup> It also signed and ratified the ILO Forced Labour Convention and the Abolition of the Forced Labour Convention.<sup>lxix</sup>

The Republic of Greece has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol. It is a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as the relevant 1967 New York Protocol, and has developed its own national asylum system, which is governed by both European and Greek legislation.<sup>lxx</sup>

## **VII. Main Actors**

### *The State*

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum is responsible for immigration in Greece. It issues resident permits for third-country citizens and golden visas for residence permits for permanent investors. The Ministry and IOM in Greece cooperate in the Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Vulnerable Migrants.<sup>lxxi</sup>

The Directorate of Social Integration was established in 2016 in compliance with laws issued by the General Secretariat of Migration Policy of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The Directorate of Social Integration has three different departments: the Policy and Program Planning Department, the Intercultural Mediation Department, the Socio-economic Integration Department and the Support for Beneficiaries of the International Protection Department.<sup>lxxii</sup> The Reception and Identification Service is under the jurisdiction of the General Secretariat for Reception of Asylum Seekers, supervising reception and identification processes throughout Greece. Its mission is to provide humane reception and identification procedures for third-country nationals or stateless individuals entering Greece.<sup>lxxiii</sup> The Asylum Service is the first independent structure in the country handling the evaluation of international protection applications. The purpose of the Asylum Service is to grant international protection. Law 3907/2011 provides that the Asylum Service receives, examines and decides on all applications for international protection lodged in Greece.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

The Hellenic Police also has an Anti-Trafficking Unit within the Organised Crime Division, that includes two different units staffed by 37 officers in Athens and 10 in Thessaloniki. Their task is to investigate trafficking and vice crimes. The Hellenic National Public Health Organisation and regional reception service and asylum officers screen undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children for trafficking indicators at the island Reception and Identification Centres (RIC). EKKA (National Center for Social Solidarity) and the Asylum Service updated SOPs for asylum claims to apply specific procedures if a case officer identifies an asylum seeker as a trafficking victim.<sup>lxxv</sup>

### *International Organisations*

The Asylum Service in Greece is the first independent structure responsible for examining requests for international protection. UNHCR cooperates with the competent Greek authorities and provides assistance, thus contributing to the formation and operation of the country's asylum system. UNHCR's work in Greece informs and raises awareness among the public about refugees.<sup>lxxvi</sup> In this context, UNICEF Greece is also involved in protecting and educating refugee and migrant children.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

IOM in Greece works for the integration of recognised refugees into the Greek society, assists voluntary return and reintegration relocation to other EU member states, site management support, temporary accommodation facilities management support, accommodation and services for unaccompanied children, technical assistance to Greek authorities, and provision of health services in collaboration with relevant local authorities.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

*Medecins Sans Frontieres* (MSF) has been providing medical and humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants in Greece since 1996. In 2015, they expanded their operations in Greece to meet the humanitarian needs of people moving to and from the country. MSF is still active in Greece to provide medical and mental health care to migrants in Athens, Lesbos and Samos.<sup>lxxix</sup>

The Hellenic Red Cross continues to carry out its humanitarian work, taking care of the weakest population groups in the country. It provides reception and social inclusion, intercultural mediation, integrated care and support services to the migrant and refugee population.<sup>lxxx</sup>

#### *NGOs and Other Organisations*

METAdrasi is a Greek NGO founded in 2009, whose main aim is enhancing the reception and integration of refugees and migrants in Greece. Its priority lines of work include: promoting activities leading to the education and inclusion of migrants and refugees, offering protection to unaccompanied and separated migrant children, similarly offering protection to other especially vulnerable groups, and providing adequate translation and interpretation in 43 languages and dialects, involving the METAdrasi's team of trained interpreters.<sup>lxxxi</sup>

The Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) is an NGO founded in 1989, which has since focused on issues of asylum and human rights in Greece. It develops lines of work like offering free-of-charge legal and social advice and direct services to migrants and refugees. While attending to people of a wide range of profiles, they prioritise helping those in especially vulnerable situations (unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking).<sup>lxxxii</sup>

*Zaatar* is a Greek NGO that specialises in supporting migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in the Athens area. One of its main projects is The Orange House, which provides shelter to refugees and offers them medical, psychosocial, and educational assistance. In this area, they also sponsor a mentoring program for unaccompanied migrant children.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

CARE International is a 75-year-old global NGO aimed at fighting poverty with a direct interest in improving the condition of women and girls in situations of vulnerability and empowering them. With so many migrants and refugees in Greece, their work focuses on providing them with financial, legal, bureaucratic, and psychosocial support, as well as offering specialised accommodation for displaced women and young men. They do it primarily in conjunction with local NGOs, supporting and monitoring their work.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

### *The Catholic Church*

The Greek Bishops' Conference is part of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC).<sup>lxxxv</sup> The ICMC runs the Share Network, which supports the reception of refugees and migrants. Through the SIRA Project (Expanding Social Orientation and Integration in Rural Areas), the Share Network encourages communities and newcomers to strengthen integration in Greek rural areas.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> ICMC also cooperates with UNHCR. In 2021, several ICMC experts supported Greek government ministries, providing international protection to nearly 9,165 newly arrived refugees and migrants. ICMC experts assisted in the reception of new arrivals, protection of displaced children, refugee status assessment of vulnerable persons, emotional support and shelter, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, and assistance in integrating refugees.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> The ICMC expert has set up urban working groups to coordinate services provided by various agencies to the refugee population.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

In addition, the Episcopal Conference of Greece is a member of the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE),<sup>lxxxix</sup> which recognised the importance of refugee resettlement programs from Greece to other European countries.<sup>xc xci</sup> It also expressed deep concern following the fire in the Moria camp and underscored as an urgent matter the need for an EU policy for asylum seekers.<sup>xcii</sup> That very issue has also been taken up by Pope Francis following his visit to the island of Lesbos.<sup>xciii</sup>

Furthermore, the Archdiocese of Athens has established the charitable, welfare, and humanitarian aid organisation 'APOSTOLI'.<sup>xciv</sup> This organisation aids the refugee population with different programmes. The Second Homeland programme promotes the social inclusion of the refugee population by organising seminars about Greek culture and language. Its teachers are seconded by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. These seminars provide opportunities to access state exams to obtain a Greek language certificate.<sup>xcv</sup> The programme 'A health trek along the borders' supports people living on the borders of the island of Greece by providing medicines and hygiene supplies necessary for residents living in these areas.<sup>xcvi</sup> APOSTOLI also manages the 'Estia' Accommodation Centre for Unaccompanied Minors, providing reception and accommodation services to 20 asylum seekers/refugees. In addition, they offer psychological support and counselling on social integration, creative participation, primary health care, Greek language, and computer courses. Unaccompanied minors participate in a wide range of ludic, cultural, and environmental activities, which are carried out thanks to the cooperation of APOSTOLI and the holy Archbishopric of Athens with the local community.<sup>xcvii</sup>

*Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII* has been present in Greece since 2014. Its work focuses on refugees arriving in Greece who are at high risk of exploitation. The organisation oversees two reception facilities.<sup>xcviii</sup> The Divine Providence Family House and Hut Bethlehem 'Betania' in Athens host refugees and homeless people, and organise regular street outings.<sup>xcix</sup>

Talitha Kum works within the RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation) programme in Greece, which runs a telephone line dedicated to reporting human trafficking issues. The aim of this programme is to prevent, raise awareness, and provide information about Freedom Centres and the different programmes available to help victims.<sup>c</sup>



The Sant'Egidio Community is also involved with the refugee population in Greece, in the camp at Schisto, where approximately 200 minors live. A group of people belonging to 'Youth for Peace' went there to help the children to feel integrated under the motto 'Christmas for all' and provided them with gifts, shared lunches, and celebrations.<sup>ci</sup> In Lesbos, this community has organised many events to help refugees. In the summer of 2021, the mission developed cultural activities, games, and Greek language courses.<sup>cii</sup>

Furthermore, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians), after the fire that destroyed the camp in Lesbos, launched an appeal to the European Union and the Greek government to provide immediate reception and integration for the refugee population.<sup>ciii</sup> These organisations have assisted refugees living in Lesbos and throughout Greece on several occasions.<sup>civ</sup> <sup>cv</sup> The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters (MSCS) have carried out itinerant missions on the Greek island, collaborating with the Community of Sant'Egidio, to support refugees by distributing food and providing spiritual assistance.<sup>cvi</sup>

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) promotes the social inclusion and integration of refugees and other forced migrants in Greece. It engages in projects supporting people from the time of their arrival and accompanies them toward self-sufficiency and full participation in the new host society.<sup>cvii</sup> JRS Greece runs three centres in Athens: Women's Day Centre, which includes laundry services, showers, and other activities. The Hub Community Centre provides activities that foster integration, such as Greek, English, French, and computer classes. The Pedro Arrupe Centre focuses on welcoming refugee and migrant children into Greek society and schools through complementary education. The centre also delivers food once a month to the most vulnerable families.<sup>cviii</sup> JRS also provides education programmes at early childhood, primary and secondary levels. It offers psychosocial and mental health support by providing safe spaces and activities, case management services, and individual and group counselling. Healthcare services also include primary and preventive measures to reduce health risks.<sup>cix</sup>

Caritas Hellas has invested in providing refugee housing units and purchased 50 containers with individual sanitary facilities and a kitchen for refugees living in Divata.<sup>cx</sup> It has also developed the Wash programme, through which Caritas has set up laundry cleaning services in Northern Greece, in Serres, and Diavata.<sup>cxii</sup> Since July 2019, Caritas Hellas, in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services and Caritas Athens, has joined the Helios programme, which provides support for independent housing, integration, promotion to the labour market, and awareness raising in local communities.<sup>cxii</sup> The New World Social Centre in Neos Kosmos offers safe accommodation and basic food coverage to vulnerable families needing shelter.<sup>cxiii</sup>

The Missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta in Athens, at the headquarters of Caritas Hellas and in an Orthodox church in Anavissos, prepare and distribute food to refugees, detainees, and the destitute. The work of this congregation also focuses on caring for children and meeting their basic needs.<sup>cxiv</sup>

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul on Samos provide the refugee population with spiritual assistance, psychological support, clothing, food, and tarpaulins for the huts, as

well as help them to integrate into the country, providing them with language classes and accompanying them throughout the asylum application process.<sup>cxv</sup>

**March 2023**

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