

Number of Migrants Rises in Greece as EU Fails in Relocation Efforts



Refugees and migrants keep arriving to Greece, despite the reduction in numbers, following the EU-Turkey deal of 2016. File photo

More than five thousand refugees and migrants came to Greece during the first sixty-three days of 2019, according to the most recent data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

A total of 3,634 individuals reached the Greek shores by sea, out of a total of 5,137 refugees and migrants who entered the country from January 1 to March 4, 2019.

Greek Migration Minister Dimitris Vitsas has confirmed that the number of refugees and migrants now living in Greece is more than 70,000.

This figure shows that three years after the deal between the EU and Turkey to control the migrant flows into Europe, Greece is continuing to receive increasing numbers of people.

The EU's relocation scheme, which was designed to relieve Mediterranean nations including Greece and Italy with the tremendous burden of refugee arrivals, is in practice non-functional. These Mediterranean countries are where the vast majority of current refugees and migrants arrive.

Many central and northern EU member states, such as Hungary and Poland, have declined to accept any refugees whatsoever.

For more than four years now, this untenable political stance has created an unjust situation, in which countries like Greece and Italy have to deal almost alone with the problem, due to their geographical position.

Meanwhile, other EU countries do not want to deal with their fair share of this European-wide problem.

Despite the constant efforts of the European Commission to make the relocation programs work, the tough immigration stance taken by some EU member states has brought the situation to a stalemate.

The last meeting between the EU Justice and Home Affairs ministers before the European Elections of May took place last Thursday in Brussels.

Again, no decision was taken yet again, due to the complete disagreement between the twenty-eight EU member states on how to handle the issue.

Thus, Greece and Italy are forced to continue coping with the increasing number of refugees and migrants, at least for several more months, before a new meeting takes place, which could happen at the end of Summer, 2019.

Over the last several years, both Italy and Greece have received billions of euros from the EU to cope with the situation. However, the EU's main aim remains the relocation of refugees and migrants across the Union, which would fairly distribute the burden of the crisis across the European nations.

Source:

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