UN Special Rapporteurs express concern about the new migration law in Greece

On 19 February 2026, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, sent a letter to the Greek government, calling attention to certain aspects of the law on the promotion of legal migration which appeared not to be in line with Greece's obligations under international human rights law. In this joint communication, the Special Rapporteurs and the Independent Expert expressed their concern that the new Migration Code would impose unfair restrictions on the work of NGOs working in the field of migration in Greece, while criminalising their activity of defence of human rights.

On 2 April 2026, the Greek government responded to the communication, acknowledging the human drama of thousands of people fleeing their homes. In an increasingly complex global landscape, the Greek government continued, they cannot stand idly by in the face of the ever-increasing challenges of instrumentalization of migration, posing a challenge at the country's external borders and undermining the EU's internal security. In such a volatile environment a united and concerted response needs to be both prudent and pragmatic, shielded first and foremost by international law, in tandem with the promotion of a credible and sincere relationship with European societies. Concurrently, the need to protect the country's borders, which are at the same time the EU's external borders, becomes an imperative need for both Greece's national security and the European legal order, while serving as a strong message against the heinous action of human traffickers and smugglers.

On 16 April, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders responded to the Greek government's reply. While appreciating the response to the communication, she expressed her dismay at the argumentation put forward in the Greek government's reply to defend the adoption of the new law on migration. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, the government's response appears to signal a continuation of a policy of denial and conflation in order to continue human rights violations and avoid accountability. For the UN Special Rapporteur, the actions of people traffickers or

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

smugglers, where they are proved to exist, do not relieve the Greek government or any other State authority from its human rights obligations.

More information is available here.

Source(s)

- United Nations (16 April, 2026), [Greece: analysis of the new law on migration and its impact on HRDs supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (joint communication)], https://srdefenders.org/greece-analysis-of-the-new-law-on-migration-and-its-impact-on-hrds-supporting-migrants-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/

Related development(s)
Greek Parliament passes bill on "Promotion of Legal Immigration Policies"
Date of development
16.04.2026
Country
Greece
Thematic area(s)
General asylum and migration development, Access to procedures and non-refoulement
Development type
Policy

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.