

Abstracts

Differentiation of the Refugee Protection in the Aegean Sea

Greece, as a frontier member state, has been drawn in the centre of these discussions with the Europeanisation process of its asylum system and its practices in migration control at the maritime and land borders with Turkey. In particular, after the unexpected migration movement from Turkey to Greece in 2015, the Aegean Sea has been under the spotlight. Despite various studies focusing on refugee protection, border policies, and EU governance, few studies emphasized the legal landscape of forced migration in the region. Therefore, this report aims to provide an overview of the legal landscape of the asylum regime in the maritime border zone between Turkey and Greece and to argue how it has impacted on the rights and livelihoods of asylum seekers. Alongside the international mechanism for refugee protection, the Europeanisation process and the harmonisation process of the Greek national legal framework with the EU law leads a multi-layered asylum regime in Greece. In addition to this, the adoption of the Fast-track border procedure with the implementation of the “hotspot approach”, the first instance procedures were geographically diversified. The consequences of this fragmentation in the legal procedures were aggravated since the geographical restrictions on travel from the Eastern Aegean Islands (where hotspots are established) to the mainland - which was brought as a result of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016. The complications in the asylum system put asylum seekers in a more precarious situation, and have a direct impact on their access to rights and to the basic services.



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