The proposed bill aims to strengthen the country's institutional framework against irregular immigration and updates Greek legislation in accordance with Directive 2008/115/EC.

The bill formulates rules and procedures that apply to the return of illegally staying third-country nationals, implementing the guidelines of the proposal for the new European return regulation.

The bill aims to fill identified gaps in the implementation of the existing framework, highlighting the need for effective management of returns, preventing abuse of asylum procedures and strengthening the rule of law.

Main points of the bill include:

Update of definitions in accordance with the guidelines of the new regulation

- Expansion of the concept of country of return. The following are added as countries of return: a) the country of habitual residence, b) the safe third country, as defined in article 91 of Law 4939/2022 (A' 111), due to which the application for international protection was rejected as inadmissible and c) the first country of asylum due to which the application for international protection was rejected as inadmissible.
- Addition of stricter definitions of the risk of absconding. The following objective criteria that constitute a risk of absconding are added: a) the absence of a residence or known place of residence, b) the abandonment or change of place of residence or known place of residence without prior notification to the competent authorities, and c) the refusal to submit to identification by biometric or other means.

Voluntary departure

- Reduction of the foreseen timeline for voluntary departure from 25 days to 14 days; and shorter extension of the deadline for voluntary departure for exceptional reasons from 120 days to 60 days.
- Imposition of electronic surveillance as a restrictive measure during the voluntary departure period.

Prohibition of entry into the country

- Stricter framework, in accordance with the guidelines of the regulation. The risk posed by the presence of a third-country national to public order and

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security, national security and public health is provided for as a mandatory reason for banning entry.
- The duration of the entry ban period is extended from 5 to 10 years and the possibility of extending it for up to 5 years is introduced.

Criminalisation of illegal residence in the country after the completion of the administrative procedure

- Imprisonment of at least two years and, in case of a repeat offense, three years, and fine of 10,000 euros. No possibility of conversion or suspension of sentence.
- Possibility of suspending the execution of a sentence under the condition that the convicted third-country national declares his/her voluntary departure from Greece. The suspension begins upon departure from the country.
- Anyone who remains in the country illegally will have two options: detention or return.

Detention

- Extension of the grounds for detention to include security concerns. Explicit provision regarding non-suspension of detention in case of appeal; extension of the duration of detention, including extensions in accordance with the guidelines of the regulation from 18 months to 24 and review of the conditions of detention every six months.
- Increase in fines for those who return to the country illegally. The previous range was from 3,000 to 10,000 euros, the range of the proposed bill is from 10,000 to 30,000 euros.
- Increase in penalty limits for those who enter the country illegally, from 3 months to at least 2 years, in case of aggravating cases from 6 months to at least 3 years.
- Increase in fines from 1,500 to 5,000 euros; the fines for aggravating circumstances increase from 3,000 to 10,000 euros.
- Limitations in the possibility of submitting subsequent applications for international protection.
- Prior to the bill, those who had resided illegally in the country for at least 7 years could apply for a residence permit. This option is abolished by the proposed bill.

Source(s)

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- Ministry of Migration and Asylum | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (8 August, 2025), Κατατέθηκε στη Βουλή το νομοσχέδιο του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου με τίτλο: «Αναμόρφωση πλαισίου και διαδικασιών επιστροφών πολιτών τρίτων χωρών» [The bill of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum entitled: "Reform of the framework and procedures for the return of third-country nationals" was submitted to Parliament], https://migration.gov.gr/katatethike-sti-voyli-to-nomoschedio-toy-ypoyrgeioy-metanasteysis-kai-asyloy-me-titlo-anamorfosi-plaisioy-kai-diadikasion-epistrofon-politon-triton-choron/

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