

ASYLUM PROCESS IN GREECE — 14 STEPS AND ADVICE

(Updated for Law 5226/2025)

Introduction

This leaflet gives an overview of the asylum process in Greece. It's intended for people who want to ask for asylum in Greece or are already in the asylum process. It has been updated after the New Asylum Law No. 5226/2025, which makes procedures stricter after rejections (shorter departure deadlines, longer detention, and criminalisation of stay after rejections if appeals or subsequent applications are not made).

However, you still have asylum rights and it's helpful to know them so you can take your decisions.

This is an information guide — please seek a lawyer for advice on your individual case.

Further detailed information is available in multiple languages on the following websites:

<https://www.refugee.info/>

<https://www.mobileinfoteam.org/>

<https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/>

<https://w2eu.info/en>

In order to receive asylum, you must prove that your life was in serious danger in your country.

The legal test for refugee status is about the fear of persecution in the future. Fear of persecution is a particular reason mentioned in the law.

Proving Past Persecution

Proving past persecution might not be enough to be granted refugee status. The Greek State may state that in some cases, there is no ongoing need for protection, for example, if the people who persecuted you are no longer in power or because enough time has passed and you might no longer be of interest to your persecutors, and therefore not at risk anymore.

Subsidiary Protection

There is a different legal test for subsidiary protection (risk of serious harm), but again, you need to show a protection need for the future. It is not necessary to provide documents as evidence (it's good if you have anything like papers, photo or video to prove — anything submitted should be checked for

consistency by a lawyer before submission, if possible), but you should tell your story, mentioning the life-threatening events and your escape.

You should outline your reasons for fearing persecution if you did return, including any incidents of past persecution if you have already survived such experiences.

It is important to have a coherent narrative in your story and your reasons for asylum, without contradictions. Ask more experienced people/NGOs to advise you how to give an interview.

Phases of the Asylum Process in Greece

1. Application -> fingerprinting -> registration -> asylum card -> renewal -> interview

If you did not arrive on the islands and are not registered there, you have to make your registration in Malakasa camp (Athens) or in Diavata camp (Thessaloniki).

After the registration, the law says that refugees can work legally after 60 days.

In your asylum card, the PAAYPA number is written. It is the temporary social security number for asylum seekers which gives you access to public health care and work.

PAAYPA will deactivate each time that your asylum card expires, until you renew it. If you take a negative decision for the asylum request, PAAYPA will deactivate; if you make an appeal, it is activated again.

Your asylum card is a legal document that proves your legal presence in Greece while your claim for asylum is being processed.

In the case of non-renewal/rejection, the card is deactivated even before the expiry date that is written on the card. It will be written on the card how often you must renew — this is the important information to be aware of.

2. Decision and notification: positive or negative?

You will receive a decision after your interview. It can be positive or negative. Under the new law, what happens after a negative decision and especially after the appeal is crucial (see steps 5–6).

3. If you have positive decision after the first interview:

If you receive a positive decision, you should send an email (if you are in Athens, the email is tallodathinon.anagnprosf@astynomia.gr) to make an appointment, and you attach the positive decision file to the email.

For this appointment, you have to bring:

a) the document of the positive decision (you also need an ID card decision)

b) 4 photographs of yourself (usually around 10 euros)

c) legal fee (around 85 euros for the Travel Document — when you send the email, you can ask for the exact price. It must be paid in advance — as a “paravolo” using the code 2119 — 84.40 euros for adults

and 73.60 euros for minors under 14)

d) your asylum card. The asylum card should not be expired, otherwise you have to contact asylum services to renew it before making the appointment. They also ask for a declaration confirming your address.

In this appointment, you give your fingerprints and these documents. If you are a family, all the members of the family should be present at the appointment, with valid asylum cards. All documents need to be submitted for each family member.

After you give your fingerprints, you have to check the site:

migration.gov.gr, ΑΔΕΤ & Travel Documents -> residence permit

at the end of every week. When it is ready, your appointment date to pick up your ID and travel document will be listed by your asylum case number. They can be issued separately, so you need to check two separate pages on the Ministry's website. Usually, the ID is ready first, but sometimes the travel document is ready first. If it's your first application, you may receive all your documents between a few weeks and three months. If you are living in a camp, you may receive them faster.

4. Renewing the documents

To renew your documents, you need to contact the asylum service and request another residence permit. You have to fill an application form, and meet other requirements that are explained here:

<https://migration.gov.gr/.../aitoyntes.../adeies-diamonis/> .

There will be no interview, but based on your past interview and the situation of your country, the asylum service will decide if you can still hold the residence permit or not. Legally, the authorities have the right to re-examine the case, including taking a new interview; in practice, they generally do not, unless conditions in the country have changed.

After receiving the new decision, you must again contact tallodathinon.anagnprosf@astynomia.gr for an appointment. You should contact the asylum services at least 3 months before the expiration of your residence permit or travel document. You must apply before 30 days of expiry. Otherwise, you may face some delay or legal problem in the process (technically there is a fee of 100€ for late applications, and the Ministry says you should justify why any application is made later than 30 days before expiry).

Remember:

- your residence permit is valid for 3 years if you have refugee status (1 year if you have subsidiary protection). You don't need to pay a fee to renew the card.
- your travel document is valid for 5 years (3 years for under 14-year-olds), and to renew it, you have to pay the fee (≈85 euros, see above).

For renewing documents, you may need to wait about 6 to 9 months. Waiting times are often unpredictable.

5. If you have a negative decision, you need a lawyer to continue. You have the right to have legal assistance.

You can take a lawyer from the state for free. You can make an application at

migration.gov.gr -> "applications" -> "asylum applications" -> "application for legal aid"

and complete a demand.

If you have negative decision after the first interview, you continue as follows:

You have to have a lawyer to appeal against the first rejection. In the regular procedure, you only have 30 days from the notification of the rejection to submit the appeal. There are also different deadlines (10-20 days) in border or accelerated procedures, and even in regular procedure, the deadline is counted differently depending on how the decision was served – by email / in person etc. The deadline for your case should be written in your rejection decision.

It is very important either to know your official address or to have provided the asylum service with your correct email, so you can check your email when you receive the notification. Otherwise, a decision may have been sent and an appeal deadline passed, without you even knowing about it or having ever seen the decision.

It is also very important to make the appeal before the deadline. During the appeal, your asylum seeker card remains valid and your stay continues to be lawful until the Appeals Authority's decision.

After the appeal, they give you an appointment to listen to your legal arguments. You will go to "Epitropi Prosfigon" (the Appeals Committees), in Nikaia. Your lawyer has to submit a statement of reasons. People usually don't give evidence at their own appeals, but must be present.

6. If they reject your appeal against the negative decision:

According to Law 5226/2025, after the second rejection (rejection of the appeal), the asylum procedure is closed at the administrative level. Your asylum seeker card ceases to be valid and you lose the right to lawful stay.

A return decision is automatically activated (no new administrative act). You are obliged to depart within 14 days (the voluntary departure deadline may be denied if they say there is a risk you will disappear from the authorities). Electronic monitoring (ankle tag) may be imposed during the departure period.

If you do not depart within the deadline, the administration may place you in administrative detention for up to 24 months.

In addition, unlawful stay after the deadline is criminalised: penalties include imprisonment (in practice reported from up to 2 years to 2-5 years) and fines (from €5,000 minimum, which until now is the usual fine). Higher fines such as €10,000 or €30,000 for re-entry are also reported).

Entry bans may be imposed for up to 10 years, especially if you failed to comply with the return.

However, making a subsequent application (see below) can suspend deportation proceedings. *If the subsequent application is accepted*, you can receive a new asylum card and your stay can be lawful again.

A lawyer can also appeal a final rejection or return decision at the Administrative Court, within 30 days after the decision is issued. This is a separate procedure outside of the asylum process. The lawyer must file an annulment action together with a request for suspension at the Administrative Court, and a judge must grant it.

If you have been detained, you may remain in detention even after you have made an administrative appeal or submitted a subsequent application, unless and until the application or appeal is accepted.

7. Making a subsequent application:

If you receive a negative decision for the first interview and appeal, you can make a new demand for international asylum protection, which is called "subsequent application". You can only submit a subsequent application after you have made an appeal and it has been rejected, or after the deadline for making an appeal has expired.

A subsequent application is allowed only if you have new and essential elements that you could not present earlier (new facts, evidence, or changes in your situation/country). If the application is not based on new elements, it will be rejected as inadmissible, and your stay will still be considered unlawful. It is still unclear whether you will be at risk of fines or imprisonment when you have made a subsequent application, but it has not yet been accepted as admissible.

8. Book an appointment via the online platform, go to the responsible Asylum Service, give fingerprints and complete new registration

When you make a new asylum request ("subsequent application"), you try to start the whole asylum process again. You arrange a new appointment via the online platform, which gives you an appointment at the asylum office responsible for registering your new application. You give fingerprints again and do a new registration.

9. Present "new and essential reasons"

In order for your subsequent application to be accepted, you have to present "new and essential reasons" to take asylum, including reasons that you didn't mention in your previous interviews.

These "new reasons" can include things that happened recently or information you were unable to provide before, with an explanation of why you could not provide it before. It is not enough to say you didn't think about it or you forgot about it. There is one exception to this: if you state a reason that is related to your sexual orientation, you don't have to justify why you didn't share it before.

You will have a new, small interview where the asylum service examines only whether your reasons are new and essential. If they accept that your reasons are new/essential, your case will be admitted to the regular process again.

10. Until your subsequent application is accepted

When you make a subsequent application, you are given a short-term paper which says that you have made the subsequent application. It is not a full card and it is valid for a short time (about 2–8 weeks) for police controls while they examine its admissibility. It is still unclear whether you will be at risk of fines or imprisonment during this time.

11. If your subsequent application is accepted

If the asylum service agrees that you meet these conditions, your application will be accepted and you can take the new asylum card and PAAYPA. You will receive a new date for an interview. It is like starting the whole asylum process again.

12. If your subsequent application isn't accepted, you can appeal the decision

If your subsequent application isn't accepted, you can make a new type of appeal against this decision. This appeal must argue why your reasons and arguments have been "new and essential". You must make this new appeal within a maximum of 5 days after the negative decision on the subsequent application.

The deadline is very short, so you have to act immediately with a lawyer.

13. Your appeal on the admissibility of the subsequent application may be accepted or rejected

If this appeal is accepted, you will take an asylum card and re-enter the asylum process. If it is rejected, you are out of the asylum process and the return decision applies (see step 6 for deadlines, detention, and criminal risks).

14. Making another subsequent application

You can make a second subsequent application, with a fee of 300 euros per person. You do the same process that you did with the first subsequent application. You have to present again "new and essential reasons" that you did not present in past interviews.

After the rejection of the first subsequent request, you are not legally protected during police controls and may be detained or deported, unless and until you take a new asylum card. This is true even if you have proof of a future appointment for a subsequent application.

Important 2025 changes and risks

- The fee for second/further subsequent applications is now €300 per person (previously €100).
- If your subsequent application is not accepted (because they say it has no new elements), it does not suspend removal.
- After the rejection of the first subsequent request, you are not legally protected during police controls and may be detained or deported — even if you have proof of a further subsequent application appointment
- Detention after the second/final rejection can last up to 24 months. Unlawful stay after the deadline is criminalised: penalties include imprisonment (in practice reported from up to 2 years to 2–5 years) and fines (from €5,000 minimum, which is until now is the usual fine).

- If you remain in Greece after the 14-day departure deadline following second/final rejection, and without starting further proceedings, you risk criminal prosecution (see step 6).
- Based on a new ministerial decision, official terminology replaces “irregular” with “illegal” stay.
- The previous possibility to regularise status after long residence (residence permit for exceptional reasons, 7+ years) has been abolished.

It is important to have a lawyer or social worker to intervene if you are detained.

Epilogue

Greece’s asylum framework in 2025 is much stricter after rejections: faster departure deadlines (14 days), longer detention (up to 24 months), automatic activation of return, and criminalisation of staying after final rejection. Subsequent applications are possible but require strong new elements and, if inadmissible, do not prevent detention, deportation, or imprisonment.

Throughout, keep your story coherent, watch deadlines closely, and use legal aid wherever possible.

This guide is for orientation — for any action, consult a lawyer/NGO.