Since January 2015, more than 1 million people fleeing war, persecution and poverty entered or passed through Greece in search of safety and a better life, and more than 1,200 were reported dead or missing. During the latter part of 2015 and early 2016, selective and arbitrary admission policies were put in place by various European countries that eventually closed their borders to all migrants. On 20 March 2016, the EU-Turkey Deal came into effect whereby all migrants arriving irregularly on to the Greek islands would be returned to Turkey. This is a two-year timeline of the major events since the implementation of the EU-Turkey Deal, depicting policies and efforts that chip away at the rights and protections for asylum seekers arriving to the EU.

### 2016

- **April 2016**
  - Asylum applications with the Greek Asylum Service increase by 287.2% compared to 2015. Greece adopts a new Asylum Law, partly to implement the EU-Turkey Deal.
  - Piraeus, the port of Greece, becomes one of the largest makeshift refugee camps hosting more than 2,500 persons who cannot continue their journey.

- **October 2016**
  - 12 NGOs publish a joint report explaining the situation for those stranded in Greece for over six months and offering recommendations.

### 2017

- **January 2017**
  - Heavy snowfall on Lesvos brings to the fore the unacceptable living conditions of refugees. Three asylum seekers die in Moria, Lesvos, apparently trying to get warm. "There are men but also women in the tents. With the snow, I thought I would die of the cold. My tent was covered in snow and you couldn’t see its surface" by Alain, 32-year-old man from Cameroon, Moria, Lesvos.

- **March 2017**
  - 13 NGOs join forces urging the Greek Parliament to reject any changes to legislation based on the European Commission’s Joint Action Plan which will worsen the situation for Greek islanders and further erode the rights of asylum seekers.

- **September 2017**
  - Employees of the Reception and Identification Service write an open letter to the Ministry of Migration Policy asking for a dignified working framework and condemning the conditions of the camps, which endanger both the employees and the asylum seekers.

### 2018

- **February 2018**
  - Changes are announced for the medical assessment of asylum seekers’ vulnerabilities, which directly affect the asylum process. New amendments on the asylum law are also announced, whereby the European Asylum Support Office will have a more expanded role in the asylum interviews causing a higher risk that vulnerable people will not be identified. Dangerous overcrowding in camps on the islands persists.

- **October 2018**
  - More than 2,800 people are living in the hotspot in Samos, a facility with a maximum capacity of just 700. Dangerous overcrowding in Lesvos and Chios, too.
  - 19 NGOs write an open letter to the Greek Prime Minister Tsipras calling for the immediate transfer of asylum seekers to the mainland to meet their protection needs.

- **December 2018**
  - 15 NGOs launch a roadmap for the handover of the refugee response to the Greek Government. Under pressure, the Greek Government announces that a one-off emergency exercise for the transfer of more than 5,000 people from the islands will take place before winter sets in.

- **March 2018**
  - Small boat sinks off Greek island, killing 16 people including at least five children.