



Norwegian Embassy

Athens

# Asylum and migration: Norway's support to Greece

FACT SHEET | Last update: September 2020

Assisting the Hellenic authorities in their efforts to manage asylum and migration is a priority for Norway. Through the EEA Grants we continue to offer support towards building and enhancing the capacity of the national asylum services. We also work closely with national authorities and are ready to respond to their request for and assistance, when needed.



Photos: Morten Harangen

## What is new?

- Norway has sent a medical team to Kara Tepe camp on Lesbos, Greece, after the devastating fire at the Moria camp in September 2020. The team comprises 25 members, including 18 doctors and nurses, and 5 paramedics. In coordination with Greek authorities and the WHO, they will offer on-site emergency care of injuries and other significant health care services for a period of six weeks.
- The Norwegian Government will relocate 50 asylum seekers, mainly vulnerable families, from Greece to Norway.
- NORCAP's experts, financed through the EEA Grants, are working alongside Greek authorities in the newly established camp in Kara Tepe, Lesbos. They are helping to set up a transitory camp, assisting the registration and asylum services to become operational very soon. They are also providing input in practical planning in areas such as water and sewage.
- In March 2020, following an emergency appeal by Greece, Norway sent beds, mattresses and tents to Greek migration authorities. The Norwegian contribution comprises 500 bunkbeds, 1500 mattresses and 10 tents.

## In their own words:

«The refugees and migrants in Greece need humanitarian assistance immediately. Our offer to send an emergency medical team is part of the effort to meet the acute need for medical help over the next few weeks»

Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
(11 September 2020)

«Norway has been waiting for eight other European countries to take in asylum seekers under the current initiative, but the situation in Greece is so pressing that we must speed up the process. Norway is offering to relocate 50 asylum seekers»

Monica Mæland, Minister of Justice and Public Security  
(10 September 2020)

«It is important to make these kinds of stand-alone contributions in order to address the urgent humanitarian needs among vulnerable migrants»

Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
(4 March 2020)



Photo: Pål Wilhelmsen

## Ongoing support through the EEA Grants: €57.2 million for the asylum and migration sectors

- The areas of asylum and migration are central to the continuous support Norway offers to Greece, being the main donor country of the EEA Grants. Under the current funding period (2014 – 2021), **Euro 33 million** has been set aside to support the development and enhancement of the asylum and migration systems at national level in Greece.
- An additional **Euro 24.2 million** was allocated to Greece in the previous funding period (2009 – 2014) in relation to migration. Thanks to this funding, more than 27,400 decisions on international protection claims were taken at first instance, more than 11,500 people have benefited from upgraded infrastructure, while 10,250 migrants have received basic welfare services.

## Focusing on the needs of vulnerable asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors

The EEA Grants funding currently supports the functioning of accommodation facilities for vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, especially unaccompanied minors, throughout Greece.

**Through an allocation of Euro 7,632 million of EEA Grants funding, approximately 1,000 vulnerable asylum seekers will find decent accommodation and proper care until 2024. Among those, approximately 800 are unaccompanied minors:**

1. NGO METAdrasi is running two transitional hosting structures in Samos and Chios. 280 unaccompanied minors will benefit.
2. Society for the Care of Minors and Youth is running a long-term accommodation centre in Athens, offering 16 accommodation places to children between 6-12 years of age and two under-aged mothers. In total 96 children will benefit.
3. NGO Arsis operates 12 apartments in Northern Greece, near the camps of Lagadikia, Diavata, Agia Eleni, Drama and Kavala, and offers an additional 4 apartments for women, vulnerable asylum seekers and places in their existing shelter in Thessaloniki. In total 308 vulnerable people will benefit.
4. International Rescue Committee operates 10 Supported Independent Living (SIL) apartments in Athens. A total of 120 people will benefit.
5. Doctors of the World operates one long-term accommodation center in Athens, with 44 places. A total of 175 women and their children will benefit.

# Building the capacity and sustainability of the national asylum and migration services

- Building on lessons learned from the previous funding period, Norway and the EEA Grants donor countries provide financial support and resources in order to ensure the proper functioning of the national asylum and migration management systems and assist asylum seekers to exercise basic rights. The aim is to upgrade services for third country nationals arriving in Greece, with emphasis placed on unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups.
- Through the direct support of UDI - The Norwegian Directorate for Immigration - critical know how and expertise is offered to the national authorities in Greece that play a critical role in the field of asylum and migration and partners from the donor states are facilitated.
- NORCAP, the capacity building branch of the Norwegian Refugee Council, currently deploys 15 national experts who work alongside the Greek authorities in critical locations. This deployment is financed through the EEA Grants. Three experts are now on the islands, embedded in the operation of RIS (the Reception and Identification Service) as well as in the Ministry of Asylum and Migration. They are supporting the setting up and running of a temporary camp in Kara Tepe in Lesbos, for 3,000 migrants and asylum seekers. They are also assisting camp managers across the country in developing standard operating procedures, training modules for the staff and local authorities, in order to increase skills and understanding of practical application of principles of international protection. Three (3) NORCAP experts are seconded to the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), helping the staff further build their capacity in handling unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking.



Photo: SolidarityNow

## Continuous support to the Athens Solidarity Centre

The Athens Solidarity Center (ASC) was established through funding from the EEA Grants and opened in December 2014. It is accessible to all people regardless of nationality, religion, ethnic origin or social status and provides a comprehensive set of services. Through its work, the ASC provides holistic support to individuals at risk of social marginalization and exclusion, paving the way towards their empowerment and self-reliance. All services are free of charge.

**Up to date, 97,000 people have been supported through the Athens Solidarity Center. The EEA Grants continue to fund the operation of the Center.**