



PRESS RELEASE

Following ECCHR complaint

Greek hotspots: EU Ombudsman probes work of European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

Berlin, 6 June 2017 – The [European Ombudsman](#) will examine practices by the European Asylum Support Office ([EASO](#)) at “hotspots” (reception centers) in Greece. The move comes in response to a complaint about the inadmissibility decisions taken under the EU-Turkey agreement. The complaint was filed by the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights ([ECCHR](#)) with the support of [Brot für die Welt](#) in April 2017. The Ombudsman has now declared the complaint admissible.

“EASO’s activities at the Greek hotspots violate their own guidelines and go beyond the scope of its powers under EU law,” said ECCHR General Secretary Wolfgang Kaleck. ECCHR finds that EASO tries to publicly downplay the role it plays, [claiming](#) it is merely providing support to the Greek authorities. In reality, Greece’s decisions on asylum applications are based solely on EASO interviews and recommendations; officials from the Greek Asylum Service have no direct contact with the applicants. “We very much welcome the EU Ombudsman’s decision to examine the lawfulness of EASO’s work in Greece,” said Kaleck.

The EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 purports to return “[a]ll new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands”. However, asylum seekers cannot be returned based on a generalized consideration of Turkey as a “safe third country” and without an individual review of the particular situation of the person concerned. The admissibility interviews undertaken by EASO deny asylum seekers a fair hearing and the chance to adequately present their case. This is the conclusion of ECCHR’s research on the Aegean islands and the basis of the complaint against EASO.

More information on the complaint against EASO: [ECCHR/Migration/Greece](#)

Contact: Anabel Bermejo, Tel.: + 49 (0)172 - 587 00 87, E-Mail: bermejo@ECCHR.eu