



## EUROPEAN COUNCIL: Topic 1

# THE ISSUE OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IN EUROPE

### **Background:**

In the EU, immigration right now is a very prominent issue. People in Europe are starting to lose awareness and compassion, and governments are making it harder for immigrants to enter the EU. They are also increasing security in refugee camps to reduce the amount of illegal immigrants, but essentially turning camps into prisons. This issue is something that needs discussion because of the new influx of immigrants coming from Afghanistan at the moment. The issue is that if some of these people are not given asylum, they would be sent back to Afghanistan where living is dangerous and not all people have the same rights.

Migration has regularly been a prevalent and highly discussed topic within the European Union. We can recall the refugee crisis in 2015 where a record 1.3 million people migrated through Europe, an unprecedented number of migrants. According to UNHCR: “April 20 – Over 600 people drowned in the Mediterranean when their boat capsized shortly before midnight on April 18 in Libyan waters some 180 kilometres south of Italy's Lampedusa Island. A subsequent Italian and Maltese rescue operation ultimately could only save some 50 of an estimated 700 people on board.”<sup>1</sup>

According to a BBC article from September 9 2021, “Fires have destroyed Greece's largest migrant camp, an overcrowded facility on the island of Lesbos, leaving nearly 13,000 people without shelter. Some 20 firefighters battled the blaze at the Moria camp - designed for fewer than 3,000 people - as migrants, many suffering from smoke exposure, fled.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Current Situation:**

As of right now, Greece is increasing its defense against illegal immigration. According to the Humanitarian aid: “The number of asylum seekers on the Greek islands has fallen to just over 4,500, down from around 40,000 in April 2020”<sup>3</sup> and “Overall, the number of asylum seekers housed in facilities throughout Greece managed or supported by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum has fallen by around 50 percent – from more than 82,000 in August last year to around 42,000 – and new arrivals to the Greek islands are down by 78 percent compared to last year.”<sup>4</sup> As we can see migration has been falling but there are a lot of new immigrants coming from Afghanistan. According to the same article, in new concentration camps, security is very high and immigrants cannot enter or exit the concentration camps. Furthermore, people have to buy themselves illegal housing in these concentration camps where they do not have access to food, healthcare or anything like that. Many immigrants that don't get granted sometimes have to wait for 2 years to be denied.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2015/12/56ec1ebde/2015-year-europes-refugee-crisis.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54082201>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/10/5/Greece-says-migration-crisis-over-refugees-beg-to-differ>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/10/5/Greece-says-migration-crisis-over-refugees-beg-to-differ>



### **Important bloc positions:**

Countries with high influxes of migrants include Germany and the Netherlands, Poland, and Mediterranean Countries: Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta and Cyprus.

### **Possible solutions:**

- Easing refugee camp security
- Make it easier for immigrants to apply for asylum
- Reducing the wait to be granted asylum
- Making the living conditions better
- Get NGOs to help with refugee camp organization

### **Further reading:**

- <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/feeling-abandoned-by-europe-greece-hardens-migration-policy-2021-06-18/>
- <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/10/5/Greece-says-migration-crisis-over-refugees-beg-to-differ>
- <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/europe-and-refugee-crisis-challenge-our-civilization>

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