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Activity Report 2025

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Note regarding images:

Out of respect for the dignity and privacy of the people we support, we do not, as a matter of principle, publish any images in which faces are recognisable. The photographs used therefore show only situations or angles that do not allow individual people to be identified.

Foreword

Education – Encounter – Prospects

Since ancient times, Ariadni's thread has been a symbol of **guiding people through difficult and confusing situations**. This is precisely what our work on Lesbos is all about.

Ariadni Lesvos has been operating on Lesbos as a Greek organisation since March 2022. Ariadni grew out of the long-standing work of Hoffnung leben e.V., which began on Lesbos in 2015. Both organisations are legally and financially independent and work closely together.

Outside the camp, **we provide a safe and reliable place for women, girls and schoolchildren. We make the often difficult waiting period easier, provide education and guidance, and prepare people for an independent life once their status has been recognised.**

This is not just about individual services. We empower people through education, interaction and practical support.

By 2025, the situation on Lesbos had changed further. The length of stay for many people had become shorter; the composition of our groups had changed, and with it, our work. Building relationships and supporting people over a longer period becomes more difficult when most guests stay on the island for only a few weeks or months.

Demand for our services remained high. Many groups were fully booked, and in some cases there were waiting lists.



Ariadni House – a place outside the camp

Many of our guests come to us on the recommendation of other visitors. This means we often reach women and children shortly after their arrival on Lesbos.

Ariadni House is not within walking distance of the camp. We therefore collect participants via a secure transfer service and bring them back again after the programme. This means that our time together begins and ends as soon as they board the bus.

This creates a clearly defined period of time: **from departure to return, this time belongs to the women or children.** They know when their time at Ariadni begins and when it ends. In between, they are not confronted with everyday life in the camp and the problems that are constantly present there.

Ariadni House itself is a perfectly ordinary residential building. That is precisely what matters to us. It offers something that is often lacking in the camp: **normality.**

Here there is a table where we eat and work together, a kitchen, a bathroom, towels, and a place where children naturally learn to wash and dry their hands after using the toilet. Things that we take for granted sometimes have to become part of everyday life again for children living in the conditions of a camp.

The physical separation from the camp also contributes to a sense of calm. The shared journey, the fixed start and end times, and the manageable group sizes create a clear structure. **The time spent at Ariadni House belongs to the people who come together there.**



In 2025, many of our guests stayed on the island for just two or three months. Overall, the average length of stay on Lesbos was around three to five months.

This also affects our work. Trust and relationships do not develop by themselves; they take time. When people move on after just a few weeks or months, there is less opportunity to support them over a longer period.

This makes the small groups and the personal atmosphere at Ariadni House all the more important. The women and children do not just come for a course. They get to know the people who work there and meet others with similar experiences.

At the end of 2025, at the request of the **BRF – Boat Refugee Foundation** (www.bootvluchteling.nl/en/), we were able to welcome a group of African women for the first time. Since then, mixed groups of African, Iranian and Afghan women have occasionally visited Ariadni House.

Women from different backgrounds sit together at the table, work together and talk to one another. In doing so, they discover common ground that transcends cultural differences.

Empowering women – learning together and trying new things

The women's programme has been part of our work right from the start.

In 2025, we were once again baking, cooking, mixing, painting, crocheting, crafting and experimenting. We created spice blends for black tea and iced tea, as well as Afghan carrot compote and torshi. Scraps of fabric were turned into jewellery; the women did macramé, crochet, batik and fabric painting. They also decorated porcelain, and gave bags and T-shirts a new look.

The focus is not primarily on the finished product. **The women find a sense of calm, are able to do something with their hands, try out new things and create something beautiful or useful for themselves.** For a few hours, the focus is not on everyday life in the camp.

Working together creates opportunities for conversation. Women contribute their own ideas, show others what they can do and learn from one another. Those who attend regularly develop their skills further; others are trying something out for the first time.

Personal care and relaxation are also part of the experience: hair care, body butter, scented soaps and body scrubs. For women living in the camp under very basic conditions, such activities are not something they can take for granted.

Trust is built through these shared activities. This forms an important foundation for the personal exchanges that *'Let's talk about'* makes possible.



Let's talk about – Knowledge, Questions, Guidance

Another component of the women's programme is **'Let's talk about'**, which is run by Hoffnung leben e.V. and takes place at Ariadni House.

The programme focuses on two areas: **personal development and empowerment**, and **information and guidance on life in Europe**.



Personal topics include, amongst other things, women's health, family planning and how to manage one's own health and body. The women gain knowledge, can ask questions and share their own experiences.

The second area concerns the legal and social framework within which they live in Europe. This includes their rights, equality, social norms and cultural differences, as well as very practical everyday issues.

Many women have never had the opportunity to realise their potential. Education was difficult to access or was denied to them. Some had to leave school early; others were never allowed to study certain subjects.

Older women in particular never cease to surprise us with their life experience, their powers of observation and their practical wisdom.

The women ask questions, engage in discussion and share their own experiences. They want to understand how things work, what opportunities are open to them and what rights they have.

And it is important to them that their daughters make the most of their new opportunities.

Time and again, we see just how much they value **being able to ask questions, speak out and be heard – and to be taken seriously, respected and seen**.

Education does not create intelligence. Education creates opportunities.

On specific issues, we collaborate with **MSF** (www.msf.org/greece – Médecins Sans Frontières) **Women's Health**, the **Legal Centre Lesbos** (www.legalcentrelesvos.org/) and other organisations. This ensures that participants receive expert information and can be referred to appropriate support services where necessary.

EcoKids – Understanding the environment, experiencing personal agency

In 2025, too, children from the camp attended EcoKids on a regular basis.

Right from the start, alongside environmental education, a second principle has been central to EcoKids: the children should learn that they themselves can make a difference. They learn that their ideas, decisions and actions matter – both for their immediate surroundings and for the wider human community.

The children have no influence over much of what happens in their lives. They have had to leave their homes, sever ties and start afresh time and again. Many also find, both at the camp and later in other countries, that they are not automatically welcomed.

EcoKids counteracts this. The children discover that they are capable of achieving things, that their contributions matter and that they are part of a community. They are EcoKids – part of a power team.

This sense of belonging does not end when they leave Lesbos. Through EcoTeamEurope, the children can continue to learn and stay in touch with other former EcoKids. In this way, friendships and relationships endure, even when a child moves on. This is particularly important for children who have so often experienced relationships being severed without having any say in the matter.



Learning and experiencing

At EcoKids, children learn about nature, the environment and sustainability, work together and get out into the open air. This includes trips into the countryside, to the Petrified Forest and to the fascinating Volcano Museum, as well as beach clean-ups and a visit to a local recycling company.

But EcoKids isn't just about lessons.

When the Red Noses come to visit, the children have a brilliant time. For a few hours, the focus shifts away from flight, camp life and uncertainty, and towards playing and laughing together.

At a father-and-child play morning before Christmas, fathers and children were able to play together. Experiences like these are also part of working with children.

In 2025, the **EcoTeamEurope** online learning platform (www.ecoteameurope.org) was also set up and adapted for the existing children's group. This means that learning can continue even after they move on, and the connection with former EcoKids can be maintained.

In 2026, EcoKids will also be opened up to more children, regardless of whether they have a migrant background or not. The language of instruction is English. This enables the children to learn and practise an important European language at the same time, and to communicate with other children across national borders.

Out of the camp – exploring the island

Excursions are part of the programme for women and children. They offer exercise, nature and a change of scenery – whilst also giving people a chance to explore the island where many of our guests have been living for several months.

During the warmer months, this naturally includes days by the sea. For many people, however, the camp is the place where they have been living since their arrival. A group outing provides a break from everyday life and opens the door to new experiences.

This is particularly evident when it comes to swimming. Many people have endured a life-threatening crossing whilst fleeing their homes. As a result, water is not necessarily associated with relaxation at first. When a woman eventually goes into the water, swims or simply sits on the beach and is able to enjoy the sea, it is a small but important step.

During the cooler months, the sea takes a back seat. That's when we explore the island in different ways. Children watch migratory birds stopping over on Lesbos, learn about volcanism at the Petrified Forest Museum and discover what a geopark is. The participants visit exhibitions by local artists, the Byzantine castle or an olive oil museum, where they learn how olive oil is made.



These excursions also provide opportunities to meet the island's residents. People who have recently arrived on Lesbos often initially associate the island with the negative experiences they have had with the coastguard, the authorities and the camp. They meet people who treat them with hospitality and openness and show them around their island.

At the same time, the residents of Lesbos also get to know refugees outside the camp: not just as people who have arrived and need support, but as women and children who are curious, ask questions and take an interest in the island's history, nature and culture.

Such encounters are particularly important on an island that has been heavily affected by displacement and migration since 2015, and whose population has itself experienced this development as a great strain.

So it is not just about getting people out of the camp. It is about showing them the island – and bringing the people on the island closer together.

Sustainability as the foundation of our work

The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide an important framework for Ariadni's work.

Poverty, hunger, lack of **education, inequality, environmental degradation and climate change rob people of future opportunities and can exacerbate displacement and migration**. For us, therefore, sustainability means more than just environmental protection. It also encompasses education, gender equality, decent work, reduced inequality and peaceful and just coexistence.

These goals are reflected in many areas of our work. **Women should be aware of their rights, be able to make decisions independently and seize their opportunities**. The Women's Programme and 'Let's talk about' therefore focus, amongst other things, on women's health, family planning, equality, rights, social norms and navigating everyday life in Europe.



For us, working conditions at Ariadni are also part of sustainability. **Good work requires good working conditions**. These include fair working hours, fair pay, further training and the opportunity to take on responsibility. We increase wages when funding allows, and invest in the professional development of our staff.

Environmental education is another key aspect. Children learn why recycling is important and how resources can be conserved. They explore topics such as water, energy, nature and marine conservation. At Ariadni House, too, fabric offcuts are reused, clothes are mended or repurposed, and plastic is avoided wherever possible.

For us, sustainability means empowering people to take action whilst treating our environment and resources responsibly.

Practical help when it's needed

Part of our work is very practical. When providing meals for women and children, we ensure they have a healthy and balanced diet. This includes fruit, vegetables, nuts and other nutrient-rich foods.

Furthermore, in 2025, thanks to the support of **Solingen hilft**, we were also able to distribute food for people to take back to the camp. For people living in difficult circumstances, this practical help makes an immediate difference.

The distribution takes place as part of the regular weekly programme. Participants sign up the day before for the following day's programme. **After spending the morning together, they can take food and – where available – clothing for themselves and their families back to the camp.**

This means that practical support is integrated into their stay at Ariadni House and does not stand alone.

People do not just come to collect something. They spend time together, take part in activities and then return to the camp with practical support.

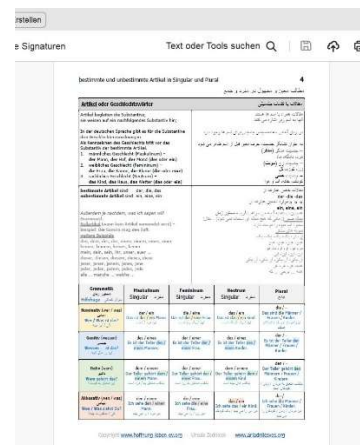
However, funding for this support remains dependent on the resources available.



Education and support do not end with departure

The length of stay on Lesbos is getting shorter. At the same time, our experience shows that, for many people, moving on does not mark the end of their difficulties. **Arrival in Germany or another European country does not automatically signal the start of the new life they had hoped for.** Many first have to find their feet there, learn a new language, cope with the authorities and an unfamiliar daily routine, and build new social relationships.

That is why our work does not end when people leave Lesbos. **‘Hoffnung leben’ maintains the connection and continues to offer educational programmes, information and guidance, as well as individual support, even after people have moved on.**



Children, young people and adults can make use of the educational programmes offered by Hoffnung leben after they have moved on. In addition, personal contact persons are available to answer questions, provide guidance or offer individual support.

In the first half of 2025, there were also three German language courses for beginners, each with around seven participants, which were held via Zoom. This programme was discontinued in the second half of the year.

The reason for this was the political situation in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. We did not wish to continue actively contributing to these countries appearing attractive as destinations for onward migration.

The resources thus freed up were allocated to other educational programmes.

So the support does not end with departure from Lesbos. It simply takes a different form.

It is the people who make Ariadni

Behind all our services are **people who take responsibility.**

In 2025, all three permanent posts were filled throughout the year. Working hours were 30 or 40 hours per week.

Our two staff members work largely independently and with great dedication. They organise their own areas of responsibility, develop their own ideas and are taking on increasing responsibility for processes, procurement and the supervision of volunteers.

In 2025, one staff member also began a degree course in 'Project Management for Organisations'. The course content ranges from fundraising and marketing to organisational development. This knowledge is being channelled into the further development of Ariadni.

Volunteers, too, made additional services possible in 2025 and contributed new ideas.

The fact that staff members take on responsibility and develop their own ideas is an important part of Ariadni's work. Ariadni is growing not only through new services but also through the people who carry out this work.

Financial uncertainty remains a major challenge. Due to limited funding, it was still not possible to offer employment contracts lasting longer than three months.

This complicates long-term staff planning and places a strain on staff members.

Good work requires good working conditions. That is why securing more stable funding is also one of the most important tasks for the future.



Collaboration

Ariadni works in partnership with various organisations, including MSF Women's Health, the Legal Centre Lesbos, the Boat Refugee Foundation (BRF), Siniparxi, The Hope Project and Leanonus.

The collaboration with Hoffnung leben e.V. is particularly close.

Ariadni and Hoffnung leben are legally and financially independent organisations. Ariadni operates on the ground in Lesbos, whilst Hoffnung leben provides organisational and financial support and continues to run online educational programmes.

In this way, we continue to support people even after they have moved on.

Funding

The financial situation remained one of the greatest challenges in 2025.

Hoffnung leben e.V. provided regular support to Ariadni and was able to secure additional grants and private donations for the work on Lesbos.

Further support came from **Stiftung:do, Solingen hilft, umverteilen** and **GLS Treuhand, as well as from Robert Betz Transformations GmbH**.

Despite this support, funds were significantly tighter at the end of the year than at the start.

In practical terms, this means that new programmes can only be set up if their funding is secured. We also need planning certainty for existing programmes.

We therefore need additional and more reliable sources of funding.

2025 in figures

1,900 places for women and older girls

1,300 places for children

approx. 28 euros average cost per place

These figures refer to places and not to individual people. Many women and children have taken part in programmes more than once.

Small groups are a deliberate hallmark of the quality of our work. They enable personal interaction and individual support.

You can find the 2025 Financial Report on our website www.ariadnilesvos.org

What lies ahead

The work on Lesbos is changing.

People are staying on the island for shorter periods. At the same time, some must prepare to stay in Greece for longer or, following a rejection, to build an independent life here after being turned away by other EU countries.

Ariadni is addressing this with new services and a closer link between short-term support and long-term education. Several tasks are therefore on the agenda for 2026:

- further developing educational programmes for women,
- setting up a pre-school programme for younger children and day care,
- opening EcoKids to children outside the camp as well – mixed groups,
- continuing the online educational programmes in collaboration with Hoffnung leben,
- developing a practical home economics training programme,
- securing additional support for logistics and organisation,
- further develop public relations and social media,
- establish more reliable funding.

Ariadni remains an organisation that focuses on people and their individual circumstances. We adapt our programmes as needs change and discontinue them when they are no longer appropriate.

For one another – with one another – shaping our shared future.



Acknowledgements

Ariadni cannot carry out this work alone.

We would like to thank our partner organisations, foundations, companies, volunteers and the many individuals who support our work.

We would particularly like to thank Hoffnung leben e.V. for their ongoing support and close collaboration.

We would like to thank Schafga.be and the Cadolzburg knitting team for the many knitted and crocheted items that are regularly sent to our guests. Behind all this are people who give of their time, their skills and their materials to help others.

And we would like to thank everyone who gives their time, their ideas, their labour or their money.

Because Ariadni is not just about programmes and figures.

Ariadni is made up of people who walk alongside one another for a while on their journey.

 www.hoffnung-leben-ev.org	 www.robert-betz.de	 www.gls-treuhand.de	 www.solingen-hilft.de
 www.stiftung-do.org	 www.umverteilen.de	 www.schafga.be	 Strick-Teams Cadolzburg

After the editorial deadline

In grateful memory



Shower Power supported Ariadni for many years in funding its food programmes. Shower Power ceased its activities at the start of 2025. We deeply regret this and would like to thank the whole team for their long-standing support.

It is with great sadness that we have also learnt of the death of Pieter Wittenberg, co-founder of Shower Power and a long-standing volunteer on Lesbos.

He passed away on 13 March 2026, surrounded by his family, following a short but serious illness.

We will remember him and his commitment to people fleeing their homes with gratitude.

Contacts Ariadni Lesvos and Hoffnung leben

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Hoffnung leben e.V. c/o Ursula Zednicek Johannesstr. 35 53225 Bonn Tax number 206/5865/1209 Registration No. VR11591, Magistrates' Court Bonn Bank Account: Hoffnung leben e.V. IBAN DE44 4306 0967 1394 3500 00 BIC / SWIFT GENODEM1GLS	Mail: kontakt@hoffnung-leben-ev.org Mail: (Finance) schatzmeisterin@hoffnung-leben-ev.org Phone: 0049 171 540 3536 (Ursula, Signal) Website www.hoffnung-leben-ev.org Facebook www.facebook.com/hoffnunglebenev/ Instagram www.instagram.com/hoffnunglebend/
EcoTeamEurope A fun learning programme for schoolchildren of all backgrounds (taught in English) Support: "Education (online) – for a bright future and social inclusion" „Bildung (Online) – für eine gute Zukunft und gesellschaftliche Teilhabe“ https://www.betterplace.org/de/projects/154045?utm_campaign=ShortURLs&utm_medium=project_154045&utm_source=PlainShortURL	Mail: info@ecoteameurope.org Telefon: 0030 697 689 9302 (Anna, WhatsApp) Learning platform: www.ecoteameurope.org
Lerncafé A learning platform for German, integration and social interaction Support: "Education (online) – for a bright future and social inclusion" „Bildung (Online) – für eine gute Zukunft und gesellschaftliche Teilhabe“ https://www.betterplace.org/de/projects/154045?utm_campaign=ShortURLs&utm_medium=project_154045&utm_source=PlainShortURL	Mail: info@lerncafeonline.org Phone: 0049 1715403536 (Ursula, auch Signal) Learning platform: www.lerncafe-online.org



AEGEAN BOAT REPORT

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People Arrived On Aegean islands

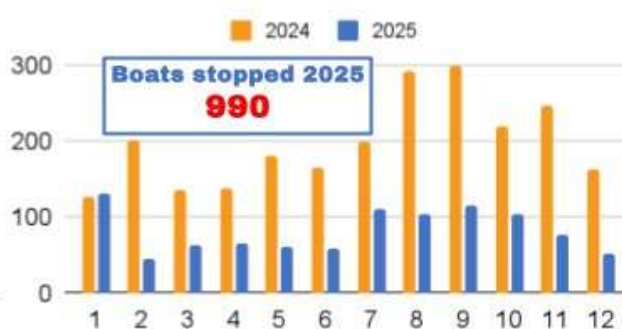


In 2025, people arriving has decreased 56.2%, compared to 2024. 725 boats made it to the Greek islands, carrying 21.352 people. Boats arriving has decreased 55.8% compared to 2024, when 1.639 boats arrived, carrying 48.761 people. 5,841 people were illegally pushed back by Greek authorities.

Boats Arrived On The Islands



Boats Stopped By TCG/Police



Total arrivals decreased by 56.2% compared to 2024 and 45.2% compared to 2023. 1.715 boats started their trip towards the Greek islands in 2025, carrying a total of 46.412 people. 725 boats made the trip, carrying a total of 21.352 people. The remaining 990 boats, carrying 25,060 people, were intercepted by the Turkish Coast Guard and police.

Total Numbers 2024/2025



In 2025 990 boats have been stopped on their way towards Greece, 25.060 people have been detained. Boats arriving on the Greek island has been reduced, due to illegal pushbacks by the Greek government, despite these efforts, the percentage of those who have successfully crossed has increased, compared to the total number of boats started.



AEGEAN BOAT REPORT

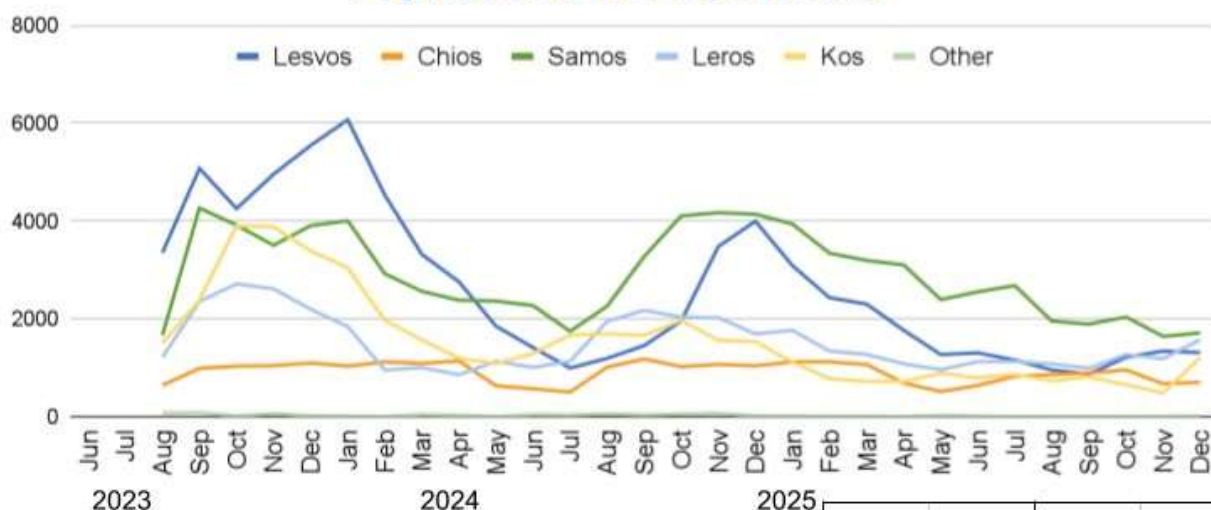
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Arrivals And Transfers By Island

In 2025 15.642 people were transported to mainland, from the Greek islands. Transfers have decreased 57.1% compared to 2024, when 36.494 people were transported. In 2025 the population on the Aegean islands has decreased 47.5%, from 12.407 to 6.514 people. The Greek government prevented 5,841 people from accessing the asylum procedure on the Greek islands in 2025 through illegal pushbacks, in violation of international law and human rights.



Population On Each Island



The official reception capacity on the islands is 14,843 people. Today's population is 8.329 people under max total capacity. In the end of 2024 total population was 12.407, one year later its 6.514, population has decreased by 5.893 people this last year on the Greek Islands.

Lesvos	1307	Kos	1212
Samos	1710	Leros	1572
Chios	702	Other	11

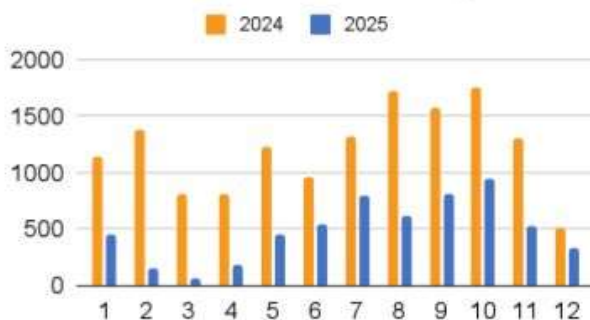


AEGEAN BOAT REPORT

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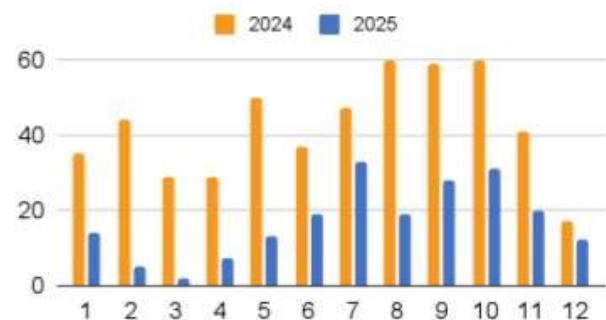
It is the legal right of men, women or children to enter a country with or without paperwork, if they intend to apply for asylum. Pushbacks are the illegal practice of a state preventing people from accessing asylum by stopping them from entering its territory or forcibly returning them across borders or into international waters. The Greek government has hugely increased illegal pushbacks of refugees since January 2020, with some victims stating they have been beaten by Greek officials before being forced back across borders, or into the sea.

Pushbacks - People



Total people 2025: **5.841**

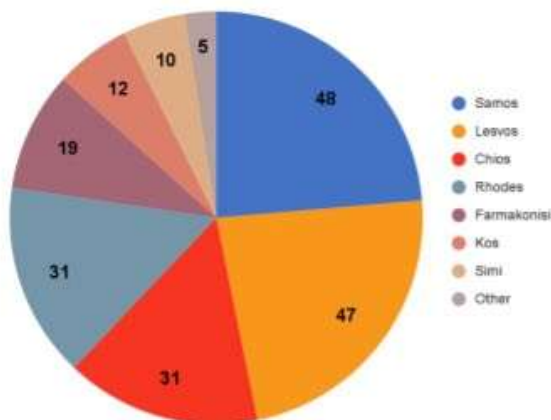
Pushback Cases



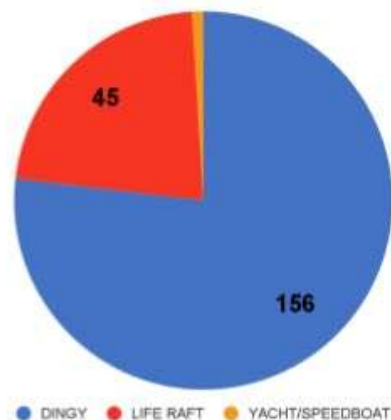
Total pushbacks 2025: **203**

In 2025 Aegean Boat Report registered 203 pushback cases in the Aegean Sea, involving 5.841 children, women and men who tried to reach safety in Europe. 20.7% (1,208 people) had already arrived on Greek territory before being detained and forcibly returned to sea, left drifting in life rafts, illegally expelled by the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG), on orders from the Greek government, so far there has been no reaction from the EU on these illegal actions. 22.6% of all boats/rafts picked up by Turkish coast guard in 2025 had been pushed back by Greek authorities.

Pushbacks By Area



Pushbacks By Craft Type



46.8%, of all pushback cases registered happened around Lesbos and Samos. 4.416 people have been pushed back at sea in 155 rubber boats, engines or petrol removed and left drifting, and in some cases even towed back to Turkish waters by HCG. In 45 registered cases, 1.208 people have been forced into a total of 69 life rafts, and left drifting in the Aegean Sea by the Hellenic Coast Guard, a systematic use of rescue equipment as a deportation tool. The Greek government categorically denies involvement in these practices; however, the volume and consistency of documented evidence strongly contradicts these claims.