



Press release

Athens, May 18, 2015

Conference on human rights and transparency in forced returns operations

Mixed migration flows management and forced return operations procedures, with particular reference to human rights protection and transparency guarantees will be at the centre of discussions at the conference organised by the Greek Ombudsman, with the support of the European Return Fund, on May 21, 2015, at the City of Athens “Antonis Tritsis” amphitheatre. Representatives of competent European and national authorities and organizations will address the conference, titled “Forced returns: mixed migration flows and human rights”. The issue is highly topical due to the recent exceptional increase of mixed migration flows.

Zoe Konstantopoulou, the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament and **Calliope Spanou**, the Greek Ombudsman, will open the conference, followed by **Christos Giakoumopoulos**, Council of Europe, Director of Human Rights Directorate, and **Marta Hirsch-Ziembinska**, European Ombudsman, Head of Complaints and Inquiries Unit.

The morning session will address “Management of mixed migration flows”. The issue will be addressed by **Kalliope Stefanaki**, UNHCR Greece, Head of Protection Unit; **Vassilis Papadopoulos**, Ministry of Interior, General Secretary for Migration Policy, Greece; and **Efi Latsoudi**, network of organizations and citizens in Lesvos “Village-All together we can”.

In the afternoon the conference will continue with “Human rights and removal operations”. Presentations will be given by **Ewald Riks**, Ministry of Security and Justice, Deputy Head of the Security and Justice Inspectorate, The Netherlands; **Klavs Kinnerup Hede**, Ombudsman coordinator for monitoring returns, Denmark; **Menelaos Kostaris**, Police Brigadier General, Director of illegal immigration control Division, Greece; **George Moschos**, Deputy Ombudsman for Children Rights, Greece; **Euthalia Pappa**, Head of the Ecumenical Refugee Program; and **Spyros Koulocheris**, Head of Legal Research, Greek Council for Refugees.

Vassilis Karydis, Deputy Ombudsman for Human Rights will close the conference.

The Greek Ombudsman is responsible for monitoring forced return operations. The Ombudsman’s mandate extends to all the phases of the operation following the decision ordering the return of the alien until its implementation, administrative detention included. The Ombudsman has recently published the [2014 special report](#) on the issue.

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