



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

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ICJ Oral Intervention on the Adoption of the Outcome Document on the Universal Periodic Review of Greece

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Madam President,

The crisis faced by the Greek asylum system, as a result of large numbers of asylum applications, including from those returned from other EU countries under the "Dublin system" is well known. These difficult circumstances cannot, however, justify any delay in bringing asylum procedures and reception conditions into line with Greece's international obligations. The serious shortcomings in the protection of asylum seekers' human rights have recently been confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *MSS v Belgium and Greece*, a decision that addresses the universally applicable principle of *non-refoulement*.

Greece has made important commitments to address these violations, through its National Action Plan for Asylum Reform and Migration Management, and notably with asylum procedure legislation adopted in January 2011.¹ The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) strongly supports the UPR Recommendations urging further implementation of the Action Plan (Recommendations 83.10; 83.11, 83.12).

Greece has also accepted a number of important recommendations regarding protection of the human rights of asylum seekers. The ICJ urges Greece to take prompt action, in particular:

- To review detention conditions for asylum seekers to ensure that they are fully in line with international standards (Recommendation 83.69);
- To ensure adherence with the principle of *non-refoulement* (Recommendation 83.72 and 83.73) and that deportation is carried out only after exhaustion of legal remedies (Recommendation 83.74);
- To ensure that conditions in detention centres comply with international human rights standards (Recommendation 83.86 and 83.87); and
- To strengthen protection for the human rights of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (Recommendations 83.76, 83.77, 83.78, 83.79, 83.81).

The ICJ finally urges Greece to respond positively to the recommendation that Greece accede to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Recommendation 85.1).

I thank you.

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¹ Law 3907 on the establishment of an Asylum Service and a First Reception Service, transposition into Greek legislation of the provisions of Directive 2008/115/EC "on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals" and other provisions.