

IMPROVING ACCESS TO ASYLUM IN GREECE

TEAM PROFILE

Students, at least one of whom is French speaking. Interest in asylum law and migration issues, strong motivation, and interest in teamwork.

PARTNER

Equal Legal Aid (ELA)

9 rue des Fabricants, 59100 Roubaix, France

<https://www.equallegalaid.org>

association loi 1901

PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT

Juliette MALFAISAN, Director and Founder of ELA

Domitille NICOLET, project manager

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTITUTION AND CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Equal Legal Aid (ELA) is a non-profit organization whose aim is to improve access to law and legal assistance for the numerous people on the move in Northern Greece.

With the rise of digitalization, we are witnessing the dematerialization of many administrative services. The health crisis of Covid-19 has only reinforced this trend that has been present for several years. This development can have serious consequences for asylum seekers. In Greece's mainland, access to the Greek asylum procedure is limited by the obtention of a mandatory appointment via a dedicated Skype number. Similarly, many procedures and applications must be made online by asylum seekers (obtaining an appointment, legal aid, file etc.). This development is reproduced in many other European countries. In Île-de-France, access to the OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et d'Intégration), which is necessary to register an asylum application, is subject to obtaining an appointment with the prefecture by telephone.

The right to asylum is limited by the material impossibility for people on the move to access these platforms (cost, access to a telephone or internet) but also by the saturation of these services. **The impossibility of obtaining an appointment puts asylum seekers in danger through the irregularity of their situation.**

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

The recent development of this digitalization at the European level is a major threat to fundamental rights and is still poorly documented. The students will focus mainly on the situation in Greece through interviews with different actors. However, it is conceivable that the project could be extended to other French and European legal actors such as ASGI (in Italy), RLC (in Germany) or others in order **to build an advocacy work at the European level** to have a real impact on this practice.

The project will take the following form:

Legal and procedural research

- Determine which rights are affected by the consequences of asylum procedure dematerialization.
- Contact different associative and institutional actors in order to have a better understanding of the procedures.

Drafting of impact sheets based on testimonies

- Interviewing people on the move in the framework of a potential field mission in Greece (*subject to sufficient funds being raised*) with the assistance of Equal Legal Aid's interpreters to identify the reasons and consequences of the non-access to the asylum procedure.
- Relating the theoretical legal framework to the identified cases and drafting the relevant factsheet(s).

Drafting of advice tool-sheets for the beneficiaries

- On the basis of the legal research and the collection of testimonies, create advice tool-sheets that will accompany asylum seekers in their access to the platforms.
- Drafting and translation of a practical sheet on the steps to follow when it is impossible to access the asylum application on the dematerialized platforms that will be made available to Greek legal organizations.

Advocacy on the issues raised by the dematerialization of the asylum procedure

- On the basis of the research carried out and the testimonies collected, construction of an advocacy for a non-initiated public. (parliamentary actors, associations, media,...).

As part of a human commitment and **responding to a clearly identified need, the project aims to build practical tools for exiles and Greek lawyers**, possibly also French or European, as well as the presentation of an advocacy work on the impacts of the access to the asylum procedure dematerialization to parliamentarians or other actors of civil life.

Access to asylum is a fundamental right that must be respected by European Union countries like Greece. Beyond the commitments made by these states in international conventions, the right to asylum is a question of humanity. By working on this project, students will have the opportunity to be at the heart of a **complete project that responds to a concrete need in the field**. During the project, they will be able to familiarize themselves with the procedures of European law, with the asylum application procedure in Greece as well as exchange with actors and exiles on the reality of the migration situation. The proposed challenge thus supports a humane and European project, willing to support the general interest.

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES INTENDED

Drafting of tool-sheets for the beneficiaries

Drafting of information sheets for Greek and European legal aid organizations

Participation in the drafting of the European advocacy work

The concrete contribution will be double. Firstly, it will allow the people working in the structure to have ready-to-use information sheets to help the people on the move who are concerned by the situation. Secondly, it will allow to launch advocacy and litigation actions at the European level which we hope will have a direct impact on the dematerialized procedures.

SCHEDULE

October/November: research phase

December/January: interview phase

February/March: drafting of fact sheets for lawyers and beneficiaries

April: work on advocacy

METHODOLOGY

We plan a weekly meeting for students and their tutor to guide them through their research throughout the year.

The students will also be accompanied by lawyers specialized in asylum law working in the structure. A monthly meeting to review the project will be organized.

However, students will be able to ask for help from the lawyers throughout the year, even outside the framework of these meetings (mainly with the creation of a dedicated whatsapp group for the project to facilitate exchanges; the people involved will however have to take into account a certain delay of response with regard to the tasks and activities of each one, goodwill will be the keyword).

LOGISTIC

Students will have access to a workroom at Sciences Po.

A field mission could potentially take place in Greece in the second semester, provided that the structure can raise sufficient funds for its 2022 budget.