The Greek Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Mr. Thanos Plevris, paid an official visit to Vienna, where he met with the Federal Minister of the Interior of Austria, Mr. Gerhard Karner, in the context of the close cooperation between Greece and Austria to address the challenges of migration and to strengthen dialogue at the European level.

The meeting focused mainly on the cooperation between the two countries to reduce migration flows and increase returns to third countries. At the same time, the issue of combating the instrumentalization of migration flows, the smooth functioning of the asylum system and the fight against illegal trafficking networks were discussed.

The Greek Minister also presented the main sections of the new law on returns, which criminalizes illegal residence, abolishes the “seven-year rule” and lifts the suspensive effect of successive asylum applications. As he stated, “anyone who resides illegally in Greece is punished with imprisonment from 2 to 5 years. There is only one way to avoid the sentence: return to the country of origin. The message is clear: prison or return”. He also underlined that “for asylum seekers, administrative detention is increasing or electronic monitoring is being implemented”, so that, as he noted, the clear message is sent that “anyone who enters Greece illegally cannot stay, cannot continue their journey, they have only one choice: to return back”.

Source(s)

- Ministry of Migration and Asylum | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (22 September, 2025), Θάνος Πλεύρης από τη Βιέννη – Συνεργασία Ελλάδας και Αυστρίας για τη μείωση των μεταναστευτικών ροών και την αύξηση των επιστροφών σε τρίτες χώρες [hanos Plevris from Vienna – Cooperation between Greece and Austria to reduce migration flows and increase returns to third countries], https://migration.gov.gr/en/thanos-pleyris-apo-ti-vienni-synergasia-elladas-kai-aystrias-gia-ti-meiosi-ton-metanasteytikon-roon-kai-tin-ayxisi-ton-epistrofon-se-trites-chores/

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