21 questions and answers about the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum's bill on illegal immigration

On 3 September 2025, the ministry issued a press release, providing answers to 21 key questions on the changes foreseen by the proposed bill on irregular migration. This is the text of the press release:

1) What changes in the definition of "country of return"?

The concept is broadened to include not only the country of habitual residence, but also the safe third country and the first country of asylum, if the application is rejected as inadmissible.

2) In relation to the "risk of absconding", what does the bill provide?
The criteria become more objective and strict. Examples: lack of permanent residence, change of location without notification and refusal to identify or take biometrics.

3) What is the practical benefit of these changes?
The risk of delays is reduced, returns are accelerated, and the phenomenon of so-called asylum shopping is decreased.

4) What will be the new deadline for voluntary departure?
It will be reduced from 25 days to 14. In exceptional cases, it can be extended up to 60 days, instead of the 120 that was in effect until now.

5) Electronic surveillance is also added. What does this mean?
It provides an intermediate solution between complete freedom and detention. This way we can better monitor the implementation of voluntary departure.

6) What does management gain?
Costs are reduced and compliance is enhanced without the need for immediate booking.

7) In what cases does the ban on entry into Greek territory now become mandatory?
When there is a risk to public order, national security or public health.

8) And for how long can it be valid?

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Up to 10 years, with the possibility of extension for another 5.

9) What is the message this change sends?

That there is no tolerance for re-entry of offenders. It is a measure of deterrence and protection of our society.

10) What penalties are provided for illegal residence?

Minimum imprisonment of two (2) years and a minimum fine of 5,000 euros.

11) Is there a possibility of suspension?

Only if the offender voluntarily departs. In this case, the suspension is activated upon departure.

12) Why such a strict framework?

The aim is to underline the criminal disrespect of illegal residence for the Greek legal system, for which the presence on its territory of a foreigner who has lost this right is not tolerated.

13) What changes does the bill bring to administrative detention?

The grounds are expanded to include security issues. Also, an appeal against detention no longer has a suspensive effect. Finally, the maximum duration is extended from 18 to 24 months with a six-month review.

14) Why was this extension deemed necessary?

To provide sufficient time for authorities to identify and issue travel documents, but also to protect public safety.

15) What are the new penalties for those who enter or re-enter illegally?

For illegal entry, imprisonment of at least 2 years and fines of at least 5,000 euros.

For illegal re-entry by those registered on an persona-non-grata list: imprisonment of at least 3 years and an increased fine of at least €10,000.

Conversion/suspension of the sentence is excluded; suspension is possible only if the perpetrator voluntarily departs from Greece, in which case the suspension begins upon departure.

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16) What is the goal?

To discourage re-entry after removal and show that rules have consequences.

17) What changes for those who have been living illegally for more than 7 years?

The possibility of obtaining a residence permit solely due to their prolonged presence is abolished.

18) With what goal?

So that there is no incentive for non-compliance and that the stay is linked to legal procedures.

19) How will abuse of the asylum system be limited?

With stricter rules for subsequent applications and new tools for rapid return in abusive cases.

20) What does this mean in practice?

As the process is accelerated, resources will be directed to truly valid applications and the system will become more reliable.

21) What will be the general impacts of the bill?

Illegal residence and recidivism will be reduced, thanks to stricter penalties and faster procedures.

The Asylum Service, the Greek Police and the courts will be decongested.

Administrative resources will be directed to real international protection needs. Legal protection will be strengthened, with clearer definitions and criteria.

Source(s)

- Ministry of Migration and Asylum | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (3 September, 2025), 21 ερωτήσεις και απαντήσεις για το νομοσχέδιο του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου για την παράνομη μετανάστευση [21 questions and answers about the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum's bill on illegal immigration], https://migration.gov.gr/21-erotiseis-kai-apantiseis-gia-to-nomoschedio-toy-ypoyrgeioy-metanasteysis-kai-asyloy-gia-tin-paranomi-metanasteysi/

Date of development

03.09.2025

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Document generated on 25-11-2026
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Country
Greece
Thematic area(s)
General asylum and migration development
Development type
Legislation

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