

Refugee residence permit renewal applications pending for over a year at the Greek Asylum Service

Refugees receiving protection in Greece and those returned thereto from other European countries continue to face prolonged delays in the renewal of their residence permits. These even exceed one year in cases supported by Refugee Support Aegean (RSA).

Without a valid residence permit (*Άδεια Διαμονής Ενιαιού Τύπου*, ADET), refugees have no [access to social rights](#) such as housing, employment or social welfare. They are also unable to authorise a lawyer to legally represent them, for want of valid identification documents to certify their signature before public authorities.

Delayed uploading of applications on the Asylum Service database

Refugees must request the renewal of their ADET by submitting a renewal form and a digital photograph to the Asylum Service via email. A [100 € fine](#) is imposed if the application is not filed at least 30 days before the expiry of the permit.

However, the mere uploading of the application on “Alkyoni”, the Asylum Service database, may take months due to a backlog of ADET renewal requests. **Hakim***, a refugee from Iraq who was returned to Greece from **Belgium** in April 2022 with expired documents, requested the renewal of his ADET one month later. The Autonomous Asylum Unit (AAU) for Beneficiaries of International Protection informed RSA lawyers that “*Due to the number of ADET renewal applications there is a long wait for the uploading of applications on the system*”.

In the case of **Soraya*** and **Somaya***, two Afghan women [returned from Sweden](#) in June 2022, the AAU for Beneficiaries of International Protection orally informed RSA lawyers that the uploading of renewal requests may take up to two months on account of the substantial backlog of cases at the Asylum Service. Indeed, in the case of **Nasim***, a Syrian refugee returned from **Germany** last February, the ADET renewal application was only uploaded and received a reference number from the AAU for Beneficiaries of International Protection two months later, on 20 April 2022.

Months-long “background checks”

Prior to issuing an “ADET Renewal Decision” allowing refugees to give fingerprints and to submit the necessary documents at the Hellenic Police in order to issue a new permit, the Asylum Service verifies whether any “public order or security grounds” would hamper the renewal of the residence permit, in line with EU and Greek law. The “background check” entails a request by the Asylum Service to the competent police and prosecution authorities for information regarding possible criminal charges or convictions against the refugees concerned. This check may last several months in practice.

Adnan*, a refugee from Syria, was returned from **Germany** in August 2020 with no documents in his possession. He submitted an ADET renewal application on 2 October 2021 but remains without documentation to date, since the Asylum Service has not issued an “ADET Renewal Decision” in his case. Following the Ombudsman’s intervention in June 2022, the AAU for Beneficiaries of International Protection

explained that the “background check” was still underway. Adnan has been waiting for an “ADET Renewal Decision” for more than one year.

Parwana*, her husband and two children are facing a similar situation. The Afghan family has subsidiary protection, based on which they are entitled to a residence permit [valid for one year](#), renewable for two years. They submitted their ADET renewal applications in October 2021. However, the Asylum Service has not issued “ADET Renewal Decisions” one year later, citing an ongoing “background check”.

Following the issuance of an “ADET Renewal Decision” by the Asylum Service, refugees are required to request an appointment with the Police in order to give fingerprints and submit documents. Such appointments may be scheduled up to a month later in the Attica region. Following the submission of documents, refugees await an announcement of the date of collection of their new ADET at the Regional Asylum Office of Attica, which usually takes approximately four weeks.

The renewal process for ADET of beneficiaries of international protection is a structural deficiency of the Greek asylum system, denounced among others by the [Ombudsman](#), the [National Commission for Human Rights](#), the [European Commission](#) and the [European Union Agency for Asylum](#) (EUAA). The Greek authorities have not taken into account [recommendations](#) made by RSA earlier this year in a public consultation on the Draft Integration Strategy, with a view to streamlining the procedure,

Finally, it is worth recalling that countries such as [Germany](#) and the [Netherlands](#) refrain from returning recognised refugees to Greece and process their asylum claims on the merits, apart from exceptional cases. Other countries have not followed suit to date, however. Nearly 100 recognised refugees were [returned](#) to Greece from other European countries in the first half of 2022, mainly Sweden, Finland and France.

For more information:

* RSA, [European countries carry on with deportations of recognised refugees to Greece – returns in figures](#), 13 October 2022

* RSA, [Deported to destitution: Refugee women remain undocumented four months after return from Sweden to Greece](#), 5 October 2022

* RSA, [The new “Cartoneros” of Athens](#), 14 July 2022

* RSA & PRO ASYL, [Beneficiaries of international protection: Access to documents and socio-economic rights](#), 31 March 2022

* RSA, [Recognised refugee returned to Greece, destitute, forgotten and undocumented](#), 4 March 2022

* RSA, [Παρατηρήσεις επί του Σχεδίου Εθνικής Στρατηγικής για την Ένταξη](#), 20 January 2022

** Names have been changed to protect the identity and privacy of the persons concerned*

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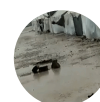
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📍 Address: Iasonos Kalampoka 30, 82132 Chios, Greece

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CONTACT

☎ Phone: +30 22711 03721

☎ Fax: +30 22711 00466

✉ Press: media@rsaegean.org

✉ Email: info@rsaegean.org

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