

**RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES  
(RIEAS)**

**Newsletter on Immigration to Greece  
(January 2009)**

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**Greece opens borders for Bulgarian and Romanian workers**

The Greek government informed the European Commission that Greece has decided to lift the barriers for Bulgarian and Romanian workers that were put in place when the two countries joined the EU two years ago. Thus, from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 Bulgarians and Romanians will be able to move to and work in Greece without any restriction. The Ministry of Employment claims that this decision will help curb uninsured labor and will not result in a massive influx of workers from these countries (*Eleftheros Typos*, 31/12/2008).

The Ministry's official press release (publicized on their website on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009) can be found here (in Greek only):

<http://www.ypakp.gr/uploads/docs/3050.pdf>

It should be noted that other EU countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg have opted not to open their borders for Bulgarian and Romanian workers because of the economic crisis and rising unemployment (*EUObserver.com*, 5/12/2008). Other countries such as Britain have set a quota on the number of unskilled Bulgarians and Romanians that they will allow in the country. Britain's annual quota is 21,250 from this April (*The Guardian*, 19/12/2008).

The Greek government had the right to retain the restrictions for Bulgarian and Romanian workers for five more years in order to protect the country's labor market.

**Arrests for illegal entry by sea jump by 66%**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Arrests for illegal entry by sea	3,047	3,371 (+11%)	3,456 (+2.5%)	9,240 (+167%)	15,315 (+66%)	34,429

According to the latest figures released by the Greek Port Police (*Eleftherotypia*, 8/1/2009), 15,315 illegal immigrants were arrested in 2008 for attempting to enter the country by sea. This sets a new record which exceeds by 66% the previous one of 2007. The figures presented in the table above show that, in the past two years, arrests for illegal entry by sea have risen tremendously. It should be noted that, despite this increase, nine out of ten arrests for illegal entry or illegal stay in Greece originate from the country's land borders.

A significant increase should also be expected in the nationwide numbers of those arrested for illegal entry and illegal stay as, according to Ministry of Interior data, in the first nine months of 2008 146,377 illegal immigrants had been arrested (*Kathimerini* 15/1/2009), compared to 112,364 in the 12 months of 2007.

### **Greek Parliament gives the green light to Albania's European prospects**

On January 14th, 2009 the Greek Parliament validated the Stabilization and Association Agreement among the European Communities and the Republic of Albania. The whole debate can be found here (in Greek only):

<http://www.parliament.gr/ergasies/showfile.asp?file=end090114ap.txt>

### **Illegal immigrants boosted criminality, claims Minister**

Following a meeting with the Mayor of Athens, Deputy Minister of Interior Mr Christos Markogiannakis claimed that the waves of illegal immigrants to Greece have contributed to the rise in criminality. The relevant press release can be found here (in Greek only):

[http://www.ypes-dt.gr/index.php?option=ozo\\_content&lang=&perform=view&id=2805&Itemid=390](http://www.ypes-dt.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&lang=&perform=view&id=2805&Itemid=390)

### **Minister of Interior Mr Prokopis Pavlopoulos writes about "The migration front line"**

In an article which appeared on the UK-based Guardian newspaper website, the Greek Minister of Interior claims that the amnesty offered to illegal immigrants in 2005 (and which was repeated in 2007) provided for "*the "rational planning" of the entry of immigrants*". The full article can be found here (in English):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jan/21/greece-immigration>

A different view on the issue of amnesties offered to illegal immigrants by successive Greek governments can be found here (in English):

[http://rieas.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=864&Itemid=89](http://rieas.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=864&Itemid=89)

### **The Hellenic Immigration Policy Institute and the US Embassy in Athens organized a Seminar on Immigration**

On January 21, 2009 at the Athens Hilton Hotel took place a seminar jointly organized by the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute and the US Embassy in Athens. The remarks by Deputy Chief of Mission Ms Deborah A. McCarthy can be found here (in English):

[http://athens.usembassy.gov/dcm\\_immigration.html](http://athens.usembassy.gov/dcm_immigration.html)

The relevant HMPI press release can be found here (in Greek only):

<http://www.imepo.gr/documents/DT21012009new.pdf>

**The Hellenic Immigration Policy Institute 5th International Conference to take place in Athens on January 26th**

On January 26th, 2009 the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPIUSA) are to host the 5th International Conference at the Terpsichore Room of the Athens Hilton Hotel. The Conference's subject is "Migratory Synergies and Processes: Improving the Developmental Outcomes of Immigration". The Conference's program can be found here (in Greek only):

<http://www.imepo.gr/images/program1.jpg>