



Refugee Support Aegean (RSA) Annual Report 2022

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Legal & Psychosocial Support

- 617 assisted asylum seekers and recognised refugees
- 25 annulment & suspension requests and appeals before administrative courts
- 14 reports to the Ombudsman
- 4 requests for interim measures before the ECtHR
- 2 complaints to the European Commission on infringements of EU law
- 58 recipients of social support
- 103 recipients of humanitarian assistance
- 15 recipients of assistance in shipwreck incidents



Research & Advocacy

- 4 analyses of Greek and EU legislation
- 7 legal notes / reports on the Greek asylum system
- 3 submissions to national, international and EU bodies
- 14 interventions in conferences, seminars and hearings



Communications

- 10 interviews with domestic and international media
- 5,122 Twitter followers
- 258 citations of RSA material by courts, stakeholders and media



Organisation

- 3 areas of activity in Greece: Chios, Lesbos, Athens
- 4 teams: Legal Support, Research & Advocacy, Communications, Finance & Administration

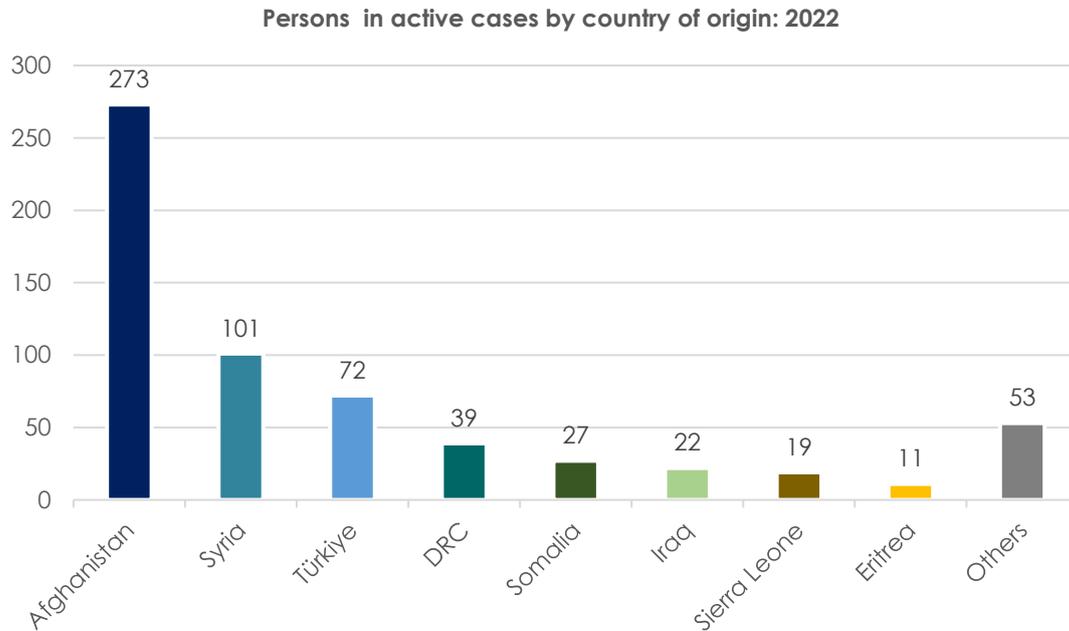


The main developments in the Greek asylum system in 2022 were as follows:

1. Deterioration and systematic use of informal forced returns, non-compliance with interim measures indicated by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), change of leadership at Frontex following the resignation of the Executive Director further to an OLAF report *inter alia* on informal forced returns by the Greek authorities.
2. Condemnation by the ECtHR ruling in *Safi v. Greece* for violations of the right to life and the prohibition on torture, inhuman and degrading treatment in relation to the shipwreck off the coast of Farmakonisi in 2014.
3. Ukraine war and granting of temporary protection to displaced persons, marking the first activation of the Temporary Protection Directive since its adoption in 2001.
4. Council of State hearing of judicial review applications against the list designating Türkiye as a "safe third country".
5. Rise in shipwrecks, in particular of large vessels, in the so-called "Calabria" route from Türkiye to Italy.
6. New process of registration of asylum applications and launch of Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) on the mainland, in Malakasa and Diavata.
7. Definitive closure of the "ESTIA" accommodation programme for vulnerable asylum seekers.
8. Policy shift in Germany and the Netherlands in relation to returns of recognised refugees, following case law developments in the previous year.
9. Council of State hearing of judicial review applications against the Registry of NGOs working with refugees and migrants, under a broader climate of criminalisation of human rights defenders.

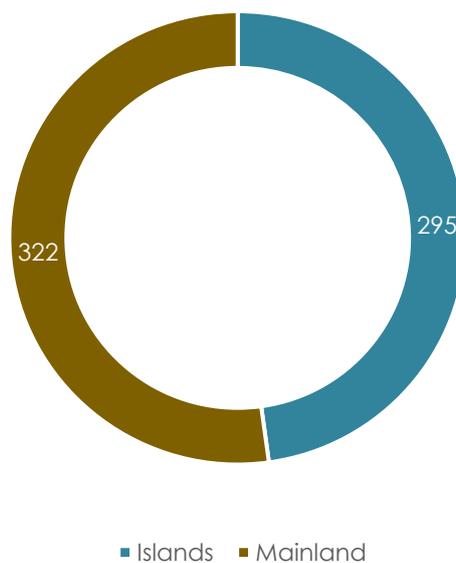


The RSA Legal Support Team provided free legal assistance to **617 recipients throughout 2022**. Persons supported in active cases of the Legal Support Team in 2022 are distributed by country of origin as follows:



Almost 50% of recipients of free legal assistance concern cases undertaken on the islands, of which 216 (35% of the total) on Lesbos:

Persons in active cases by location: 2022



The Legal Support Team provides legal support and representation before competent administrative authorities (Asylum Service, Appeals Authority, Hellenic Police, Reception and Identification Service, Hellenic Coast Guard), independent authorities (Ombudsman), domestic administrative courts, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), EU Agencies (EASO, Frontex) and UN Committees on human rights.

In the course of the year, the Legal Support Team lodged, on behalf of RSA clients:

- 19 applications for judicial review of individual decisions before the Administrative Court of Athens and 2 requests for suspensive effect
- 1 application before the Council of State for judicial review of a regulatory act (JMD 672487/2021) on the 100 € fee for certain subsequent applications
- 2 appeals against COVID-19 fines before the Administrative Court of Mytilene and 1 request for suspensive effect
- 4 requests to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) for interim measures under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court
- 1 third party intervention in a case before the ECtHR
- 2 complaints to the European Commission on infringements of EU law

RSA combines legal support activities with social support, research and advocacy through a holistic approach, aimed at highlighting general issues and challenges of the Greek asylum system at domestic and European level.

A detailed account of the activity of the Legal Support Team by area is provided below:

Asylum procedure

Access to the procedure

In 2022, the Legal Support Team continued to [intervene](#) before the competent authorities to ensure that refugees arriving on Greek territory could register asylum applications. Emphasis was placed on the Evros area, where RSA represented at least 63 applicants for international protection seeking to ensure the registration of their asylum applications and their placement in reception and identification procedures. It lodged at least four interim measures requests before the ECtHR to ensure the provision of immediate assistance to people at risk, while it addressed the Public Prosecutor of Orestiada on behalf of a refugee for the investigation of his brother's death in the Evros area.

RSA, PRO ASYL and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) submitted a [third party intervention](#) before the ECtHR in *M.A. v. Greece*, relating to domestic remedies for victims of informal forced returns in Greece.

In August 2022, RSA submitted questions to the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) on its handling of allegations of push backs made before EUAA caseworkers and interpreters in the context of asylum interviews in Greece. The Agency's replies [indicated](#) that the EUAA has no documents on transmission of the alleged fundamental rights violations to its management or to the competent Greek authorities and that it is not obliged to do so, as far as alleged violations are perpetrated by national authorities and not by Agency personnel.

Greece condemned by the ECtHR for the Farmakonisi shipwreck

The ECtHR delivered a landmark ruling in the *Safi v. Greece* case on 7 July 2022. This decision accepted the application of 14 refugees, supported by civil society lawyers, including RSA, vindicating the victims eight years after the tragic event. The decision recognised the responsibilities of the Greek authorities for the shipwreck that took place in Farmakonisi on 20 January 2014, following the involvement of a Coast Guard vessel, in which eight children and three women refugees from Afghanistan tragically drowned. The Court awarded damages based on the violation of Article 2 ECHR (right to life) and Article 3 ECHR (prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment). The Strasbourg Court found a violation of the right to life, both **on its procedural limb due to the failure of the authorities to investigate responsibly and effectively**, as they should have done in such an important case, and on substance, that is, failure of the authorities to take the necessary actions to protect human lives and prevent the tragic outcome. The Court also found that there was degrading treatment towards the survivors of the shipwreck by the men of the Coast Guard that night.

Registration of asylum applications

Since September 2022, a new uniform registration procedure of asylum applications has also been implemented on the mainland, with the launch of the Malakasa and Diavata facilities as Reception and Identification Centres (RIC), as a mandatory stage for applicants who have not previously undergone reception and identification procedures. Already in November 2021, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum had abolished with its circular the potential of direct access to the Asylum Service for those who had not previously undergone reception and identification procedures. Previously, in July 2022, the Ministry launched a special online platform through which registration appointments are scheduled at the RIC of Malakasa and Diavata.

However, the registration of asylum applications on the mainland is still subject to prolonged delays, as appointments granted through the online platform are scheduled for several months later, reaching up to twelve months, as in the case of **Ehsan*** from Afghanistan. In this case, RSA has lodged a complaint before the European Commission for infringements of the Asylum Procedures Directive.

At the same time, the Legal Support Team provided support to single-parent families, in order to speed up their registration at the RIC of Malakasa, and intervened for the fast registration of shipwreck survivors who were transferred to the RIC of Malakasa and were placed in *de facto* detention for a prolonged period of time, such as **Rohullah***. Following relevant RSA reports, the Ombudsman addressed questions to the Reception and Identification Service regarding the regime and length of stay of those subject to reception and identification procedures at the RIC.

RSA's observations from legal support for asylum seekers in the registration process are reflected in a [report](#) published in early 2023.

Safe third country

The establishment of a national list ([JMD 42799/2021](#)) designating Türkiye as a "safe third country" for citizens of Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Pakistan and Bangladesh has led to the [arbitrary rejection](#) of at least 9,000 asylum applications as inadmissible from the issuance of the regulations in June 2021 to present.

Over two thirds of the organisation's active cases involve refugees from countries for which Turkey qualifies as a "safe third country". That is why the legal and judicial challenge of the national list of "safe third countries" was a primary goal of the RSA Legal Support Group's work, both at an individual and strategic level.

The “safe third country” list before the Greek Council of State

In March 2022, the Plenary of the Council of State examined [judicial review applications](#) lodged by RSA and the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) against the national list designating Türkiye as a “safe third country”. In February 2023, [Decision 177/2023](#) of the Plenary submitted – for the first time in the history of the Greek asylum system – **preliminary questions to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)** regarding the interpretation of the Asylum Procedures Directive, while **the majority of the Court was in favour of annulling the regulatory act**, noting that readmission of asylum seekers to Türkiye has not been possible for over two years.

Through legal support of cases on the islands and the mainland, RSA contributed to the improvement of the practice of Appeals Committees in relation to the implementation of the “safe third country” concept. We achieved the first – to our knowledge – implementation of the Administration’s obligation to examine asylum applications on the merits on grounds of implicit rejection of a readmission request by the alleged “safe third country”. In [3rd Appeals Committee Decision 345521/2022](#) regarding the case of **Faramarz*** and his minor children, a single-parent family from Afghanistan, the Committee ruled that the expiry of the deadline set by the Greece-Türkiye Bilateral Readmission Protocol for Turkish authorities to respond to a readmission request sent by the Hellenic Police should be construed as implicit rejection thereof and lead to the examination of the asylum claim on its merits, due to the refusal of the third country to accept the readmission of the applicants to its territory.

Finally, the Legal Support Group lodged a [new complaint](#) before the European Commission for breach of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU *acquis*, due to the arbitrary rejection of the asylum application of **Khaled***, a refugee from Syria and survivor of torture, on the basis of the “safe third country” concept, despite the demonstrable impossibility to carry out readmissions to Türkiye. The examination of the complaint is pending.

Vulnerable groups

Still in 2022, RSA continued to highlight the critical deficiencies of the asylum and reception system in identifying vulnerable persons and to provide them with special procedural guarantees. Through the support of cases, especially in the context of border procedures on the Eastern Aegean islands, the organisation identified systemic issues in the [administrative practice and jurisprudence of the courts and Appeals Committees](#), and contributed to the strengthening of the judicial protection of vulnerable persons with targeted interventions before the administrative courts.

In the case of **Valid*** and his family, Syrian refugees, whose asylum application had been examined under the border procedure on Chios and had been rejected on the grounds that Türkiye was a “safe third country” for them, the annulment of a negative decision of the Appeals Authority was reached with by the [Administrative Court of Athens Decision 552/2022](#). The Administrative Court of Athens underlined, in accordance with previous jurisprudence of the administrative courts, that the applications of vulnerable persons must be exempted from the border procedure and referred to the regular procedure, without the asylum seeker being obliged to prove procedural harm stemming from the application of the border procedure.

Support to victims of torture and serious violence on Lesbos

RSA continued for the third year the project that has been implemented since 2019 in partnership with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) to support victims of torture and serious

violence in Lesbos. In 2022, a total of **154 people in 100 cases** benefited from free legal assistance at all stages of the asylum process, upon referral by MSF.

The case of **Francine***, a single mother with a minor child and a survivor of severe violence and sexual exploitation, whose asylum application was rejected at second instance by the Appeals Authority as a later application without new and substantial evidence, is illustrative. Her vulnerability, due to the violence she has suffered and the mental health problems she suffers from, was not considered as such an element. Pending the adjudication of the judicial review application lodged before the Administrative Court of Athens, the Legal Support Team lodged a request to suspend the execution of the return decision and the rejection of the asylum application, due to the risk of irreparable harm that the family would suffer in the event of removal from Greece. The Court granted interim relief with **Administrative Court of Athens Decision 9/2023** in early 2023, accepting that the state of Francine's mental health and the young age of her child required their stay in the country until a final decision was taken on their judicial review application.

Support to single-parent families on Lesbos and throughout Greece

As part of a project privately funded by the PRO ASYL Foundation / Hans Maier Family since August 2020, RSA has provided support to mothers with new-born children and to vulnerable families on Lesbos. The project was expanded in 2022 to cover other cases of single-parent families with specific vulnerabilities. Project activities include free legal support and representation by two lawyers of the Legal Support Team, as well as emergency humanitarian assistance in the form of vouchers for food and basic necessities, clothing, coverage, medical examinations and medicines, as well as coverage of housing costs in exceptional cases. The team has provided support to **120 beneficiaries in 54 cases** under the project.

The case of **Saleh*** is worth mentioning. Saleh is the father in a single-parent family from Syria, who was accused of the crime of complicity in smuggling, in the context of a problematic and summary pre-trial procedure. Saleh was unjustly detained for a year and was separated from his two minor children when accused by the Greek authorities, while even his parenthood was questioned. RSA lawyers defended him from the start of the criminal proceedings until his **acquittal**, provided legal assistance until his recognition as a beneficiary of international protection, and oversaw his family reunification with his children while providing him with humanitarian support for family housing.

Recognised refugees

During 2022, RSA provided free legal assistance to at least **91 beneficiaries of international protection, including 23 persons who have been returned to Greece** through readmission procedures from other European countries e.g. Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands and Sweden. In addition to the **detailed analysis** of the recognised refugees' access to documents and socio-economic rights, special emphasis was placed last year on highlighting the cases of recognised refugees deported from other states and their living conditions in Greece, for example in the case of **Farhad*** from Germany or **Soraya* and Somaya*** from Sweden.

Policy shift in deportations of recognised refugees to Greece

RSA made important contributions to the policy decision in the Netherlands to suspend returns of recognised refugees to Greece. Specifically, following an official visit to Greece, the Dutch Government sent a **letter** to the country's Parliament in November 2022, announcing that **forced returns of recognised refugees to Greece shall be suspended as a rule**, due to the risk of their exposure to inhuman and degrading treatment, based on reliable sources of information such as RSA and PRO ASYL

Foundation reports the [report](#) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to which the organisation contributed. This was preceded by an internal directive of the Dutch Migration and Naturalisation Service (IND) against the initiation of deportation procedures to Greece, subject to narrow exceptions.

A similar regulation was adopted by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in Germany in the spring of 2022, in view of the general prohibition of refugee returns to Greece in recent jurisprudence of higher administrative courts.

The Dutch Government's letter indicates its intention to raise the issue of recognised refugees' rights in Greece before the European Commission and to request information on the country's compliance with EU law. At the end of January 2023, **the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Greece for incorrect implementation of the Qualification Directive**, due to the indirect discrimination faced by refugees vis-à-vis access to social benefits.

Residence permit renewals

Prolonged delays of several months in the renewal of refugees' residence permits remain a structural problem of the system. Waiting times **exceed one year in some cases** such as that of **Adnan*** from Syria, who was returned from Germany to Greece. As a result of these delays, beneficiaries of international protection are deprived of access to their guaranteed social rights in practice.

In 2022, in addition to raising the issue at [research](#) and [parliamentary](#) level, the Legal Support Team lodged at least three complaints to the Greek Ombudsman on behalf of different beneficiaries, with the aim of highlighting systemic barriers to the rapid granting of identification documents to recognised refugees. Following the complaints, the Independent Authority made several interventions and addressed questions to the Asylum Service and recommendations for the faster registration and processing of renewal requests, as well as the harmonisation of the "certificates of asylum status" granted by the different Regional Asylum Offices and Autonomous Asylum Units pending the completion of the process.

Refusal to grant travel documents

Refugees are often denied travel documents outside circumstances of "overriding reasons of national security or public order" as strictly required by the Refugee Convention and the Asylum Code. The regulatory act issued under the Code (JMD 10302/2020) prohibits the delivery of passports to refugees in the event of a conviction or pending criminal proceedings even for minor misdemeanours, such as the use of false documents according to the Migration Code.

In 2022, the Legal Support Team lodged two appeals against decisions rejecting granting travel documents to refugees invoking the above provision, which are pending before the Director of the Asylum Service.

Shipwrecks & deaths at borders

2022 was marked by an increase in [shipwrecks](#) and the lack of a safe alternative leading refugees to risky journeys. The Legal Support Team assisted relatives of the victims in the process of locating and identifying them in the shipwrecks in Lesvos and Antikythira and in isolated cases at the land borders. This is an agonising and time-consuming process with increased practical difficulties due to the lack of systematic practice by the locally involved authorities.

On Lesbos in particular, in March 2022 we assisted in the identification of a person and the return of its body to an African country, while in the tragic shipwreck of 6 October 2022, we almost exclusively took over the families of the victims and managed to identify seven bodies with their relatives, while more cases are ongoing.

Furthermore, in the cases of the shipwrecks in Antikythira and Mykonos, the team intervened against the practice of automatically issuing deportation decisions, and decisions of detainment of survivors in the Pre-Removal Detention Centre of Amygdaleza. Following relevant complaints, the Ombudsman reminded the authorities of the obligation to immediately support the survivors and of the incompatibility of detention with the country's legal obligations.

Special mention is due to the case of **Shafizada***, a 20-year-old young woman from Afghanistan who survived the largest shipwreck in Lesbos on 28 October 2015, in which she lost five members of her family. RSA's intervention was crucial in ensuring DNA identification, which allowed her to identify three members of her family after six years of struggle. A lengthy legal process has been underway for a year for the necessary measures to name her dead relatives, who have been buried as "persons unknown", while efforts to locate her missing father and younger sister continue in both Greece and Türkiye. Shafizada is a young woman now trying to recover from her trauma and start her life again. Earlier this year, RSA decided to support her and signed a part-time contract with her as a trainee interpreter / mediator to enable her to support her daily life with dignity.

In collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), RSA conducted field research in a total of 57 registries (31 in the Northern Aegean, 10 in the Dodecanese, 1 in Attica region and 15 in Northern Greece), collecting data to update the "Border Deaths" database for the period from November 2019 to September 2022. This is a database created by the Free University of Amsterdam.



Interpretation and support to the health system

Throughout the year, the daily provision of a Farsi-speaking interpreter continued at the "Vostanio" General Hospital of Lesbos, the only one to provide such services after the withdrawal of the other organisations from this specific scope in September 2022.

Support to pharmacies

At the same time, support to local pharmacies in four Aegean islands that have operate Reception and Identification Centres / Closed Controlled Access Centres (Lesvos, Chios, Samos and Kos) continued successfully, with the aim of supporting asylum seekers and recognised refugees who did not have the money to cover costs of medication. This provided significant relief to several hundreds of people who would otherwise be left without the relevant coverage to deal with chronic or emergency conditions.

Emergency humanitarian assistance

The presence of a new social worker in Athens was decisive in the provision of optimal assistance alongside the legal procedures. During the previous months, a series of actions were carried out (meetings, recordings, escorts, referrals, social reports, etc.) aiming to empower individuals or families, as well as supporting the legal procedure where deemed necessary.

Throughout the year, RSA provided emergency assistance in kind (mainly supermarket vouchers) to at least **103 beneficiaries and vulnerable families** facing a serious survival problem mainly in Lesbos, Samos and Athens.



RSA uses research and advocacy to highlight issues and to contribute to the work of national and international bodies responsible for monitoring international and European law through a holistic approach combining liaison with monitoring institutions and procedures with legal action, research and communications.

Publications

Throughout 2022, the Research & Advocacy Team released – as a rule in two languages (Greek and English) at least 15 publications on areas of RSA work:

Comments on legislative proposals

- ❖ Comments on the proposal for a Regulation on “instrumentalisation” in asylum and migration, Jan 2022
- ❖ Comments on the proposal for a Regulation amending the Schengen Borders Code, Jan 2022

Analysis of the Greek asylum system

- ❖ Greek Asylum Case Law Report, Issue 2/2022, Dec 2022 (with GCR, HIAS Greece)
- ❖ The state of the border procedure on the Greek islands, Sep 2022 (with HIAS Greece, Equal Rights Beyond Borders)
- ❖ The Greek asylum procedure in the first half of 2022: High recognition rates, rise in subsequent applications due to generalised “safe third country” policy, Sep 2022
- ❖ Greek Asylum Case Law Report, Issue 1/2022, Jun 2022 (with GCR, HIAS Greece)
- ❖ Special procedural guarantees in the asylum procedure: Observations on case law, Jun 2022 (available in Greek)
- ❖ Persisting systematic detention of asylum seekers in Greece, Jun 2022
- ❖ Beneficiaries of international protection: Access to documents and socio-economic rights, Mar 2022 (with Stiftung PRO ASYL)
- ❖ The Greek asylum procedure in figures: most asylum seekers continue to qualify for international protection in 2021, Mar 2022
- ❖ Greece arbitrarily deems Turkey a “safe third country” in flagrant violation of rights, Feb 2022 (with Stiftung PRO ASYL)

Submissions to national, EU and international bodies

- ❖ Systemic breaches of the rule of law and of the EU asylum *acquis* at Greece’s land and sea borders, Jun 2022 (submission to the European Parliament with members of the Informal Forced Returns Recording Mechanism)
- ❖ Submission to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Jun 2022
- ❖ Asylum and the rule of law: Serious concerns persist in Greece, Greece 2022 (submission to the European Commission Rule of Law Report)

- ❖ Comments on the Draft Integration Strategy, Jan 2022 (consultation of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum)

In addition, RSA advocated its positions through contact with institutions such as the European Commission and European Parliament, as well as **presentations and interventions** by RSA staff in at least 10 discussions, conferences and seminars organised in 2022 at national and European level:

Panteion University	Repression of civil society working with refugees and migrants	13 Jan 2022
Belgian Parliament	Hearing on push backs at external borders	22 Feb 2022
National Kapodistrian University of Athens	Common European Asylum System: from the origins to today	01 Mar 2022
Global Public Policy Institute	Keynote: How to salvage non-refoulement	05 May 2022
European Parliament	Afghanistan Friendship Group: 2 nd meeting	10 May 2022
European Parliament	Migration Working Group Meeting	08 Jun 2022
Ev. Akademie zu Berlin	22 nd Berlin Conference on Refugee Rights	20 Jun 2022
Amnesty International	Advocacy Strategy Meeting	05 Oct 2022
UNHCR	Training for lawyers on the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros	14 Nov 2022
UNHCR	Training for lawyers of the Registry of the Asylum Service	12 Dec 2022

Contribution to parliamentary scrutiny and the work of monitoring bodies

Throughout 2022, the Research & Advocacy Team continued to engage with MPs and MEPs on information exchange and stronger parliamentary scrutiny, in particular via domestic and EU-level parliamentary questions on issues such as “safe third country”, immigration detention and the grant of identity documents to asylum seekers and refugees.

Moreover, RSA made submissions on the Greek asylum system and the rule of law *inter alia* to the European Commission Rule of Law Report and to the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee of the European Parliament.

Scrutiny of the European Commission’s Task Force Migration Management

The Task Force Migration Management, established under the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) of the European Commission in September 2020 as part of an agreement for a new RIC on Lesbos, is currently operational in a significant number of EU Member States and plays a key role in the Commission’s monitoring of national asylum systems.

RSA has systematically raised the lack of clarity and transparency on the workings of the Task Force, as well as often contradictory information on its involvement in the assessment of infringements of EU law, through a combination of actions taken in cooperation with civil society organisations such as HIAS Greece. These include submission and follow up to complaints to the European Commission, requests for access to Task Force documents and informal contacts with its representatives. The persisting lack of transparency on the functioning of the Task Force jeopardises the effectiveness of monitoring and enforcement of the Common European Asylum System.

RSA advocacy has led to important initiatives for stronger transparency and scrutiny of the Task Force at EU level. On the one hand, the **European Ombudsman** invited six

organisations to a targeted consultation in December 2022 *inter alia* on the workings of the Task Force, as part of an [own-initiative inquiry](#) on the role of the European Commission in ensuring compliance with fundamental rights in new Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCAC) on the islands. RSA and HIAS made a joint [submission](#) to the European Ombudsman in January 2023. On the other hand, the Coordinators of the **LIBE Committee of the European Parliament** invited the European Commission for an exchange of views with the Head of the Task Force, which took place in January 2023.

Transparency and data collection on asylum

Collection and analysis of asylum statistics remains a core activity of the Research & Advocacy Team, supported through reinforcement of parliamentary scrutiny and through targeted recommendations to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. RSA recommendations contributed to improvements in the dissemination of data by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. As of June 2022, monthly statistical reports of the Ministry provide correct and accurate data on judicial review of asylum decisions, as court decisions are presented by year of delivery and rejection decisions are disaggregated from inadmissibility decisions and withdrawals of applications, in line with RSA recommendations.

Wider and stronger reach of the Greek Asylum Case Law Report

Last year, RSA developed a joint project in cooperation with the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) and HIAS Greece on the development of a biannual Greek Asylum Case Law Report, aimed at disseminating Greek asylum jurisprudence and at better supporting legal practitioners representing refugees and asylum seekers.

In its first year of operation, the project has delivered three volumes and 325 asylum cases, of which 104 decisions from courts, 111 from Appeals Committees and 110 from the Asylum Service. In addition to RSA, GCR and HIAS, civil society organisations METAdrasi, Fenix, Equal Rights Beyond Borders, The HOME Project, I Have Rights, as well as an increasing number of Asylum Service Registry lawyers, have contributed cases to the Asylum Case Law Report so far.

RSA has also launched cooperation with [NOMOS](#), the largest subscription-based case law database in Greece, to reproduce decisions with full citation of the Asylum Case Law Report. The first batch of cases were uploaded on NOMOS in December 2022.



Media work and social media

Media interviews

Throughout 2022, RSA staff members gave at least 10 interviews to local, national and international media, including [The Guardian](#), [Al Jazeera](#) and [Frankfurter Rundschau](#), on issues in the Greek asylum system, the rights of refugees and the rule of law.

Social media presence

RSA maintains an active social media presence with:

5,122 Twitter followers

1,595 Facebook followers

Citations of RSA material

RSA publications continued to contribute to the work of jurisdictions in other countries, EU institutions, international organisations, civil society organisations, researchers and the media.

RSA recorded at least **258 citations of its material** in 2022, including **209 in case law of foreign jurisdictions**, namely in Germany, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Iceland, relating to living conditions and the rights of beneficiaries of international protection.



Organisation

RSA counts 15 staff members, including 7 lawyers, active on Chios, Lesvos and Athens. The [organisational structure](#) of the organisation, available on its website, comprises of the following teams: Legal Support, Research & Advocacy, Communications, Finance & Administration.

In addition to its Chios headquarters, RSA operates branch offices in Athens and Lesvos.

Registration

Ministry of Migration and Asylum Registry of Greek and Foreign NGOs

Registry Number 3142

EU Transparency Register

Registry Number 583270644066-47

Cooperation with the PRO ASYL Foundation



RSA continues its collaboration with the **PRO ASYL Foundation** for a sixth year. PRO ASYL, a leading human rights organisation in Germany, has RSA as its exclusive partners in Greece, and has undertaken joint actions in 2022 at national and European level.

Synergies

RSA continued to receive referrals of particularly vulnerable patients of **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** on Lesvos, under a memorandum of understanding launched in 2019. Free legal assistance is provided at all levels of the asylum procedure and on matters relating to reception conditions, focusing on the vulnerability of recipients.

RSA continued its collaboration with the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** in 2022 through a fact-finding mission to the land border, namely the Evros area, as well as north-eastern Aegean islands and Leros, Kos and Rhodes, with the aim of registering deaths of third-country nationals upon entry into the country.

In cooperation with the **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)**, RSA took part in a joint [report](#) with Equal Rights Beyond Borders and HIAS Greece on the border procedure on the Greek islands.

Networks

RSA is a founding member of the Informal Forced Returns Recording Mechanism of the **Greek National Commission for Human Rights**. The first interim report of the mechanism was published in early January 2023.

RSA is an active member of the **Racist Violence Recording Network** and consistently records racially motivated violence on the islands of Lesvos and Chios, as well as the mainland.

Finally, RSA participates in regular meetings of the Legal Aid Working Groups organised by UNHCR on Lesvos, Chios and Athens, and chairs the CEAS Sub-Working Group. RSA

also participates in meetings of the Advocacy Working Group of civil society organisations in Athens.



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