

★Welcome Islands★



IMPRESSUM

copyright photos: refugee tv, Salinia Stroux, Kayra Martinez, Giorgos Kosmopoulos

copyright text: infomobile / w2eu

'I live here for more than a year now. In this house we feel at home. Because of you people; because of the way this project works. You help us with many daily things in a difficult situation and you are honest to us. I feel safe here.'

S., from Uganda

'I had no place to go, no place to sleep. I was pregnant in the last month. I have now a bed and a room for me and my baby. I am home here now.'

S. and her baby girl, single mom from Uganda

'Finally, we found a place where we are safe and we can rest.'

T., K. and J., two minors with their adult cousin from Afghanistan

'Home is where I can be myself and where I can remember who I am, and where I can think about who I am and who I want to be. My real home is in war. In this flat and with my roommates I found a place where I will not lose myself more. Maybe one day I can create a new home for me and my family somewhere else and maybe I can even go back to my original home in safety. I miss home.'

M., from Afghanistan

'I was pregnant in the 9th month and staying in Elliniko camp together with 1,500 people in one big saloon. After birth I was lucky to come here, instead of returning to the camp like many other mothers did with their newborns. Our little family got the chance to be a family here and my son can be growing up protected and safe.'

S., J. and baby A., family from Afghanistan

'Thank you for giving us a safe place. We were living in a horrible camp before, sleeping in a tent. We were trying to survive among hundreds of men who were getting drunk and having fights almost every night. My daughter was not coming out of the tent out of fear.'

Z. and F., mother and underage daughter from Afghanistan

'I came to Athens to find work. I am always trying to help others, so it is special for me if sometimes others are helping me. Thanks for the transit time I could spent here, before moving on!'

H., from Morocco

خلف الخيام

ترى قلوباً كالثلوج بيضاء قد تعبت من السفر
الطويل ومن كل الكلام
BEHIND The TENTS

See White as snow hearts tired of long travel
and all talk



The story of the welcome islands...

Since **2011** a small group of activists from Welcome to Europe (<http://w2eu.info>) who are involved in the Infomobile Greece grassroots project, and some refugee friends recognized an urgent need to create solidarity shelters for emergency housing of refugees who were not covered by the official shelters. At the time, the number of places in state-founded refugee accommodation was nearly non-existing and did not reach 1,000 in total – half of which were used specifically to house unaccompanied minors. In the majority of cases, the remaining places were exclusively offered to the most vulnerable among asylum seekers. Yet, most remained homeless and unprotected. Waiting times to get a place in a shelter could reach months or even years. Despite belonging to the group of vulnerable people, for one reason or another (i.e. psychological problems, disabled, victims of torture etc), many families but specifically single men, were never able to find shelter.

Following repeated visits in Patras, the main exit point at that time for refugees trying to move onwards to Europe hidden on ferries that head to Italy, and in Igoumenitsa after a violent police raid in the mountains of Igoumenitsa that expelled hundreds and left them on the streets, we opened a first flat – the ‘welcome island’ in Athens. Three Sudanese friends were the first to find shelter in this place, which has ever since been funded through solidarity donations from friends all over the world. The young men from Darfur had escaped a genocide, prison, torture and death, and when seeking asylum in Greece they were unable to find any shelter. They stayed homeless and hungry for more than three years before we met. They had been victims of police violence and racist attacks in Greece, and not only once.

In **2013**, following a wave of police raids all over the country that started in summer **2012** and the arbitrary detention of thousands of refugees in the pre-removal detention centres opened for that purpose (in Amygdaleza, Corinth, Paranești / Drama, Xanthi, Komotini and Fylakio), the need grew to support the first who had been released after having stayed for 1-1 ½ years in detention. A second 'welcome island' was opened and another five friends from Somalia and Afghanistan got a new home. The flat soon became more multicultural with two young women – one of whom was pregnant – from Eritrea and Sudan, who were left unprotected on the streets of Athens, exposed to all kinds of exploitation.

By the end of **2015**, when the Balkan countries gradually started limiting border crossings to certain nationalities, a new need arose to house people who were suddenly stuck again in Greece. While we saw a period of frequent change during the opening of the Balkan Route throughout 2015 during the 'summer of migration' where we housed many for short periods to take a rest, suddenly we had to face hundreds and then thousands who were stuck in Greece.

From March 8th **2016** onwards – when the borders were closed, and the state opened over the night mass tent camps nationwide, where hundreds of highly vulnerable people lived in cramped and deplorable conditions and without any support for months. During counselling visits in different camps, we met amongst others women in advanced pregnancies staying in halls shared with a thousand people and single mothers who were locking themselves in tents in fear of abuse by men. For a short period we therefore opened a third flat and gave a home to eleven people at once.

Today, we are back to two flats with one Afghan family staying in one of them and the other being inhabited by an Afghan family and two single mothers from Uganda. We decided that we have to focus our limited energy and resources by maintaining the two flats while also supporting the people and structures of refugee squats, which, at the end of the day, are more efficient as they can house more people. We are now planning to move with the residents of one flat into a bigger one and be able to host more people for the same rent soon.

The idea...

Our basic approach was to house the ones who would not be offered state-accommodation and to show solidarity specifically to people we had met before through our daily contacts and who had shown solidarity to others, too. The 'welcome islands' were from the very first moment not only conceived as a response to a humanitarian emergency but also as a protected space of welcoming and meeting one another, a place where solidarity could grow from solidarity.

The 'welcomers'...

Over the last five years, the two 'welcome islands' have been a home to more than fifty people from eight countries (Eritrea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Syria, Uganda and Morocco) among whom, were and are families with children, pregnant women, single mothers and newborns, single women, victims of torture, people with severe chronic illnesses (such as cancer, diabetes) and ex-detainees. We have assisted them with accommodation, access to medical and legal aid. With their growing knowledge through advice and action, they themselves have supported many others.

Most of our friends left the welcome island after a period of rest and recovering, once again able to stand upon their own feet: moving on, finding a job to support themselves, getting legal residence permits or moving to other countries to their beloved ones through family reunification. We have not won every fight for a better life yet, but we are struggling together until the end.

Living together has always been a rich and continuous learning experience and has been the starting point for many lasting friendships. At the same time, living together was not always fun. There were fights, cultural differences but also many individual disagreements that we might personally all know too well from shared living. We survived smaller and bigger disasters all together and at the end of the day, we can all say, that we will never forget one second of all these experiences.

We also shared many moments of struggle and reflection together in the 'back to the border'-solidarity camps¹ that were organized in Lesbos the last four years with Welcome to Europe, youth without borders Germany (JOG) and Infomobile Greece. Many of our fellow residents also joined our sister project 'mohajer bag'² and started sewing bags out of dinghies – those small plastic boats that had, once before, carried them to Europe.

The 'welcomers' have grown to become a small community and we are happy to be able and exist until today, a fact, that would not be possible without the help of hundreds of solidarity people, who donate(d) smaller or bigger amounts

¹ <http://lesvos.w2eu.net/2017/01/01/journey-back-to-lesvos-3-everything-is-different-august-2015/>

² <http://bagmohajer.antira.info/>



of money, once or regularly, to keep this small solidarity project alive.

Many of the 'welcomers', while dealing with many obstacles in their own lives and still fighting for their own future, are today 'welcoming' others all over the world with their solidarity and we are proud to be their friends.

Our position...

We never claimed to be objective, but we support individuals that we know.

We are no service providers, but support self-organization and self-empowerment in our common fight for equality and freedom.

We believe in solidarity and the growth of solidarity through common action.

We believe in people and we believe in the continuity of shared struggles for another world.

We create safe spaces of 'home' and 'solidarity' and we want to say 'welcome' through our actions.

We strongly support the 'refugee squat movement' and fiercely oppose the current revival of state repression and evictions!

No borders!

Freedom of movement to all!

Open houses and burn all prisons!

No people without houses and no houses without people!

For one, two, three ... and thousand welcome houses!

w2eu – infomobile greece – welcome islands



Retrospect reception conditions 2016: The never-ending accommodation disaster

Almost 62,257³ refugees are stuck in Greece since the closure of the 'Balkan Corridor' in March 8th last year and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Deal from March 20th, 2016 onwards.

While only about 13,000 people were able to leave Greece legally through relocation and family relocation to other EU-member states in the last year (11,339⁴ implemented relocation transfers as of 9.4.17; 1,107⁵ persons travelled outbound for family reunification in 2016) and while an unknown number has moved on to the 'North' clandestinely, another 19,151⁶ have been forcibly returned to their home countries of whom 5,728 participated in so called 'voluntary return' programme of the International Organization of Migration (IOM). Until today, 979 persons of the ones who arrived after the EU-Turkey Deal signed voluntary return and were deported, choosing the high risk of 'sudden death at home' instead of 'dying slowly' in the Greek camps. Another 2,273⁷ were readmitted to Turkey since January 2016 (as of April 12th 2017).

³ <http://mindigital.gr/index.php/προσφυγικό-ζήτημα-refugee-crisis/1173-summary-statement-of-refugee-flows-to-eastern-aegean-islands-13-04-2017>

⁴ http://www.asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Relocation-procedures-up-to-09.04.17_en.pdf

⁵ <http://www.asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Press-Release-17.1.2017.pdf>

⁶ http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=68291&Itemid=1820&lang=

⁷ <http://mindigital.gr/index.php/προσφυγικό-ζήτημα-refugee-crisis/1169-21>

Islands

Since November 2016 when the first hotspot detention centre (officially called: reception and identification centres) was inaugurated on Lesbos, another four were opened also on Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros. Currently, 12,767⁸ persons, following the UNHCR, live on the islands while there is only capacity for 8,696 (April 11, 2017). Overcrowding has been a major problem in the hotspots for a long time, which in the beginning, with the originally closed system led to constant riots and fights. While municipalities, NGOs and solidarity networks created alternatives to the hotspots, mainly for the most vulnerable, migration policy has shifted once again, turning away from dignified accommodation (still with the geographical restriction that is limited on the islands) and toward detention. In addition, refugee squats have faced a permanent threat of eviction.

Reception conditions in the hotspots remain very poor. Until today one can find people there who live in tents and without any adequate access to information, medical and legal services to cater their basic needs. While hundreds of people had been moved in the beginning of the year into hotels, nowadays, they are moved back to the official camps while dozens of NGOs have ceased providing their services as funding ended. Meanwhile, new pre-removal detention centres are opening on the islands, depriving dozens more of their liberty.

Mainland

The 35,356 people on the mainland (April 11, 2017) are in their majority the ones who arrived during the 're-closing' of

⁸ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/55917>

the Balkan borders and before the EU-Turkey Deal. Of the currently existing 46 camps on the mainland - including Elliniko sites and excluding Lavrio reception centre – 11 are currently empty but have yet not been closed down. These camps were created as a temporary solution, but exist now for more than one year.

While only 5,000 refugees were permitted to leave the islands by the end of 2016, legally being declared as vulnerable or having applied for family reunification, a Joint Action Plan submitted by the Coordinator of the Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, suggested to harshen the measures and include them also into admissibility procedures in the near future. Nevertheless, another 5,000 arrived⁹ to mainland Greece ever since, according to the UNHCR (March 15, 2017).

There are three different forms of official housing on the mainland with no common procedure to apply for these:

- A. NGO-run reception centres, which are co-ordinated and where one has to apply for this kind of housing before the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), mainly through the help of NGOs or the Asylum Service,
- B. UNHCR funded housing implemented by different NGOs, which one has to apply for directly through UNHCR representatives, through NGOs or the Asylum Service.
- C. State-run 'temporary' camps (so called: emergency reception sites) where one has to apply for through the help of NGOs who then have to submit a referral to the Central Operational Body for Migration (Κεντρικό Επιχειρησιακό

⁹ <http://www.dw.com/el/χωρίς-προοπτική-οι-πρόσφυγες-στην-ελλάδα/a-37940224>

Όργανο Μετανάστευσης, ΚΕΠΟΜ) under the Ministry of Migration Policy.

The official reception system for refugees in Greece pre-existing the exceptional developments since 2016 were NGO-run but state and EU funded **reception centres for asylum seekers** managed by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA). They continue to exist until today with a current total capacity of 1,272 for unaccompanied minors and 678 for adults, a number that never suffices to address the real needs. Despite the commitment of the Greek authorities to meet a target of 2,500 such reception places dedicated to asylum seekers under the coordination of EKKA by the end of 2014, this number has not been reached to date. Only 6,72%¹⁰ of the persons belonging to the group of core families could find housing among the applicants in the last trimester of 2016 and 26,5% of single headed families – just to give an idea of how difficult it is to find accommodation. More than half of these places are for unaccompanied minors, while the remaining, in practice, are only provided to highly vulnerable asylum seekers. As of April 3, 2017, 952¹¹ unaccompanied minors were waiting for a place in a specialized shelter - 184 in hotspots and 34 in police detention cells. There are currently 54 shelters for minors in Greece with a total capacity of 1,382. All these places are constantly taken.

Housing funded by **UNHCR** is mainly provided asylum seekers eligible for relocation, vulnerable persons and Dublin family reunification candidates (the latter to a lesser degree and only since July 2016). This accommodation scheme has been in place since the last months of 2015. Only

¹⁰ http://www.ekka.org.gr/portal_docs/news/439.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.ekka.org.gr/files/aglika03042017.pdf>

one year after¹² announcing the creation of 20,000 additional reception places in subsidized flats and hotels, the UNHCR reached by the beginning of December 2016¹³ finally the anticipated places. These are mainly places in apartments (1,936 units – 12,091 people staying there), but also in buildings, host families, hotels and there are places for unaccompanied minors – places which are constantly taken and where it was in 2016 highly difficult to get access to. 17, 803¹⁴ such places are available as of April 2017 with 27,007 people having benefitted until now from this form of housing.

The so called **‘emergency reception sites’** are mass camps created at the periphery of the society as temporary solution for the accommodation. They were built in most of the cases over night to address the sudden needs of thousands of refugees trapped in Greece with the closure of the borders. In the majority, they are run and coordinated by the military in cooperation with the Ministry of Migration. It took a long time until all of these camps had finally a coordinator of the Ministry. In the beginning, these more than 40 camps, consisted for the most part only of tents (the only camps with pre-fabricated houses were in Elaionas and later in Skaramangas in Attiki area). They were often attached to old factory buildings, military camps, sport stadiums or former workshops. In the first period after their opening, overcrowding, the lack of adequate material conditions and services as well as the lack of legal information paired with the despair about the sudden closure of the borders, created high tensions among the refugees and also directly endangered peoples’ lives.

¹² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6316_en.htm

¹³ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/54467>

¹⁴ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/55915>

Specifically, the cold period from October onwards led to another crisis when 'winterization' plans were implemented too late and refugees had to survive snow, rainfalls and storms while still living in tents without heating. One camp after the other had to be evacuated and hundreds of people were suddenly transferred temporarily to hotels all over Greece. The emptied camps were slowly upgraded and tents gave place to prefab houses.

Until today very few of these sites meet humanitarian standards as basic needs and essential services are not always delivered sufficiently even though material conditions have been generally improved in most places and refugees who had been evacuated are being moved partly back there. Additionally, vulnerable persons and others permitted to leave the islands are transferred nowadays to a larger degree to these camps, increasing the number of residents again.

Specifically, the camps which are currently perceived to offer better living conditions are full (Elainoas, Skaramangas, Malakassa etc). New type of temporary camps with improved conditions like Koutsochero, Nea Kavala or Serres have been created based on the example of Elaionas and look like futuristic ghettos with white prefabricated container houses arranged in lines and squares within a fenced area of an open field in the middle of nowhere. Other sites, which have been condemned by refugees and supporters alike for the deplorable conditions there, like i.e. Elliniko Complex in Attika – consisting of the old airport, a hockey stadium and a baseball stadium - are 'to be closed' by the government, as announced already since June 2016 – but nothing has happened yet. Meanwhile, these sites in Elliniko were of the first temporary facilities to be set up by the authorities in December 2015.

In the Attica Area, in most cases it is not possible for refugees seeking a place to stay to access the camps just by going there and asking. Nevertheless, refugees 'not belonging' there for whatever reason might be tolerated unofficially, but suffer from the lack of access to food, money and other services. The quality of these camps and the services provided there are as different as the number of NGOs active there and their services provided.

While many refugees had tried to escape the camps in the last year, they anticipate an indirect pressure to return by the fact that the cash card system, which is in place fully since January 2017, has been limited to the official housing structures and all others renting homes by themselves, or being hosted in solidarity structures, are left without money.

The Greek authorities try to persuade all refugees in the country to go to such camps and stay there, so as to have a better control of the situation and the people. They announced to close some of the camps with poor conditions and to improve the better ones in order to turn them into mid-term accommodation camps to cover emergency needs.

Non-official and solidarity accommodation

- A. Refugee staying officially in hotels or renting flats themselves
- B. Informal hotels run by co-nationals
- C. Refugee Squats
- D. Other solidarity structures
- E. Private hosting in houses of Greeks or others

In Athens, many normal **hotels** rent rooms to refugees but many others have rented their own **flat** too. In order to find this kind of accommodation refugee need to have passport or asylum seekers cards and reside legally in Greece, which excludes hundreds of people from this option.

It is unclear how many persons currently stay in **informal hotels** with co-nationals, which are sometimes a cheaper option. There one can rent a room or just a corner to sleep on the floor, and they have to pay extra for food and showers. People having problems with their documentation might find this one of their only options, as long as they have the money to pay for it.

About 2,000 people are currently staying in the 12 **squats** in Athens, empty houses occupied and used for living. They are run by different groups of people out of solidarity. The refugee squats played a crucial role in the first period after the closure of the border, when hundreds of highly vulnerable persons had to be evacuated from the state-run camps, while their lives were in danger there. What the government wasn't able to provide was offered solely based on solidarity by civil society. Until today, the squats are the only solution for hundreds of refugees, who would be either homeless otherwise or exposed to living conditions that would be harmful for them.

An unknown number of refugees – estimated to reach hundreds – are meanwhile hosted in **other solidarity structures** that are running also with the help of donations only and that are using rented flats.













Chronology of changes in refugee accommodation

Phase 1: *Thousands of refugees arrive in spring 2015 with more than 100,000 arriving for the first time in one month in August. In the early summer, they start filling the squares and parks of Athens, where they sleep for one or two nights until moving on to the border in the north. With increased arrivals in Idomeni and the pressure of the masses, the Balkan Corridor opens in the late summer. Athens and Thessaloniki become transit points and an informal transit camp grows in Idomeni. Even refugees who had settled for years in Greece leave the country for a better future.*

19. August 2015: Elaionas Camp opens. It's the first mass camp with containers and was opened to solve the problem of hundreds of homeless refugees in the parks and squares in the city centre (Victoria and Paidion tou Areos). It is the beginning of a new era of refugee camps run by the state that came to add to the pre-existing few hundred reception places in NGO-run reception centres. The camp soon is full.

20. August 2015: Macedonia declares a state of emergency, closes the border crossing with Greece just outside the town of Gevgelija, erects barbed wire fences along the border and calls military backup. The following humanitarian crisis in Idomeni forces them soon to allow a controlled crossing of the border. The Balkan Corridor opens and refugees from all of Greece start moving north.

22. September 2015: Refugees are transferred from Viktoria Square to the Tae Kwon Do Stadium in Faliro, Athens as all other camps are full and many are homeless. Later in December also refugees from Idomeni get transferred there for emergency housing. Reception conditions are deplorable with hundreds of people provisorily placed in one big stadium.

25. September 2015: Notara refugee squat opens as the first refugee hosting squat offering dignified solidarity housing specifically to the homeless and among them the most vulnerable.

28. September 2015: The emergency housing in the Taek Won Do cannot continue so refugees are moved to the Hockey Stadium in Elliniko. Later also the Baseball Stadium and the former Airport hall in Elliniko open as emergency reception sites. The three sites remain categorised by the UNHCR as 'informal sites' although they continue to exist until today. While Minister Mouzalas announced their closure repeatedly over the last year, the three camps remain open until today with more than 1,000 refugees in total being exposed to the dangerous living conditions there.

Phase 2: *The Greek government upon increasing pressure from Europe tries to regain control of its borders to Turkey but also to the north. The relocation scheme is started.*

Late September / October 2015: EU member states agree on a temporary scheme to distribute responsibility for receiving asylum-seekers more evenly between European countries. The relocation program starts with first transfers in November to Luxemburg. The final commitment by other EU member states is to take in

66,400 asylum-seekers from Greece, divided between them according to pre-set quotas.

16. October 2015: Inauguration of first Greek “hotspot” on the island of Lesbos.

26. October 2015: Greece pledges to create 50,000 reception places the EU financial assistance, of which 30,000 are planned for the end of 2015.

18. November 2015: Macedonia - along with Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia - changes its border management practices suddenly and without prior notice, and introduces the first in a series of discriminatory border control measures refusing to admit anyone unless they have papers to prove they originate from Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria.

19. November 2015: The Balkan Corridor gets sealed also at the border between Greece and FYROM in a first step for all nationalities other than Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans. First forced removals and transfers of people to camps in Athens take place.

5. December 2015: Orfanotrofio opens as first refugee squat in Thessaloniki.

14. December 2015: UNHCR announces plan to create 20,000 additional reception places subsidizing flats, hotels and other homes.

Phase 3: Borders get sealed and the March 18th EU-Turkey migration agreement implemented, thereby introducing a system of confinement on the Aegean Islands. Informal transit camps in Idomeni and Piraeus are evicted. At the same time the government created a coordinative body of the army for the ‘migration crisis’ and dozens of mass camps are opened over night to host thousands of refugees suddenly stuck in Greece.

January 2016: The government publishes a deadline for the finalization and inauguration of five planned hotspots in the Aegean and the camps Schisto and Diavata until 18 of February.

19. February 2016: Serbia closes its Preševu border to Afghan nationals, leaving more than 600 stuck at Tabanovce in Macedonia. Macedonia follows this practice and all Afghans as well as Iraqis and Syrians without passports get stuck in Greece.

22. February 2016: The camp in Schisto near Athens opens and Afghan refugees are transferred there.

24. February 2016: Diavata camp opens.

25. February 2016: The Greek government opens the old airport in Elliniko in order to accommodate there around 2,000 refugees.

End of February / beginning of March 2016: The first camps in north Greece open in Cherso and Nea Kavala.

8. March 2016: Closure of Balkan Corridor.

13. March 2016: 2,000 refugees start the March of Hope from Idomeni to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Macedonia) and are pushed back all by the Macedonian authorities after only a few hours on March 14th.

20. March 2016: EU-Turkey Statement is implemented and Aegean Islands turn to big prisons

22. April 2016: City Plaza Squat opens its doors for 400 refugees.

24/25. May 2016: Idomeni informal camp gets evicted. Police transfers the refugees by force to the camps in the mainland.

27. July 2016: Piraeus informal camp is closed down by authorities, refugees transferred to Skaramangas and other camps. At the same time three refugee squats are evicted in Thessaloniki. Some of the refugees end up in the streets.

Phase 4: With the first deaths due to winter and cold in the hotspots, the camps' 'winterization' obviously comes too late. Prefabricated houses replace tents in eight camps. Later another seven camps have to be closed down and refugees evacuated due to snow-falls. Hundreds are transferred to flats. More than 5,000 are transferred from the islands to the flats but also into the camps. The number of residents in the mass camps is cut down, in most cases, to fewer than 1,000.

November-December 2016: Tsepelovo, Petra, Cherso, Serres, Drama, Asimakopoulou, Katsikas Camps are closed due to snow-falls. Prefabricated houses start to replace tents in other eight camps. UNHCR reaches goal of 20,000 planned reception places. Koutsohero re-opens to host Cherso residents.

8. December 2016: The EU Commission recommends the gradual reinstallation of Dublin returns to Greece for the first time after 2011 when they got halted amongst others due to the lack of reception conditions.

January-April 2017: After 5 refugee deaths in the Greek Camps by the end of January, many camps get closed (Vagiohori, Frakaport, Oraiakastro, Vasilika, Karamanlis, Kalohori).

Phase 5: The government has created a landscape of modernized camps on the mainland. People are being transferred partly back to the materially upgraded camps or in flats and hotels. At the same time, a cash card system comes to fully replace the catering services in the camps; provisions and services by NGOs are being slowly cut down and replaced by state services.

8. February 2017: The government finally announces the names of the directors of the hotspots one year after their creation. Until that day, directors were placed without legal frame to the camps and changed frequently, which caused problems of mismanagement and overall chaos.

24. February 2017: Migration Minister Mouzalas announces another 10,000 places in flats to be created

March 2017: Thiva Camp opened newly but refugees don't want to go there as it is too far from the urban centre. Serres Camp re-opens for its former residents who get transferred back.

15. March 2017: Germany announces to restart Dublin returns to Greece as proposed by the EU Commission for specific groups of non-vulnerable refugees.

1. May 2017: Cash replaces catering in camps on mainland. From now on, single adult refugees have to arrange their living – food, transportation costs etc - with 150 Euro per month.

TOMB
No: F3

List of deaths in Greek refugee camps 2016/2017

- 19. April 2016:** A 17-year-old girl from Afghanistan, who lived with her family in Elliniko camp in Athens, dies in the hospital after having been seriously ill.
- 14. July 2016:** A man from Afghanistan dies in the camp of Elliniko in Athens after a fight between refugees.
- 28. July 2016:** Azaz Ragda, a young Syrian woman dies on her way to the hospital from Softex Camp near Thessaloniki after a breakdown in a shower during a day of extreme heat and more than 40 degrees Celsius.
- 16. October 2016:** A 35-year old Kurdish woman and her 10-year-old son are deadly hit by a truck on a highway in front of Oraiakastro camp. The daughter survives with severe injuries.
- 24. November 2016:** A 66-year-old Kurdish woman and her 6-year-old grandson burn alive at Moria hotspot after a gas canister they used to cook their own food and warm up with explodes. The explosion leaves others seriously injured, destroys vital documents and is followed by major disturbances at the camp.
- 24. January 2017:** A 22-year-old Egyptian dies in the Moria camp in Lesbos. Media reports suggest that he had inhaled toxic fumes from a heating system.
- 25. January 2017:** A 41-year-old Iraqi suffers a heart attack in Samos hotspot. He had lived there with his wife and their three children for 2 months without receiving the medication for his hypertension and diabetes.
- 27. January 2017:** Noursan, a two-month-old Syrian-Kurdish baby, dies in a taxi on the way to the hospital from the Ritsona camp in the north of Athens. He was diagnosed with congenital cystic fibrosis and needed oxygen support that was not offered in the camp. His parents demanded to live nearer to the hospital, but were ignored. A hospital car had been called, but did not come. The parents were initially accused of child neglect.
- 28. January 2017:** A 46-year-old Syrian dies at the Moria hotspot in Lesbos. Media reports claim that the autopsy result indicates that he died on "pathological grounds". But other reports suggest that he has inhaled toxic fumes from heaters.
- 30. January 2017:** A young Pakistani dies at the hotspot in Moria. Despite an autopsy, no information about his death is known. Local media reports that an Afghan man who shared the same tent with him was admitted to the hospital with a carbon monoxide poisoning. Volunteers at Moria report more victims.
- 5. February 2017:** A 45-year-old Algerian was found dead in his cell at the police station in Petrou Ralli in Athens.
- 21. March 2017:** A 57-year-old man from Syria, who lived in the camp in Filippiada near Preveza suffered a heart attack and died. He lived in the camp for months with his wife and their daughter, waiting for the green light to be given for the reunification of the family in Germany. The process was completed and in a few days before his death they were supposed to begin their journey to join the other two children in Germany.
- 8. April 2017:** A 29-year-old man from Syria who had set himself on fire in the hotspot Vial in Chios on March 30 2017 passed away. He had burns to 85 percent of his body and was initially admitted to the island's hospital and then transported to Athens, for further treatment.



★Urgent call for donations★

Our two flats are run solely by private donations. The money is spent to cover the following costs: the rent, additional expenses like electricity and gas, renovations and reparations of the flat, as well as a caretaker (former resident and with a migration background), the bills and costs related to checking up on the residents regularly. The estimated 400 Euros per month and per flat do not suffice anymore, due to different reasons:

- While hosting ever more vulnerable persons, and with the economic crisis continuing, our residents cannot find any work / income and are in need of food, cleaning and hygiene items. To cover their basic needs became a costly part of the whole project, especially considering the fact that more vulnerable people also have special needs, for example concerning food.
- During the last winter-period we had high heating / electricity costs while hosting very vulnerable persons who are very sick or had newborn babies.
- We had to renovate the flats and encountered some technical issues as the building is old.

Currently, we face a funding gap due to these increased expenses and we are in need of your support more than ever.

Infomobile Greece – w2eu

Contact : infomobile.w2eu@gmail.com

More infos: <http://infomobile.w2eu.net/>
<http://wohnschiffprojekt.blogspot.eu/willkommensinsel/>

Account details for donations:

Owner: Wohnschiffprojekt Altona e.V.
Keyword: Willkommensinsel
Bank: Hamburger Sparkasse, Germany
IBAN: DE06200505501257122737
BIC: HASPDEHHXXX

