

Info Sheet: Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)

(Latest update: 10th of October 2017)



What is Voluntary Return?

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration is a program for individuals that voluntarily decide to return to their home country. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) runs this program.

Where can I return to?

IOM does not provide flights back to some countries that are not considered safe at all, such as Syria. **It is only possible to go back to your country of origin, not to any other country.**

If the area of your country where you lived is considered unsafe, however other parts of your country are considered safe, then it might still be possible to be returned to one of the areas considered safe. To check if IOM is able to provide flights for you, visit one of their offices (see the addresses below) or call them on +30 210 991 90 40.

Who is eligible for Voluntary Return?

You can only apply for assisted voluntary return if you are not registered as an asylum seeker, if you have abandoned your asylum application, if it has been rejected or if for other reasons you are unwilling to stay in Greece. That means if you are registered as an asylum seeker you have to withdraw from your asylum application to be able to apply for Voluntary Return. This step is irreversible, so be 100% sure that you want to return before you do it.

People who have already been granted international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) are not eligible to use the program. If you have international protection in Greece but still want voluntary return, IOM will be able to provide you with the papers necessary to resign from your international protection so you can then use this program.

Does the procedure cost anything and what exactly does IOM provide?

The procedure of voluntary return is free. In addition to that, IOM provides potential returnees with:

- Information and counselling about returns;
- Pre-departure assistance, including assistance to obtain appropriate documents (i.e. travel documents), air tickets and escort to the airport;
- Transit and reception assistance
- A small amount of money for re-establishing yourself in your home country



How and where can I apply?

If voluntary return is an option for you, you should **visit an IOM office or call them to get more detailed information**. In either case they will be able to speak to you through a translator.

Offices of the International Organization for Migration in Greece

Athens office	Thessaloniki office
6 Dodekanisou Street, Alimos, 17456, Athens, Greece tel: +30 210 991 90 40 email: iomathens@iom.int	A1 Vasileos Georgiou Street, Building E, Office 26 E, 54640, Thessaloniki, Greece tel.: +30 231 331 73 49 +30 694 966 26 66

Other offices exist in Ioannina, Heraclion and Patra. Please see the following page for details:
<https://greece.iom.int/en/contact-us>

Important information for people on the Greek islands

If you are on the Greek islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros or Kos then somewhat different conditions apply. If you asked for asylum there and get rejected, you will be told that you only have 5 days in which you can decide to apply for voluntary return. You will also be told that if you decide to appeal against your rejection, you will not be allowed to apply for voluntary return any more.

The above policy towards asylum seekers on the islands has been heavily criticised by many NGOs and human rights organisations. If you find yourself in this situation, it is very important to try to think about your situation with a clear head and avoid feeling like you are under pressure to make a decision on the spot, even if that is how the situation is presented to you.

To have access to this information online please visit our Facebook page:

Mobile Info Team for refugees in Greece

<https://www.facebook.com/mobileinfoteam>

