

# Access to procedures and non-refoulement - Greece | DIP EUAA

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## Overview

## Relevant EU legislation

Greece is bound by the recast Asylum Procedures Directive and has transposed its provisions through the [Greek Asylum Law 4375/2016 \[Νόμος 4375/2016 \(Κωδικοποιημένος\) - ΦΕΚ Α 51/03.04.2016\]](#) and further amendments.

## National legislation

- Presidential Decree No. 20/2023 Abolition of the General Directorate for the Coordination and Management of Migration and Home Affairs Programs. Amendment of Presidential Decree 106/2020 "Organization of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (Α'255) | Προεδρικό Διάταγμα 20/2023 (ΦΕΚ Α'

43/24.02.2023) Κατάργηση της Γενικής Διεύθυνσης Συντονισμού και Διαχείρισης Προγραμμάτων Μετανάστευσης και Εσωτερικών Υποθέσεων. Τροποποίηση του π.δ. 106/2020 «Οργανισμός Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου» (Α' 255)., (24 February 2023),

[https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek\\_pdf=20230100043](https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20230100043)

- [Presidential Decree 77/2022 \(OGG A' 212/17.11.2022\) Establishment of Closed Controlled Access Centers and abolition of Reception and Identification Centers \(R.I.C.\). Amendment of P.D. 106/2020 "Organization of the Ministry" | Προεδρικό Διάταγμα 77/2022 \(ΦΕΚ Α 212/17.11.2022\) ίδρυση Κλειστών Ελεγχόμενων Δομών \(Κ.Ε.Δ.\) και κατάργηση Κέντρων Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης \(Κ.Υ.Τ.\) Τροποποίηση του π.δ. 106/2020 «Οργανισμός Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου» \(Α' 255\), \(17 November 2022\)](#)
- [Law 4939/2022 on Ratification of Code of Legislation on the reception, international protection \(OGG A' 111/10.06.2022\)| Κύρωση Κώδικα Νομοθεσίας για την υποδοχή, τη διεθνή προστασία πολιτών τρίτων χωρών και ανιθαγενών και την προσωρινή προστασία σε περίπτωση μαζικής εισροής εκτοπισθέντων αλλοδαπών., \(10 June 2022\)](#)
- [Circular no.106206/22-02-2022 on Management of applications for international protection of family members | Εγκύκλιος 106206/22-02-2022 για τη Διαχείριση αιτήσεων διεθνούς προστασίας μελών οικογένειας, \(22 February 2022\)](#)
- [Circular no. 86750/14-02-2022 Regarding the change of data of applicants for international protection | Εγκύκλιος 86750/14-02-2022 Αλλαγή βασικών στοιχείων αιτούντων διεθνή προστασία, \(14 February 2022\)](#)
- [Circular 31/08/2022- Lodging international protection application before Regional Asylum Offices/ Asylum Un 31/08/2022 Καταγραφή αιτημάτων διεθνούς προστασίας από τα ΠΓΑ/ΑΚΑ της Υπηρεσίας Ασύλου, \(31 August 2022\)](#)
- [Presidential Decree 106 on the Organisation of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. \(Government Gazette A'-255-23-12-2020\) | Οργανισμός Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου, Προεδρικό Διάταγμα 106 \(ΦΕΚ Α'-255-23-12-2020\) , \(23 December 2020\)](#)
- [Greek Asylum Law 4375/2016 \[Νόμος 4375/2016 \(Κωδικοποιημένος\) - ΦΕΚ Α 51/03.04.2016\]](#)

## Competent authority and stakeholders

<b>Area</b>	<b>Competent national authority</b>	<b>Assistance to competent authority (if applicable)</b>
<b>Screening at the external border</b>	<a href="#">Hellenic Police   Ελληνική Αστυνομία (ΕΛ. ΑΣ.)</a>	Not applicable
<b>Biometric data</b>	<a href="#">Hellenic Police   Ελληνική Αστυνομία (ΕΛ. ΑΣ.)</a>	Not applicable

Area	Competent national authority	Assistance to competent authority (if applicable)
<p><b>Making an application</b></p>	<p><b>At the border:</b> <a href="#">Reception and Identification Service   Υπηρεσία Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης (at Reception and Identification Centers)</a></p> <p>Any Greek Authority at all legal points of entry at the border and at the airport /port transit zones</p> <p><b>On the territory:</b> <a href="#">Asylum Service   Υπηρεσία Ασύλου</a> (for subsequent applications and UAMs) <a href="#">Reception and Identification Service   Υπηρεσία Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης</a> (at Reception and Identification Centers appointments online )</p> <p><b>In detention:</b> Detention authority (simple registration)</p> <p><a href="#">Asylum Service   Υπηρεσία Ασύλου</a> (full registration)</p> <p>In case of emergency/mass influx support may be provided by: <a href="#">the Hellenic Police   Ελληνική Αστυνομία (ΕΛ. ΑΣ.)</a> or by personnel of the <a href="#">armed forces</a> under the exceptional border procedure which applies following a relevant Ministerial Decision. Such a Ministerial Decision is no longer in force.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Area	Competent national authority	Assistance to competent authority (if applicable)
<b>Registering an application</b>	<a href="#">Asylum Service   Υπηρεσία Ασύλου</a> (for UAMS and subsequent applications, appointments <a href="#">online</a> only for subsequent applications) <a href="#">Reception and Identification Service   Υπηρεσία Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης</a>	Not applicable
<b>Lodging an application</b>	<a href="#">Asylum Service   Υπηρεσία Ασύλου</a> <a href="#">Reception and Identification Service   Υπηρεσία Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης</a>	Not applicable
<b>Information provision</b>	<a href="#">Asylum Service   Υπηρεσία Ασύλου</a> <a href="#">Reception and Identification Service   Υπηρεσία Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης</a>	Not applicable

## Access to the territory

### Official external border-crossing points

Greece has [28 external air border crossing points](#).

Greece has [19 external land border crossing points](#).

Greece has [60 external sea border crossing points](#).

### Emergency measures in cases of mass arrivals

In case of mass arrivals of third country citizens or stateless persons, who submit applications for international protection at the border or in the transit zone of ports or airports of the country, or while they remain in Reception and Identification Centers or Closed Controlled Access Centres, the registration of the application for international protection, can be carried out by personnel of the [Hellenic Police | Ελληνική Αστυνομία \(ΕΛ. ΑΣ.\)](#) or by personnel of the [armed forces](#), in case the personnel of the Hellenic Police are not sufficient art. 95 par. 3 Law 4939/2022.

As per article 2(4) of the Law 4375/2016, the recruitment of staff is allowed in accordance with article 20 of Law 2190/1994 in case of mass arrivals.

The registration process and decisions will follow very short time limits in cases of mass arrivals:

- A 1-day limit for registration and decision notification.
- 2-day limit for certain decisions (e.g., for appeal submission).
- 1-day limit for notifying appeal decisions and other procedures.

Decisions must be made by the day after the interview and notified the next day. Appeals will be examined within 3 days and decisions issued within 2 days. Certain individuals (e.g., those under EU Regulation 604/2013 and vulnerable persons) are exempt from these procedures. (article 60 of the Law 4375/2016)

## **Protection from refoulement**

The principle of protection from *refoulement* is enshrined in Articles 20, 73 and 110 Law 4939/2022.

Applicants for international protection are **allowed to remain** in the country until the completion of the asylum process on the first instance and it is prohibited to remove them in any way (article 73, Law 4939/2022). This obligation **shall not** apply in the following cases:

- submission of a subsequent application (in accordance with Article 94 Law 4939/2022
- where the competent authorities either extradite the applicant to another Member State of the European Union on the basis of a European arrest warrant, in accordance with the provisions. of Law 3251/2004 (A '127), either extradite him to a third country, with the exception of the applicant's country of origin, or to international criminal courts, based on the country's international obligations

During the period for filing the appeal and until a decision is issued on it, the applicant is allowed to remain on the territory of the country. In this case, any measure of deportation, readmission or return of the applicant shall be suspended. A decision to remain is issued by the Independent Appeal Committees. Exceptions are foreseen in the following cases:

- when another EU member state has granted international protection
- when another EU member state, bound by Regulation (EU) 604/2013, has taken responsibility for examining the international protection application
- when the applicant enjoys adequate protection from a first (for them) asylum country
- when the examination of the subsequent claim concluded that no new elements or findings have been presented/ arisen or the claim is manifestly unfounded
- when the application has been rejected under accelerated procedure of art. 8 par. 9 in the cases where the applicant:
  - comes from a safe country of origin
  - misled the authorities by presenting false information or documents or by withholding relevant information or documents regarding their identity and/or nationality which could adversely affect the decision
  - is likely that they have destroyed or disposed in bad faith documents of identity or travel that would help determine their identity or nationality
  - has presented manifestly inconsistent and contradictory information, or clearly false or apparently unlikely information which contradicts sufficiently substantiated information on the country of origin, thereby making his statement clearly non-convincing as to whether they fulfil the conditions required for international protection,

- has submitted a subsequent application
- has submitted the application only to delay or impede the enforcement of an earlier or imminent deportation decision or removal by other means,
- did not comply with the obligation to have their fingerprints taken in accordance with Regulation EU 603/2013 (EURODAC)
- may, for serious reasons, to be considered as a threat to the national security or public order or is under enforced deportation procedure for reasons of serious public security or public order under national law
- refuses to comply with the obligation to have their fingerprints taken in accordance with relevant legislation

The decision should not lead to direct or indirect refoulement in violation of the international and European obligations of the state (art. 87 par. 8 and 100 par. 10 Law 4939/2022).

### **Protection from *refoulement* at external air borders**

Information is currently not available.

### **Protection from *refoulement* at external land borders**

Information is currently not available.

### **Protection from *refoulement* at external sea borders**

Information is currently not available.

### **Protection from *refoulement* in case of emergency measures related to mass arrivals**

Information is currently not available.

## **Border procedure**

Article 60 of the Law 4375/2016 outlines the border procedures.

When international protection applications are submitted in transit zones of ports or airports, applicants will be granted the rights and protections outlined in Articles 41, 44, 45, and 46 of the Law, same as per regular procedure.

If a decision on the application isn't made within 28 days from submission, the applicant will be allowed entry into the country, and their application will be examined as per regular procedure of the law.

If an application is rejected and a deportation, return, or readmission order is issued but its execution is suspended by a court, the applicant will be allowed to stay in the country until the court's decision on the legal remedy is made.

## **Procedural aspects**

In Greece the making, registering and lodging of an application take place at separate instances.

## **Making an application**

### **Responsible authority and place**

The competent authorities to submit the initial application are Reception and Identification Centers. The competent authorities to submit a subsequent application are the Regional Asylum Offices and the Asylum Units.

For unaccompanied minors the competent authorities are the Regional Asylum Offices and the Asylum Units and Reception and Identification Centers.

The initial application is submitted in Reception and Identification Centers in the islands (Closed Controlled Access Centers in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos, Rhodes, and Leros) and in Evros. When in the mainland, applications are submitted in the Reception and Identification Centers in Malakasa and Diavata.

If the application for international protection is submitted before an authority that is not competent to receive such applications, that authority is obliged to notify promptly the Asylum Service using the most appropriate way and to refer the applicant to it. The Support Directorate of the Asylum Service ensures the information and training of the authorities to which anyone who wishes to submit an application for international protection is likely to contact, in particular the Hellenic Police, the Coast Guard and the Reception and Identification Service, regarding the competent services and the application submission process, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of art. 69 Law 4939/2022, so that interested parties are informed about the place and method of submitting an application for international protection. (Article 69 par. 9 Law 4939/2022).

### **Possibility to apply from outside the territory**

Applications for international protection cannot be submitted from outside the country at diplomatic representation/embassies abroad. No legal provision on protected entry procedures or humanitarian visa schemes/programs are in place.

### **Formal requirements for making an application**

Application for registration may be submitted online. Through the electronic registration scheduling service, a date for completing the registration as part of the international protection application process is provided.

Applications for international protection must be submitted in person. The applicant may submit an application on behalf of their family members. (article 69, par. 10 Law 4939/2022).

In this case, adult members with legal capacity must consent in writing to the filing of the application on their behalf or otherwise can submit their application themselves. Prior to the consent, each adult family member must proceed in person and be personally informed on the relevant procedural consequences of the individual application and of the right to submit an independent application for international protection. Consent shall be sought at the time the application is lodged.

Applicant who obtains child after entering the country may submit an application for international protection on behalf of the child, the submission of which is accompanied by the civil registration of the childbirth. This application is linked to the application for international protection of the applicant parent, irrespective of the stage and the (first/second) instance of the procedure.

The minor, under the age of fifteen (15), shall submit an application through the adult member of the family or a representative.

If an asylum seeker is detained, the competent authorities will ensure the immediate submission of a relevant written statement. The detention authority will proceed with the registration of the applicant (so-called 'simple registration') in the central ALKYONI database within 3 working days. Detention authorities will arrange the transfer of the detainee to the Regional Asylum Office to complete the full registration of the application for international protection within 7 working days. If the applicant is released before the completion of the full registration, he/she must appear before the competent Asylum Unit for the full registration of the application for international protection at the specific date set. (article 69 par. 2 & par. 7 (b), Law 4939/2022).

## **Registering an application**

### **Responsible authority and place**

The competent Regional Asylum Office/Asylum Unit should immediately register the application. In case the applicant undergoes reception and identification procedure, the registration is realized by the Reception and Identification Service. The Asylum Service, if there is an urgent need, can be assisted by Greek-speaking staff available from the European Union Agency for Asylum, who will provide all technical and operational assistance for processing applications for international protection. It will provide assistance for the registration of applications for international protection, the corresponding application of exceptional border procedure in case of mass arrivals and for any other administrative action related to the processing of applications for international protection. (article 69 par. 16, Law 4939/2022).

## **Practical steps to register the application**

The full registration entails personal data\*, country of origin, parent's names, partner and children, electronic address if available, bio-metric data, full statement of the reasons applying for international protection, home address or residence, the language in which he/she wishes to be examined and, if the applicant wishes, designation of attorney.

When full registration is not possible, following a decision by the Director of the Asylum Service, a simple registration (including basic data and language) takes place within 3 working days, whereas the full registration should be realized within 15 working days. In the latter case, the applicant is provided with a document, which bears his details and a photograph, that he/she delivers during the full registration.

If the applicant undergoes simple registration, if they

- state that they do not wish to complete his/her application for international protection, he/she shall be informed on the consequences of his/her decision and on the fact that he/she must leave the country if not holding a residence permit and the case is put on file upon the decision of the Head of the competent Regional Asylum Office. At the same time, the applicant is informed on the possibility of voluntary repatriation procedures and if they wish, they are provided with any assistance in order to facilitate their repatriation, otherwise, if a decision of return or expulsion against them is already in force, they are referred to the competent Authority for the execution of return or expulsion procedures.
- does not appear for the full registration on the designated date, the case shall be archived upon the decision of the Head of the competent Regional Asylum Office. In this case, if there is already a decision to return or deport the applicant, the competent Authority, which is in charge of the execution of these procedures, shall be informed immediately. At the same time, if the third-country national or stateless person resides in a Reception Center, the Head of the Center is also informed.

## **Data collection**

The applications are registered in a central electronic database for the electronic management system of Third Country Nationals, known as ALKYONI. The Asylum Service is responsible for the data management. The database has been developed and functions within the 'Police On Line' application created by the Hellenic Police.

A photograph is taken. All applicants over 14 years are fingerprinted.

The registration of identity data of the applicants is based on their passport, identity card (with full date of birth written on it) or birth certificate, if they have been born in Greece. By decision of the Director of the Asylum Service, another category of documents may be accepted. In the absence of such documents, the identification data shall be recorded on the basis of the applicant's relevant declaration at the time of the application for international protection.

Identity information may be modified by a decision of the Head of the competent Asylum Authority following the applicant's request, which is accompanied by original documents unless the amendment concerns obvious omissions or omissions apparently due to transfer of another alphabet into the Latin alphabet. In the latter case, a simple request from the person concerned is sufficient.

Exceptionally, the element of citizenship and place of birth may be modified by decision of the Head of the Asylum Authority, after the opinion of the caseworker, provided that in the interview the applicant makes a relevant statement and establishes that these data have been incorrectly recorded. Similarly, identity may be exceptionally modified if reasonable and serious reasons are given at the time of the interview, for which the applicant did not initially state their actual details. The year of birth is modified after an age determination procedure, unless in the interview it appears that the applicant who has been registered as an adult is obviously a minor, for which case a decision of the Head of the Receipt Authority is sufficient. operator. In this case a decision of the Head of the competent Asylum Authority is sufficient, after the opinion of the caseworker.

The procedure for amending the personal information shall in no case constitute: (a) a reason for the delay in the examination of the application or an appeal or (b) a reason for postponing the conduct of the applicant's interview.

If the need to amend this information occurs at the stage of the appeal proceedings the amendment shall be made by a decision of the Independent Appeals Committee. The Director of the Appeals Authority shall then inform the Head of the competent Regional Asylum Office in an appropriate manner to take the necessary steps. The need to amend the data is in no way a reason of adjournment.

Exceptionally, if the need to amend the data occurs after the granting of an international protection regime or the issuance of a final rejection decision, the amendment may be made by a decision of the Head of the competent Decision Authority.

The Eurodac Regulation (604/2013), Article 9 obliges Member States to promptly take fingerprints of all fingers of every applicant for international protection who is at least 14 years of age. The new Eurodac Regulation (2024/1358), Article 15 obliges Member States to take the biometric data of every applicant for international protection who is at least 6 years of age.

## **Documentation**

Information is currently not available.

## **Lodging an application**

### **Responsible authority and place**

The application is considered lodged on the date of its full registration.

### **Formal requirements to lodge an application for international protection**

It is lodged using a set registration form in the database. The registration form contains personal data, Dublin questions and a summary on the reasons applying for IP. In 2021, a common form of lodging an application was launched which is used by the Reception and Identification Service, as well, when responsible for lodging an application (for applicants who want to lodge an application while in Reception and Identification Procedures). A certificate for the registration is issued and the applicant receives an [international protection applicant's card](#).

The application is lodged in person.

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Asylum Service has digitalized a series of administrative steps. For the following acts, the physical presence before the Regional Asylum Offices and Asylum Units is no longer necessary. The platform is available here.

More analytically, the following acts are performed online:

- [Application to Change Personal Data](#) or contact information
- [Application to Postpone/Expedite the Interview Date](#)
- [Application to Request Statement of Application Status](#)
- [Application to Separate Files](#)
- [Application to Submit Additional Documents](#)
- [Application for Copies of Personal Files](#)
- [Application for Legal Aid](#)
- [Application for notification of ΠΑΑΥΠΑ \(Provisional Social Security and Health Care Number\)](#)
- [Attribution of Tax Registration Number](#)

The applicant may submit an application on behalf of their family members. In such cases, the adult members must consent in writing or otherwise have the opportunity to submit an application on their own. Before consent is requested, dependent adults are informed in private of the procedural consequences of lodging an application on their own and on their right to lodge an individual application for international protection. The consent is requested at the time the application is lodged or, at the latest, during the personal interview with the said family member.

## **Documentation**

Upon lodging, the applicant's card is issued with 1 year validity. It is renewed until the examination process is completed. The duration of validity of the applicant's card may be reduced (art. 75, Law 4939/2022):

by decision of the Director of the Asylum Service, for nationals of specific countries of origin, taking into account the expected duration of the issuance of the decision at first instance and provided (as per official statistics of the European Union) that the

rate of international protection granted to applicants from that country in the two preceding quarters, it is less than thirty-five percent (35%). In this case the duration of the card cannot be longer than three (3) months.

by decision of the Head of competent Asylum Office the duration of the card cannot be longer than thirty (30) days

- when the issuance of a decision is imminent or when a transfer pursuant to Dublin III Regulation is pending.
- for applications examined under absolute priority
- for applications processed under priority, and/or accelerated and/or admissibility procedure
- for applications processed under border procedure.

If the applicant is in detention, the applicant's card is issued once the detention is lifted or the reception and identification procedures are completed or after being allowed to enter the territory of the country.

If the application is rejected, the validity of the card is automatically terminated.

In case of non-renewal of the card on the next working day after its expiry, the application for international protection or the appeal is considered an [implicit withdrawal](#). The delivery of the rejection decision of the applicant's application has the consequence of self-righteousness suspension of the card's validity. Against the rejection decision, the applicant may file an appeal before the Independent Appeals Committees, according to article 97 Law 4939/2022, legalizing an attorney for this purpose (article 75 par. 5, Law 4939/2022).

### **Information provision**

After lodging their application, applicants may receive information leaflets regarding the procedure, their rights and obligations.

### **Passport and other documents**

### **Obligation to surrender original documents**

## **Requirement to submit original documents**

Applicants are required to submit the travel document and any other document in their possession that is related to the examination of the application and the data certifying the identity of themselves and their family members, country of origin and place of origin as well as their marital status. In case the above documents are delivered, a delivery-receipt report is drawn up, a copy of which is provided to the applicant. The submission and examination of the application for international protection, as well as the granting of a regime, do not necessarily presuppose the submission of evidence. (article 83 par. 5, Law 4939/2022)

## **Consequence of a refusal to surrender documents**

The submission and examination of the application for international protection, as well as the granting of a regime, do not necessarily presuppose the submission of evidence. (article 83 par. 5, Law 4939/2022)

## **Return of original documents to the applicant**

An applicant cannot request their national passports back while the asylum process is still ongoing.

## **Other documents**

Applicants are required to submit the travel document and any other document in their possession that is related to the examination of the application and the data certifying the identity of themselves and their family members, country of origin and place of origin as well as their marital status. In case the above documents are delivered, a delivery-receipt report is drawn up, a copy of which is provided to the applicant. The submission and examination of the application for international protection, as well as the granting of a regime, do not necessarily presuppose the submission of evidence. (article 83 par. 5, Law 4939/2022)

## **Requirement to read digital data**

Information is currently not available.

## **Guarantees for applicants**

### **Confidentiality principle**

Article 49 of the Law 4375/2016 guarantees the confidentiality principle. All the competent authorities must not disclose information related to individual applications, neither request information from alleged actors of persecution or serious harm in a way that would have the effect of disclosing information of the applicant and would endanger their physical integrity and that of their dependants, as well as liberty and security of family members still in the country of origin.

### **Information provision**

Article 44 of the Law 4375/2016, as repealed by [Article 119 Law 4636/2019](#), guarantees the right to information of the applicant.

The Asylum Service, in cooperation with the authorities operating in these areas or with certified organizations, ensures the provision of information regarding the possibility of submitting an application for international protection. Interpretation shall be provided at said detention centers and crossing points to the extent necessary to facilitate access to the asylum procedure.

The criteria and the certification process of the organizations provided for in this article and any other more specific or technical matter concerning the certification, as well as any other detail, are determined by a decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum.(Article 70, Law 4939/2022)

At present, on each location there are different synergies among actors active in the area of information provision (RIS staff, UNHCR, IOM, NGOs contracted by the RIS) with the support of interpreters. Provision of Information includes introductory information provided upon arrival and prior to the registration, legal and practical

information in group or individual sessions. The legal information includes the topics of registration, asylum procedure and family reunification, the readmission, the Assisted Voluntary Return Program by IOM, legal remedies and deadlines, as well as specific topics like the protection and administrative treatment of unaccompanied children and other persons with specific needs.

Persons held in detention facilities or at border-crossing points, including transit zones and at external borders, receive information on the possibility to submit an application for international protection.

An [Overview of International Protection Procedures in Greece](#) is available in various languages.

Links to information provided in the national context:

**Authority/agency:** Asylum Service

**Title:** Overview of International Protection Procedures in Greece

**Type:** Website

**Hyperlink:** <https://migration.gov.gr/gas/plirofories-se-18-glosses/>

## Interpretation

The cost of interpretation is borne by the State. Interpreters are engaged for every individual case, regardless of whether the officers or public servants of the relevant service possess adequate proficiency level of the asylum seeker's language. In cases where interpretation services cannot be provided through the physical presence of the interpreter, interpretation is provided with the use of IP (Internet Protocol) phone services within a special network provided and run by the Hellenic Police.

Interpretation services are provided to the Asylum Service through a contracted partner within the context of the EUAA Operational Plan to Greece.

## **Legal assistance and representation**

Article 44 of the Law 4375/2016, as repealed by Article 119 Law 4636/2019, provides the legal assistance and representation for applicants for international protection. Applicants have the right to consult a lawyer or other counsellor at their own expense regarding their application. Authorization for a lawyer to represent the applicant can be given through a simple private document, while authorization for other persons requires signature verification.

Applicants are entitled to free legal and procedural information about their case, particularly regarding the procedure. If an application is rejected at first instance, applicants can request an update on the reasons for the decision and the possibility to appeal, and this information may be provided by civil society organizations.

In appeal procedures, applicants will receive free legal assistance as specified by ministerial decisions. In court procedures, applicants may receive free legal assistance according to Law 3226/2004.

Lawyers and counsellors have access to reception and identification services, detention facilities, and transit zones to communicate with applicants. This access can be limited for security reasons but must not excessively restrict the applicant's right to representation.

Applicants have the right to be assisted by a lawyer or counsellor throughout the procedure, including during the personal interview. However, the interview can proceed without them if their absence isn't considered a valid reason to suspend the process.

Free legal assistance for the administrative procedure is regulated by the new Asylum Procedures Regulation (2024/1348) which entered into force on 11 June 2024 and will enter into application as of 12 June 2026.