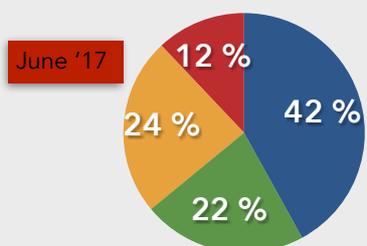




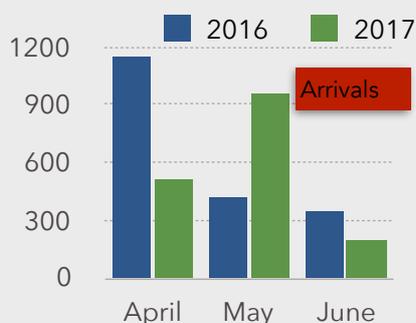
Overview of data

The total registered arrivals on Chios from January 2016 to date is 43,836, with an average of 6 arrivals per day in July 2017. Since the beginning of 2016, Chios has received 24% of the total arrivals to Greece.

Since the entry into force of the 'EU-Turkey Deal' on 20 March 2016, new arrivals undergo the fast-track border procedure, and only accepted applicants are moved to the Greek mainland. Denied applicants are eventually deported to Turkey, allegedly in accordance with the 'safe third country' concept. Currently, approximately 1,665 live on Chios.



● Men ● Boys
● Women ● Girls



[Source: UNHCR Data Portal - Chios, 9/7/2017]

Who we are and what we do

Refugee law clinics abroad e.V. (rlca) is a registered society located in Berlin. We are a volunteer-based organisation operating on the Greek island of Chios. Our aim is to provide asylum seekers both with information regarding the asylum procedure in Chios and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Deal, and with interview preparation through one-on-one meetings as well as public workshops. We are also engaged in assisting in family reunification cases, and we cooperate with Greek asylum lawyers and different NGOs across the island to improve the level of assistance granted to asylum seekers.

All of our legal volunteers have a sound background in EU and national asylum law. We also receive support from a broad network of experienced and well-known lawyers, legal scholars and judges.

Rlca believes in empowerment through information. Our approach is to give people the information they need to enable them to make informed decisions and plan for their future.



New Pre-removal detention centre on Chios?

In accordance with the [5th report of the European Commission](#) about the implementation of the EU Turkey Deal, a pre-removal detention center should be built in Chios as soon as possible. Due to some legal disputes at a local court level, the pre-removal detention center has not been built so far. However, a [decision has been taken](#) to proceed with the development of a pre-removal centre in a site outside the city.

Border Procedure

A border procedure can be defined as a procedure in which the applicant for international protection is not granted entry to the territory during the time that the authorities examine his or her application. Since the entry into force of the EU Turkey statement, the (in)admissibility of an application for international protection on the basis of Turkey (not) being a „safe third country“ is examined prior to the examination on the merits. During the procedure, the applicants are subject to a „geographical restriction“ i.e. they are not allowed to leave the island. Some of the applicants are waiting for a decision for up to one year, during which they live in sub-standard conditions in the hotspot camps.

Chios: implementation of the ‘hotspot’ concept

Our legal information team is based on Chios, a small Greek island located in the Aegean Sea, 7 km from the coast of Turkey. With a population of 51,000 and Greece’s fifth largest island, Chios is deemed a hotspot for asylum-seeker arrivals from

Turkey due to its geographical location and number of arrivals. The ‘hotspot’ concept was developed by the European Commission in order to cope with situations of ‘disproportionate migratory pressure’ at



the EU’s external borders. One main goal is to enable local authorities to swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants in a ‘border procedure’.

Living Conditions in Chios

Generally speaking, hotspots facilities are severely overcrowded far beyond their capacities. In Chios, the official camp in *Vial* has a total capacity of 1100 persons. However, recent research by UNHCR shows that more than 2000 people in need of protection reside on Chios, a fact that has prompted the rise of a second unofficial camp, *Souda*, to house the remainder of the asylum seekers. The humanitarian conditions in the camps of both Vial and Souda are

particularly concerning, and have been defined by the Greek Minister of Migration Yannis Mouzala as ‘horrifying’. The camps are overcrowded, solid floors and walls are missing, and tents are infested by rats and vermin. Electrical lines are not secured, thus exacerbating the risk for children to become injured. Even for vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors or severely-ill persons, adequate housing is not available, a fact that poses serious dangers to their health and safety. Children do not

have access to the public education system. The number of mentally-ill persons has increased due to the precarious living conditions in the camps, and previous traumatising experiences in the country of origin. The detectable increase of suicide attempts should not, thus, be surprising. Psychiatric aid is not available: waiting times are long, up to even months, and psychological treatment for traumatised persons is not accessible at all in many cases. New arrivals are sometimes forced to sleep in the street as the camps in Vial and Souda have reached their maximum capacities. On 14 June 2017, the camp in Souda was partly cleared without notification, leaving many people without accommodation.

The impact of our work

Since our inception in May 2017, we have given legal information to more than 300 asylum-seekers. Although the majority of our work consists of asylum interview preparation, our volunteers have also initiated and assisted in over 50 family reunification procedures. Most asylum-seekers approach us with case-specific questions; matters relating to vulnerability are also discussed and referred to the competent bodies. In addition to our legal info work on the ground, rlca aims at making public the many illegal and inhuman aspects of the situation for asylum seekers trapped at the so-called 'hotspot' islands at the EU's external border. We therefore closely follow political and legal developments at national and EU level and engage with the relevant actors.



At a glance Family Reunification under Dublin

A big part of our work is dedicated to assist in family reunification within the European Union under the Dublin-III Regulation. Like many other refugees that we give legal information to, a female asylum-seeker, who arrived to Chios in May 2017 together with her one-year-old son, approached us: her husband is legally residing in Germany as a fully recognised refugee and now she wishes to be reunited with him. We informed the family about the possibility of family reunification under the Dublin III Regulation, which is an extremely lengthy procedure. Further delays are expected following an informal agreement between Germany and Greece to cap the monthly number of transfers to 70, starting from April 2017. Not only does this raise serious questions on the legal bases of the agreement, but it is also a clear breach of the human right to family life and unity as recognized in a number of international human rights instruments, and also in the Dublin Regulation itself. This new agreement will delay the family reunification of approximately thousands of refugees, who will be forced to wait in a limbo for up to a year before embracing their family. Rlca has published an opinion and contacted the relevant actors at the EU level in order to inquire the circumstances of the informal agreement.