

The World Refugee Day is celebrated every year on June 20 since 2001. The day which honors refugees has been established by the United Nations (<https://www.unhcr.org/world-refugee-day>) in order to honor the refugee population globally. This way, the strength and courage of people who were forced to flee their country out of fear, in order to escape conflict and persecution are honored. Whereas the number of refugees has reached 29.6 million at the end of 2019 (<https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/>), and 4.2 million people are asylum seekers (people who have filed an asylum application and are awaiting for the decision), in total, 79.5 million people were forcibly displaced at the end of the same year. Besides refugees and asylum seekers, 45.7 million people are internally displaced (e.g. due to conflict, persecution and natural disasters) and remain within their country.

Besides, although Greece has established since 1994, the Panhellenic Refugee Day, the memories of the refugees of Asia Minor are unforgettable. The contribution of the refugees of Asia Minor was catalytic for the Greek society and economy. The solidarity and respect to the fellow people, refugee or not, are evident throughout the years in Greece. The respect to the international law which has legally established the refugee status (the Refugee Convention in 1951 and its Protocol in 1967), aiming to the protection of the vulnerable population, in parallel has set the limits to the actions which will ensure the security of host population.

Greece is at the external borders of the EU. Therefore, and mainly due to the conflict in Syria, the country, in the midst of the economic crisis, received in 2015 more than 850,000 refugees and migrants (<https://www.unhcr.org/>). While solidarity and hospitality are provided to refugees and migrants who cross the borders, after the establishment of the EU-Turkey agreement in 2016, arrivals in Greece, and therefore in the EU, have been reduced significantly. Nevertheless, the number of arrivals of refugees and migrants at the land and sea borders have not been stabilized, therefore, practical problems have been caused including in shelter and asylum applications' processing, among others. For instance, in a single day on August 2019 at the island of Lesbos more than 500 refugees and migrants arrived, whereas the Reception and Identification Center of the island has a capacity of 3,000 people, and is overcrowded since 2015. Relatively to Italy and Spain which also are in the Mediterranean and at the EU's external borders, Greece has received the greatest volume of migration flows (<https://www.unhcr.org/>). During 2019, Greece received in total 74,613 refugees and migrants at the land and sea borders, in contrast to Italy (11,471)

and Spain (32,513). Besides, Greece has proportionally a very high international migration stock, in total 1.2 million in 2019 ([https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2019&cm4](https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2019&cm4)). The migration stock refers to foreign-born residents in Greece.

The percentage of forcibly displaced population globally below 18 years of age (children) reached 40% in 2019. Whereas education is a basic human right, the access to and provision of education are among the basic humanitarian response actions of the international humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations. Simultaneously, the provision of education is necessary for the integration of refugees to the society, as well the protection of the society. The universities, besides any rights and obligations, are stakeholders of the national and international community in the sectors of education and research. Therefore, they can play an institutional role towards the sustainable integration of refugees in Greece, through the provision of education and research, as well as to the identification of sustainable solutions to the problems that have arisen, aiming to the sustainable development and progress of the Greek, European, international and refugee society.

The International Hellenic University contributes in the academic sectors of research and education involving the humanitarian response of the management of refugee and migration flows. Research includes, but is not limited to, the identification of solutions to practical problems such as refugee siting, as well as site management, including in order to avoid tensions between refugee communities as well as between refugee and host communities. Research methods include both modern methods such as combination of operations research with Artificial Intelligence, fuzzy logic, as well as classical methods such as interviews with stakeholders involved in the management of refugee flows. To this end, collaborations include the development of relationships with international humanitarian organizations and NGOs including the International Organization of Migration and Doctors of the World Greece. In the area of humanitarian logistics, collaborations have been developed with European Research Institutes, through research visits and research publications; NGOs including Apostoli and Doctors of the World Greece; and companies. Research dissemination has also been done through participation in international and national conferences. The continuing investigation for sustainable solutions to the practical problems related to the incoming refugee and migrant flows as well as the refugee population already residing in Greece, is among the immediate academic goals of research and education, for an

inclusive society, with respect to the fellow people, in an environment of solidarity and security.

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