



ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΗ  
ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ  
Ε Π Ι Τ Ρ Ο Π Η  
ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ



Ευρωπαϊκή  
Επιτροπή  
Αντιπροσωπεία  
στην Ελλάδα



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE APRIL 20, 2016

*“Human flows and the world we  
share: can Europe tackle the Refugee  
and Migrant Issue?”*

### CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

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THE OLD PARLIAMENT'S HOUSE, 13, STADIOU STREET, ATHENS  
STARTING TIME: 16.00

Owing to its location, our country is experiencing an unprecedented increase in the influx of people into its territory and is currently at the epicentre of Europe's refugee and migration crisis. The humanitarian, economic, social and political dimensions of the issue are immense and highly complex, with implications at both local and international levels.

The **Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC)**, exercising its constitutional role, has launched a dialogue and set up a committee of experts to investigate the various aspects of this serious issue.

Against this backdrop, it decided, **working together with the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Commission's Representation in Greece, to conduct an International Conference in Athens, entitled:**

***"Human Flows and the world we share: can Europe tackle the Refugee and Migrant Issue?"***

Please note, that on the morning of the same day, between **13.30-15.15 p.m.**, on ESC's initiative in co-operation with the **Greek-German Assembly and the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece**, a closed meeting will be held among mayors of German towns that have developed good practices in the management of refugee flows and their Greek counterparts that deal with the phenomenon every day. The aim of the meeting will be the exchange of experience and the shaping of proposals that could lead to effective policies, taking into account the multifaceted aspects of the refugee issue.

In tandem, between **10.30-12.30 a.m.**, there will be a closed session on the role, contribution and coordination of NGOs involved in the management of refugee flows in Greece, as well as the possibilities of a wider cooperation with other organizations and initiatives involved in the management of refugee flows in Greece. Faced with the new reality, there were many who tried in any way they could to contribute. Dynamic initiatives were created, actually born through this crisis and deserve not only to be highlighted, but also given the chance to describe us the problems they encountered and their whole experience.

**The conclusions of both those closed meetings will be announced in SESSION C of the International Conference (bellow follows the programme).**

*Some of the crucial questions that will be raised at the event, in order for us to approach the issue comprehensively and search for the appropriate responses, are:*

- Human Rights. To what extent is the European humanitarian tradition under threat? Has the refugee crisis sent the EU into moral and institutional retreat?
- Is there scope for a different asylum policy in Europe and what are the challenges when it comes to forming a single asylum system and revising the Dublin regulation? What will be the impact of the decisions taken at the latest EU Summit?
- What are the limits to the regular and exceptional flows of migrants and refugees that a national state or the European Union can accommodate? How can we respond to the fact that mass global movements of people are unlikely to recede for years to come?
- What is the relationship between the flows of migrants and refugees and the population issue and cultural identity of Europe? Is organised integration possible without causing friction and tensions with local communities? What are the consequences for the labour market?
- What are the plans for returning irregular migrants to their countries of origin and are the existing readmission agreements working? Is there a clear distinction between asylum seekers and irregular migrants?
- What is the connection between Schengen border controls and the role of Frontex, the European border and coast guard, how important is its cooperation with NATO and what operational planning issues could arise?
- What are the boundaries between European and national policies and how do they impact ultimately on the notion of European integration?
- What is the role of international organisations, such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Red Cross, and what role could be played or initiatives taken by the UN Security Council? How does the international dimension tie in with European and national policies?
- How effective is the joint action plan by EU and Turkey as established by the last agreement and is based on an overall cooperation plan?
- What financing does the management of refugee flows entail at European and national level? Are the decisions that have been taken to date and the pace at which they are being implemented sufficient?
- What is the role of the hotspots in terms of migrant identity checks, registration and fingerprinting? Are they operating effectively and achieving their objective? Where are the boundaries between organised provision of the basics for survival and formal arrangements for administrative detention?
- What is Greece's experience and how is it managing the refugee crisis. What is the role of the government coordination centre, and that of local authorities and NGOs? Can our country cope for an indefinite period with a series of humanitarian and operational problems relating primarily to the living conditions of so many people but also to matters of internal and external security? What are the consequences for the economy, the labour market and tourism?

SESSION A:

CONFERENCE OPENING

16.00 - 16.45

- **George Vernicos**, President of the Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC)
- **George Dassis**, President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Panos Carvounis**, Head of the European Commission Representation in Greece

VIDEO MESSAGES

- **Martin Schulz**, President of the European Parliament
- **Federica Mogherini**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship
- **Christos Stylianides**, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management
  
- **Nikolaos Voutsis**, President of the Hellenic Parliament

Opening of the Conference by H.E.  
the President of the Hellenic Republic, **Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos**

## SESSION B:

### CHALLENGES FOR EU & THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

16.45 - 17.45

Coordinator:

Sia Kosioni  
Journalist

- H.E. the **Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**, Caspar Veldkamp, Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union
- H.E. the **Ambassador of the Turkish Republic**, Kerim Uras
- H.E. the **Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany**, Dr. Peter Schoof
- H.E. the **Ambassador of the French Republic**, Christophe Chantepy
- H.E. the **Ambassador of the Italian Republic**, Efsio Luigi Marras
- **Klaus Roesler**, Director of Operations Division, Frontex Agency
- **Daniel Esdras**, Head of the International Organization for Migration Office in Greece (IOM)
- **Philippe Leclerc**, Representative, UNHCR Greece

**COFFEE BREAK 20'**

## SESSION C:

### GREEK MANAGEMENT & EXPERIENCE

18.05 - 18.50

Coordinator:

Apostolos Mangiriadis  
Journalist

- **Dimitris Vitsas**, Deputy Minister of Defense, Head of the Coordination Center for the Refugee's Crisis
- **Wolf Plesmann**, Deputy Commissioner for Refugee Housing and Support, The Governing Mayor of Berlin - Senate Chancellery
- **Kostas Agorastos**, President of the Union of Greek Regions
- **George Patoulis**, President of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)
- **Christodoulos Mamsakos**, Mayor of the city of Drama<sup>i</sup>
- **NGO Representative**<sup>ii</sup>
  - Presentation of the conclusions from the morning mayors' meeting under the Greek- German Assembly (DGV)
  - Presentation of the conclusions from the morning NGO's meeting

## SESSION D:

### SOCIAL PARTNERS' VIEW

18.50 - 19.35

Coordinator:

George Karanikas  
Vice President of the ESC  
of Greece

- **Theodoros Fessas**, Chairman of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)
- **Giannis Panagopoulos**, President of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE)
- **Vassilis Korkidis**, President of the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce & Entrepreneurship (ESEE)
- **Giorgos Kavathas**, President of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (GSEVEE)
- **John Retzos**, Vice President of the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE), President of the Hellenic Hotel Federation (HHF)
- Interventions by the **Presidents of National Economic and Social Councils**

## SESSION E:

### DEBATE ON THE MULTICULTURAL LIMITS OF EUROPE

19.35 - 20.15

Coordinator:

Pavlos Tsimas  
Journalist

#### DISCUSSION PANEL

- **Nikiforos Diamantouros**, former European Ombudsman
- **Odysseas Voudouris**, General Secretary for Refugees  
First Reception and Identification
- **Soti Triantafillou**, Writer
- **Christian Pîrvulescu**, President of the Permanent Study Group  
on Immigration & Integration (EESC)