

Cyprus struggles with increased influx of asylum seekers



More than 140 refugees arrived in just four days from September 1 to 4, in what the Cypriot government said was a significant spike in irregular immigration.

Cyprus appealed on Wednesday to the European Union for more help in dealing with illegal migrants, warning it would be unable to cope if the influx of arrivals continues to its shores.

According to statistics, the EU's easternmost state of Cyprus had received over 4,000 asylum requests in the first eight months of 2018, which was a 55% increase for the same period last year.

Cyprus is located just 160 kilometers from the coast of war-torn Syria but had not seen the same massive inflow of migrants experienced by Turkey and Greece until this year.

In 2018, many European countries such as Italy and Greece launched stricter regulations on receiving migrants, which made Cyprus a new option for migrants to enter Europe.

"The refugees coming from the Middle East are looking for ways in order to find

better living conditions, and from the moment it is now very difficult for them to go to Greece via Turkey. They are seeking to find different routes and Cyprus is one of those routes and that's why we are experiencing a higher number of refugees trying to reach Cyprus," said George N. Tzogopoulos, a senior research fellow at the Center International de Formation Européenne(CIFE) and an expert on EU affairs.

Cyprus, an island with a population of about a million, is already dealing with over 15,000 asylum seekers, with about 5,000 asylum applications still pending.

At the peak of the European migrant crisis in 2015, 1.3 million Syrians requested asylum in Europe. However, the number of new asylum seekers has declined overall since then. Still, over 5.6 million people have fled Syria since 2011, while more than 6.6 million Syrians remain internally displaced according to the UN Refugee Agency.

Source: http://www.euronews.com/2018/09/09/cyprus-struggles-with-increased-influx-of-asylum-seekers?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29

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