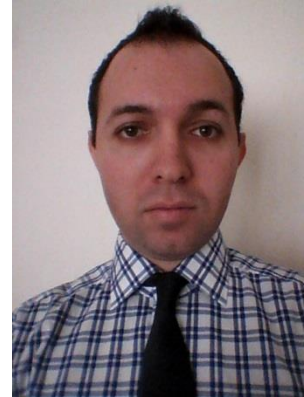


Liveris Vouropoulos:

Illegal emigration to Greece - Current situation and solutions



The humanitarian aspect of the migration problem that Greece faces is obvious.

Millions of people are coming to Europe searching for a better life. Often, they pay large amounts of money and risk their lives to reach our continent. Thousands have died trying to cross the Mediterranean.

In many cases, Greece is the first European country that refugees enter. This means that it is Greece's responsibility to take care of them and offer medical assistance. But given the current financial turmoil, many Greek citizens are reluctant to help the refugees as they are a burden for the state's budget.

Since January, Greece for the first time ever is ruled by a left-wing government. The first decision Alexis Tsipras' government made was to close the detention centers for refugees where people stayed for some months before being returned to their countries. While it is true that living conditions in the detention centers weren't good and that there was a terrible lack of sanitation, the situation now is worse with thousands of refugees jobless and homeless.

To add to the problem, the refugee issue is being manipulated by the government. The Minister of Defense recently announced that he would issue legal papers to refugees to allow them to freely travel to the rest of Europe unless Greece's European partners agreed to release the next credit payment to Athens.

Undoubtedly, Europe must show its solidarity by implementing solutions both in the short and the long term.

Short-term:

- The EU's Frontex agency must step up its activities in the Mediterranean.
- More medical equipment and personnel are needed to assist refugees.

Long-term:

- The Dublin 2 treaty which obliges the country where a refugee first enters the EU to host that person and review his case need to be reviewed.
- There should be closer cooperation with Turkey in order to better control migration flows.
- More efforts should be made to confront the problem for the root by stabilising countries in need such as Syria, Egypt, Iraq etc. so that people see no need to flee their homes.