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INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, March 23, Generation 2.0 RED held an informative event titled, "Residence Permits & Citizenship: Procedures & Developments", a meeting between communities and representatives of the decentralized immigration and civil status directorate. The purpose of the event was to inform the public on the relevant procedures. It was also an opportunity to bring together members of different migrant communities in Athens. This consequently ensured that the concerns and difficulties faced by the immigrant populations in Athens and in Greece in general, would be highlighted.

The informative event and the issues raised were based on questions made by the audience to Generation 2.0 RED, which were then passed on to the speakers. This document is a summary of the information gathered during the event. It aims to provide important and relevant material about residence permit and citizenship procedures for immigrants and migrants living in Greece.

RESIDENCE PERMITS

NEW RESIDENCE PERMITS WITH BIOMETRIC DATA

As of February 22, 2017, and on, the residence permits will come in the form of an autonomous card with biometric data.

Question:

With the new system, will the permits take longer to be issued? Will the waiting time depend on each service? Must applicants pay 16€ for each member of their family?

This new form of the residence permits will **ONLY** be available in the case of renewal or re-issue due to expiry of the applicant's passport. The change applies to all permits except the **long-term residence permit** and the **Blue card (European Citizen)**.

The **extra documents** needed for submission at the Directorates of Immigration are:

- 4 printed passport photographs (can be saved in a CD)
- Electronic fee (*paravolo*) of 16€. This is for the new card and the fee applies to everyone including children

Clarifications:

Children under the age of **6 years old** do not give biometric data.

Children under the age of **12 years old** do not provide a signature.

CHANGES IN THE PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF RESIDENCE PERMITS

There are **differences in the procedure**. Meaning that more time is needed to apply since the collection of the biometric data is a time-consuming process. Then, the data is transferred to the Ministry of Interior, where they are examined (on a case-by-case basis). After that, it is sent the Passports Directorate of the Greek Police. This is where the autonomous documents are issued, which are then distributed by courier by the Services. Note: The Services have become less flexible on meeting requests.

Indication of place of birth: When the place of birth is not shown on the passport, a document from the country of birth or the embassy/consulate must be presented, where the birthplace will be indicated in Latin characters, at least in a parenthesis (there are problems with the former USSR countries).

Meaning of the written warning: When an applicant makes a request, the biometric data is given on the spot, except when the lawyer submits the documents or the service does not make it on time. The applicant then would have to come on a specific time and day, which will be set by the Service. If the applicant does not come the first time, the Service will make a new appointment, which will be communicated in a proven way. If the appointment is lost again, his/her application will be rejected.

Question: Why do applicants give biometric data? Does it affect his/her ability to travel?

Theoretically, this requirement is based on a 2004 Directive (legislation) which makes sure that third country nationals do not require passports within the Schengen area. But since it is applicable in 2017 and the conditions in the EU have changed, we cannot know if it will be accepted as a substitute during passport control. It is important to check this before finalizing travel plans.

Comment: It was already provisioned by the law 4018/11

In the new permit, which will have a credit card format, all the information (finger prints, photograph, signature) will be stored digitally.

EXCEPTIONAL REASONS PERMIT

Question: What is changing in the application process for exceptional reasons permits due to 7-year permanent residence? Do applicants now get a blue certificate?

From Monday, April 3, 2017, the authority with the power to issue residence permits granted for exceptional reasons is being transferred to the Immigration Directorates in accordance with the provisions of par. 2 of article 19 of L. 4251/2014, as replaced by paragraph 23 of article 8 of Law. 4332/2015.

There is no substantial change in the process. This means that once again the applicants will be given a **white certificate, not a blue one.**

Question: Do the monthly public transportation cards consist of proof of residence in the country?

Using monthly transportation card can **NOT** be used as proof of residence in the country. The owner cannot be identified through this document. Therefore, it is not considered a form of identification, especially not for permission to reside in the country.

WORK PERMITS TO UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS FOR RURAL WORK

Question: What is the exact process and the documents needed for the acquisition of work permit for the irregularly immigrants residing in Greece?



The following three services participate in the process:

- The Decentralized Services issuing the approval
- The Region issuing the work permit
- The Police, which issues a return decision and deferral of removal after the issuing of the approval by the decentralized services

The **documents** needed are:

1. Single statement of farming or breeding
2. Affidavit by the employer stating urgent need and inability to attach legal contracts on time
3. Fee of 50€
4. Affidavit for recruitment of employees and withdrawal of costs in the case of expulsion
5. Valid work contract
6. Evidence that a suitable accommodation is provided

SECOND GENERATION PERMIT

Question by Generation 2.0: Does a child that attends a private school have the right to the second-generation permit?

To get the second-generation permit, the school's program must be **GREEK or MIXED**.

Below is a list of the Greek or mixed schools, which are accepted for the second-generation residence permit. This list was directly provided by the Ministry of Immigration Policy to the Ministry of Immigration Services.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF LARISSA	Νηπιαγωγείο Δημοτικό	ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ	Βάση Σχολών, ΤΘ 349 Γυρνάβος, 40100-Λάρισα	24920-29114 FAX: 24920-29114 info@international-school.gr	Δ/νση Π/θμιας Λα- Δήμητρας & Γοριβόλας 16, Τηλ. 2410536577, Fax. 2410- e-mail: dprelax@sch.gr
	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ	Βάση Σχολών, ΤΘ 349 Γυρνάβος, 40100-Λάρισα	24920-29113 FAX: 24920-29114 info@international-school.gr	Δ/νση Β/θμιας Εκ/σης Ν. Αρκαδίας Καλαμάρας 11, 41222-Λάρισα Τηλ. 2410536129, Fax. 2410531345 e-mail: mail@icde.lar.sch.gr
ΙΤΑΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ	Νηπιαγωγείο Δημοτικό ΙΤΑΛΙΚΑ		Μητσάκη 18 TK 111 41, Αθήνα	210-2280338 FAX: 210-2017628	Δ/νση Π/θμιας Εκ/σης Α' Αθήνας Δωρου 9-104 32 Αθήνα
ΙΤΑΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο ΙΤΑΛΙΚΑ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο		210-2280338 FAX: 210-2017628	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Α' Αθήνας Κηφισίας 16-116 25, Αθήνα ΤΗΛ: 210-5234796 FAX: 210-5241160
Β' ΞΕΝΑ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΑ ΜΕ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ					
ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΟ ΚΟΛΛΕΓΙΟ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ	Γραβιάς 6 TK 153 42, Αγ. Παρασκευή	210-6009800-9 FAX: 210-6083214	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Β' Αθήνας Μεσογείων 324 153 41, Αγ. Παρασκευή ΤΗΛ: 210-6012888, 6386166 FAX: 210-6000870
ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΟ ΚΟΛΛΕΓΙΟ "ΑΝΑΤΟΛΙΑ" ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ	1ο Γυμνάσιο 2ο Γυμνάσιο	ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ	Τ.Θ. 21021 TK 55510, Πυλαίοι(2ο Γ)	2310-398302 FAX: 2310-398302(2 Γυμ)	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Ανατολικής Θεσσαλονίκης Σαπφούς 44, 546 27, Θεσσαλονίκη ΤΗΛ:2310-503719-724 FAX:2310-503725
	1ο Λύκειο 2ο Λύκειο	ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ		2310-398354,56,20,04 FAX: 2310-332237	
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ "ΑΓΙΟΣ ΙΩΣΗΦ"	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Θεσσαλονίκης 2 TK 151 21, Πεύκη Αρμαρουσίου	210-8061281 210-8054161, 337 FAX: 210-6120411	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Β' Αθήνας Μεσογείων 324 153 41, Αγ. Παρασκευή ΤΗΛ: 210-6012888, 6386166 FAX:210-6000870
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ "ΑΓΙΟΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ"	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Χαρ. Τρικοίτη 36 TK 185 36, Πειραιάς	210-4511954 FAX: 210-4537721	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Πειραιά Ελ. Βενιζέλου 35, 185 32, Πειραιάς ΤΗΛ:210-4124482, 2104116795, FAX:210-4115734 mailto:info@peiraias.int.sch.gr
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ "ΔΕΛΑΣΣΑ" ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	ΤΘ 05-57010 Αρβεστοχωμιά Θεσσαλονίκης	2310-6731919(Λύκειο) 2310-673252(Γυμνάσιο) FAX: 2310-673348	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Απλ. Θεσσαλονίκης Κολοκοτρώνη 22, Σταυρούπολη 564 30, Θεσσαλονίκη ΤΗΛ:2310-640264, FAX:2310-640285 mailto:info@v.thess.sch.gr
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ "ΙΩΑΝΝΑ Δ' ΑΡΚ" (JEANNE D'ARC)	Δημοτικό	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Ελ. Βενιζέλου 10Α TK 185 31, Πειραιάς	210-4133836 210-4179161 FAX: 210-4128216	Δ/νση Π/θμιας Εκ/σης Πειραιά Καρσώλη Δημητρίου 50, 18532 Πειραιάς
	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Ελ. Βενιζέλου 12Α TK 185 31, Πειραιάς	210-4179161 FAX: 210-4128216	Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Πειραιά Ελ. Βενιζέλου 35, 185 32, Πειραιάς ΤΗΛ:210-4124482, 2104116795, FAX:210-4115734 mailto:info@peiraias.int.sch.gr



Picture 1-1 List of Greek schools

Σχολείο	Επίπεδο	Γλώσσα	Διεύθυνση	Τηλέφωνο	Φαξ	Διεύθυνση
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ "ΚΑΛΑΜΑΡΙ" ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΚΗΣ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Λ. Γεωργ. Σχολής 44 ΤΚ 551 02, Πύλαια Θεσσαλίας	2310-472115 2310-475277 FAX: 2310-473159		Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Ανατ. Θεσσαλίας Συμπόριος 44, 546 27 Θεσσαλίας ΤΗΛ 2310 503719-724 FAX: 2310-503725
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΟΥΡΣΟΥΛΙΝΩΝ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Ψυχάρη 10 ΤΚ 154 01, Ν. Ψυχικό	210-6712228 210-6712555 FAX: 210-6716400		Δ/νση Α.Ε. Β. Αθήνας Μισογιάν 324, 153 41, Αγ. Παρασκευής ΤΗΛ: 210 6012888, 6396166 FAX: 210 6006870
ΛΕΟΝΤΕΙΟ ΛΥΚΕΙΟ ΝΕΑΣ ΣΜΥΡΝΗΣ	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Θεμιστοκλή Σφραδάκη 2 ΤΚ 171 22, Ν. Σμύρνη	210-9418011 FAX: 210-9418079		Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Δ' Αθήνας Ομήρου 34, 171 21 Ν. Σμύρνη ΤΗΛ: 210-9318867-9322310-9318260 FAX: 210-9318261
ΛΕΟΝΤΕΙΟ ΛΥΚΕΙΟ ΠΑΤΗΣΙΩΝ	Δημοτικό	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Νέγγυ 17 ΤΚ 111 43, Πατήσια	210-2522402 FAX: 210-2515049		Δ/νση Π.Ε.μας Εκ/σης Α. Δ. Αθήνας Διαίου 9-104 32 Αθήνα ΤΗΛ: 210-5234796 FAX: 210-5241160
	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ				

Γ' ΞΕΝΑ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΑ ΜΕ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ & ΞΕΝΟ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ

Σχολείο	Επίπεδο	Γλώσσα	Διεύθυνση	Τηλέφωνο	Φαξ	Διεύθυνση
ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ	Νηπιαγωγείο Δημοτικό	ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΑ	Ζηριών & Χωμειτισσού ΤΚ 151 23, Μυρούσι	210-6199261 FAX: 210-6199267		Δ/νση Π.Ε. Β' Αθήνας Μισογιάν 448(3 ^{ος} όροφος) 153 42, Αγ. Παρασκευής ΤΗΛ 210-6394882 FAX: 210-6009644
	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο					
ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΚΗΣ	Νηπιαγωγείο Δημοτικό	ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΑ	Τ.Θ. 51 Φοινίκας ΤΚ 551 02, Θεσσαλονίκη	2310-475900 FAX: 2310-476232		Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Ανατ. Θεσσαλίας Μισογιάν 324-153 41, Αγ. Παρασκευής ΤΗΛ 210-6012888, 6396166 FAX: 210-6006870
	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο					
ΕΛΛΗΝΟ-ΓΑΛΛΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ ΕΥΓΕΝΙΟΣ ΝΤΕΛΑΚΡΟΥΑ	Νηπιαγωγείο Δημοτικό	ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ	Χαλκής & Τρικόλων ΤΚ 153 42 Αγ. Παρασκευής ΤΟ 80050	210-6010220 210-6000313 FAX: 210-6003460		Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Ανατ. Θεσσαλίας Συμπόριος 44 546 27, Θεσσαλίας ΤΗΛ 2310 503719-724 FAX: 2310-503725
	Γυμνάσιο Λύκειο					
				210-6012704-5 FAX: 210-6003460		Δ/νση Π.Ε. Β' Αθήνας Μισογιάν 448(3 ^{ος} όροφος) 153 42, Αγ. Παρασκευής ΤΗΛ 210-6394682 FAX: 210-6009644
						Δ/νση Δ.Ε. Β. Αθήνας Μισογιάν 324-153 41 Αγ. Παρασκευής ΤΗΛ 210-6012888 FAX: 210 6006870

Picture 1-2 List of Greek and mixed schools

CHANGE IN FAMILY STATUS/ADDRESS

Question: Is it true that if a person changes her/his address or family status and does not declare the change, she/he will pay a fine? If yes, where is this mentioned?

A fine is indicated, if the changes are not declared, as referred to in Articles 22 and 23 of the Immigration Code.

Article 22: Duties of third-country nationals:

1. Third country nationals, during their stay in Greece, are obliged to declare to the competent services of the Decentralized Administrations or the Directorate of Migrant Policy of the Ministry of Interior:

- Any changes of the address of residence
- Any changes to their personal or family status, especially the change of citizenship, marriage, dissolution or annulment of the marriage or the birth of a child.
- The loss or renewal or change of their passport data or other travel document.
- The loss of their residence permit or permanent residence permit.

Article 23: Sanctions of third country nationals:

1. "The declarations of paragraph 1, Article 22 of this Article, must be made within two months of the relevant event, except the case of passport renewal, which can be made until the submission date of a renewal application or re-issue of the residence permit and the birth of a child, which can be made within two years of the birth". Third country national that do

not fulfill their duties, a fine of fifty (50) euros is imposed and one-hundred (100) euros in case of recurrence.

RENEWAL OF TEN-YEAR RESIDENCE PERMITS (income criteria)

Question: There are ten-year residence permit holders who want to change it to long-term residence permit, but those have economic criteria. What happens with those that cannot meet the requirements (i.e. if someone is unemployed)

If a person does not comply with the economic criteria, 8.500 euros per year with the compensation payment deducted (approx. 6.900 euros), she/he can **ONLY** renew a three-year dependent employment.

AUDIENCE'S QUESTIONS

If a person has been to court and/or has a criminal record with 1 year sentence, can he/she be granted a residence permit?

This is a general provision, but for the affiliation, the legislation is not that strict. There are specific provisions. An account of the specific weight of a felony must be taken; it must be determined whether there is a constant and permanent threat. This works cumulatively when there are additional conditions (e.g. permanent threat).

Can a person have a long-term residence if they have supplementary insurance?

If a person holds a certificate proving their knowledge of the Greek language and culture, you need five (5) years from the application and an income of 8.500 euros/year, with the compensation payment deducted, approx. 6.900 euros.

ACQUISITION OF GREEK CITIZENSHIP

To begin with, regarding the second-generation citizenship, it is advisable to use the postal service method for submitting requests and monitoring the request through the webpage of the Ministry of Interior. The same order of priority is followed. There is absolutely no difference and it reduces traffic in the building, thus serving the work flow. The Law does not present challenges, difficulties and points to the discretion of the public servants. The entire process is based on documents, and when they are complete and correct then the decision is quick as a result.

It was also stressed that there is a similar spatial jurisdiction GOK with regard to the volume and the distances to be covered.

STAFF RESPONSE TIME/DURATION

Question: Why do the decisions take so long to be finalised?

The response time of each service is different from region to region. But there are common response times set by the ministries to each service, regarding criminal records for example. While the process for minors lasts some weeks, for adults the waiting period can last up to 3 months. After the decision is issued, it is posted on the Official Gazette, which might take up to 1 month and a half. And, to add to this there is the order to enter the population register which can hold up for another 3 months.

Question: Once I see on the information system that my application has been approved, what happens next?

The approval of the acquisition of Greek citizenship is an intermediate stage and NOT the final one. Since it is necessary to complete all the above-mentioned procedures, the entire process might take more than 3 months, after being posted on the Official Gazette. The publication time can be unclear, because all cases (nation-wide) are concentrated in one service. Of course, the correspondence is electronic and therefore, avoids any delay in the correspondence.

NATURALISATION

Question: What do I need to know to pass the naturalization interview? Will I also need to show that I know how to write in Greek? Why would I need to do that since I speak Greek fluently and have lived for so many years in Greece, is that not enough?

There is no need for written exams in front of the Naturalisation Commission. It is important though that the applicant can recognise the Greek alphabet and public signs on the streets and at public services.

Question: I heard somewhere that one of the prerequisites for naturalisation is the possession of insurance stamps, is that true?

The possession of insurance stamps is NOT a prerequisite (at least, it is not necessary). However, it is a sign of integration on a subsidiary level.

Question: There has been a misunderstanding regarding the naturalization of those people under subsidiary protection. It is unclear whether they can apply after 3 or 7 years after acquiring the subsidiary protection status.

The subsidiary protection status is NOT equal to the full protection status as far as naturalization prerequisites are concerned. This means that, the requested years of legal residence in Greece are **7 years** and that the requested fee is **700 euros**. Also, the years of legal residence start counting backwards, from the day of the application for protection. That means, that the years spent with an asylum seeker's card count as years of legal

residence, but that happens only if you have received a positive answer. So, asylum seekers who have not yet received an answer, cannot apply for Greek citizenship.

9 YEAR ATTENDANCE PREREQUISITE

The services recommend that people apply under the category of 9 year school attendance. It has appeared to be the simplest procedure. Most of the applicants prefer to avoid the Secondary Education Directorate, and apply with a certificate of continued study, but the procedure gets more complicated. On the other hand, applying with a certificate of a 9 years school attendance, disengages the procedure from prerequisites of the parents' years of residence. It is objectively difficult for the parents to fulfill these prerequisites. Parents should be patient and wait for their offspring to complete the 9 years of school attendance (16years old). This helps the parents in the renewal of their kids' residence permit, because the procedure is faster and easier.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

It should be understood how important it is to submit a correct birth certificate properly certified by foreign authorities. In the first case, all changes are shown (paternity, data corrections, etc.). If not properly received, a false decision will be issued and the municipality does not record it as complete. In the second case, it is important that there are no errors or failures, because in the future the Municipality will issue registration certificates. So, they must comply with the data in the country of origin.

The Greek birth certificate is different from the birth certificate. Preference is in the first because it contains all the changes, all the data and the issuance of all documents from the municipality. Yet, the certificate has failed to create shortages and complete dossiers.

REGULATION REGARDING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Question: How can a person apply for Greek citizenship under the category of school attendance if they have not attended a merely Greek speaking school? How does the Ministry of Education categorise the schools?

There is the recent regulation on private foreign schools that follow a Greek program. The services are still waiting for instructions and a new schools list from the Ministry of Education because, apart from the Regional Education Directorates, they should accept any school certificates for attendance. The Ministry of Interior should answer about what should be done with the applications which are already filed.

The recent amendment of L. 4332/2015 relating to foreign schools operating in Greece and following a Greek curriculum, states that schools will follow an updated list, which will issue

certificates of the Regional Education Directorates and Directors certificates will be accepted. It is also the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to adopt the automatic search process for the certificates of school attendance. We know that the preparation of a database has begun, but apparently, it has not been pursued further. However, there are no delays because of this.

Many times, the parents, with the stress to gather the documents needed, urge teachers to issue statements on dates when the school might be working, but students do not attend because it is after 30/06 or before 15/9. These certificates can lead to deposit, but the attendance of the child is always verified in the end. We believe that this situation will disappear because the teachers understand now that such a certificate dated eg. 9/9 has no validity.

If the foreigner does not have Greek education (ie. Has not attended a Greek school), there is the naturalization process. He or she can get prepared with the book and should be informed about current news and issues. This is very important since it demonstrates integration.

ACCELERATION PROCESS

Question: When can a person apply for acceleration and how long does the process take?

The reasons for the acceleration are usually judged by the head of the service and there must exist a reason which is objectively connected with not having the status of a Greek citizen. For example, being seriously ill and having to undergo an operation abroad. Also, the acceleration must be personal, and cannot involve other members of the applicant's family.

It is important to understand that the completion of the process cannot be realised in just a few weeks due to the several parts of the process which were mentioned above (Official Gazette etc.). The reasons should be specific and proven (i.e. correspondence with foreign universities or specific date of needed hospitalization).

Since 2015, the Civil Status Directorate of Athens received 800 requests for acceleration to study abroad, but rejected them all. Because of the volume of the acceleration applications, the Civil Status Directorates decided to approve acceleration only if the applicant has already been register for one semester in the university abroad.

VALIDATION PROCEDURE FOR FOREIGN DOCUMENTS

Question: Why does the service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not accept to validate documents from Afghan applicants? Why does the service not accept any other equivalent document as proof of date of birth? Why do they not accept the documents issued by the

Embassy of Afghanistan on the public services in Greece, and especially in cases of family reunification and applications for citizenship?

The services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the competent authorities, as set out by the regulation of operation. If there is a Greek Consular authority in the country of origin, the person concerned must address this to an Authority located in another country, this is a matter that cannot be solved by other Services. Equivalent documents are accepted, but not by case, because the person concerned does not ensure the issuing and validation of the documents (e.g. because the person cannot travel or the cost is too high or there is an outstanding issue that the person does not want to declare). There must be a failure of the country to respond (e.g. if at war) or does not issue a similar document or the issued document does not have this specific information. These cases are usually known by the Greek Administration and that is why the issuing of these documents is considered as an objective difficulty.

In cases of identified refugees, it is comprehensible that they cannot be supplied with recently issued documents. Therefore, there is a provision in using the decision of the Ministry of Citizen Protection as an identification document. Because after the acquisition of the Greek citizenship, all documents will be provided by Greek authorities (municipality of registration) and so it is avoided to create these archives from documents with dubious validity or content. If the Service accepts a non-valid document, this makes the case more difficult than easy.

OBJECTIONS

Question: How long does it take to have a response for objecting in rejection decision?

An objection to the Ministry of Interior is a lengthy procedure. When the person concerned thinks that the negative contribution by the Commission for Naturalization was either very strict or incorrect, he/she can claim an objection to the Ministry of Interior. The records are detailed and available if requested. This means that the case is going to be re-examined, first come, first served, not immediately. The Commission of Naturalization might need to be summoned again (but not necessarily), and of course, there will be a delay in the decision issued by the Minister. Usually the procedure of examination takes up to one year.

AUDIENCE'S QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

Transitional provisions of the law 3838/2010 do not include several categories of residence permits holders.

The transitional provisions should last for only a certain amount of time. The problem is the long duration. They should last up to 2012, at the most. The services are waiting for this legal framework to be brought up to date. There was a specific reason why the law had those exclusions back in 2010, but this reason does not exist anymore. An amendment could

include the ten-years residence, since it means that the holder has been living for many years in Greece.

When will the Commissions of Naturalization start to operate?

The Commissions have not been selected yet, they have been sent, repeatedly, documents and reminders, however, they have difficulty finding the appropriate people as set by the amendment. They are address school administrators. Only one regional directorate has been selected.

The book for summary information (interview for naturalization) needs to be changed.

The Ministry is aware that there are problems with the book for a long time. It has been discussed many times that its content must change. In certain places, it is obsolete (Administrative Structures of the country), but remains the main source of preparation for the interview. We would like to draw your attention to the following: Timelines and everyday information should not be neglected (customs, traditions, local community). They are information for integration and are more important for people that have neither attended school in their country of origin nor in Greece. The dates are not as important as understanding, connection with and participation in the local society. For example, why are there names like Androutsou, Ethniki Amaryna, Omirou in squares and streets and what do they mean?

Afghans are refugees. Some of them cannot have certificates and this leads to problems. Some of them were not born in hospitals, so they do not have any kind of document.

When someone is recognized as refugee, the Ministry accepts the decision as birth certificate and takes the information from there. Theoretically though, there must be something lodged so the permission can be issued. Even this is the attestation of objective difficulty in providing a passport. The identification of these documents might require collaboration and consultation between the services.

In Islamabad, there have been changes in the personnel of the embassy and requests of 5 to 10 years have been found. Hopefully, the situation has changed. There must also be pressure by the communities.

What is going on with the problems of identification, since in the passport a second name is added? To some it has been said to solve this problem via the court.

The name is the first, given by the parents. The forename is deleted, or otherwise it seems like they are two people. During the process it will be determined if the forename can be added. It is true that this could be done with a mandate from the Prosecutor to the Population registration office.

Some ethnicities where two names are usually considered as a first name, The Ministry of Interior writes up both as first name, but the Administrations (for the Directorates of foreigners and immigrants) only write the one as a first name and the second as surname.

This poses a problem in the residence permit and the birth certificates. How does that differentiation arise?

The residence permit is issued with the name written in the passport. The decision for naturalization is issued with the name written on the birth certificate.

Can a 16-18 years old person get an affidavit by a ΚΕΠ?

There is an issue with the approval of the authenticity of the signature for the 16 to 18 years old kids. Some ΚΕΠs, acting correctly, accept the signature since there is a provision which entitles them to apply and sign by themselves. Some other ΚΕΠs don't. The Civil Status Directorates accept in any case the signing of these children or that of their legal guardians.

Why do the people who apply for naturalization to the decentralized services, get quicker answers than those who applied to the ministry of interior?

The Ministry examines the applications submitted up until 2010. In the last two years 3 committees operated, but they ended their term and the new ones have not yet been formed. This seems to be something that can be solved. The problem now seems to have shifted to decentralized services, where they have gathered many folders. It is purely an operational problem.

Will the applications made by young people with migrant origins, who have attended bilingual schools be rejected?

The issue that concerns the services is whether the Ministry of Education will give additional guidelines on whether additional documents shall be needed. It is something that technically cannot be foreseen. If the school is recognized as eligible, there is no problem, but if it is bilingual some issues might arise. If a school is identified, there is no problem, but when it is bilingual there is friction. The law was not very specific on which schools should be rejected.

Regarding the Naturalization of refugees, why does the Ministry of Interior ask for analytical certificates of our legal residence in Greece, since they can see it in their online system? This is time consuming, especially if received from Petrou Ralli.

If you are applying from there you get a residence permit and you get immediate confirmation of the period of residence permits (same day). If it concerns asylum, then they wait for the police decision and that is what makes it a time-consuming process.

CONCLUSION

Overall, we see that there have been no major problems with the changes in residence permits issuance process for now, beyond the critical issue of long waiting time. It is evident, thought, that the services become less flexible with the new system.

Keep in mind that the fees for residence permits or dues and, [under normal circumstances](#), should and must relate solely to support the operation of the Immigration Directorates.

The Ministry of Education needs to end the vagueness on [which schools are eligible for a Greek citizenship application](#). In the cases where the school is not eligible, the solution should be found in some "equivalent" criteria.

Some conditions of L. 4332/15 (parents' residence/school attendance/Greek school), have as a result children of immigrants not applying or resorting to the naturalization process. However, the naturalization process -as it works now- **is not a viable option**. The process must be made more efficient, given that it lasts more than four years. Especially now that the [naturalization committees have not yet been established](#) due to the lack of foresight on the part of the Ministry of Interior.

The problems on a legislative and functionality level are evident. Even if some parts show some improvements, many remain in a perpetual immobility.

The quicksand in each of the services is discouraging our fellow citizens from seeking to gain political rights in a country which they have invested time, money and the future of their children. This indicates the need for migrant communities living in Greece to claim a seat at the table (and avoid being on the menu).

However, this is not a matter that only concerns the migrant communities, but also the Greek society as a whole. When our fellow citizens cannot exercise their political and social rights, we all lose. It is our responsibility not to let the immigration issue fall in the shade.