

Role Asylum Lawyer
Start date November 2019
Organisation European Lawyers in Lesvos (www.elil.eu)
Location Lesvos, Greece
Duration Permanent
Working hours Full-time (9.30 – 17.00 Monday – Friday)



Background

There are currently over 15,000 asylum seekers on the Greek island of Lesvos, the vast majority of whom have fled Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq. The asylum process they go through is a complex and ever-changing legal procedure that is difficult to navigate. Despite this, there is no state-provided legal aid available for asylum seekers before their asylum interviews and so the majority of them attend their interview without having spoken to a lawyer. The only way an asylum seeker can receive legal assistance in relation to their asylum interview is through one of the few NGOs on the island.

Without access to legal assistance, asylum seekers often do not know their rights or understand the process and the criteria applied when their asylum applications are assessed. They are therefore significantly disadvantaged when they attend their asylum interview and often suffer problems and delays in the processing of their asylum applications. This absence of legal information and legal assistance puts human rights at risk and undermines the rule of law.

European Lawyers in Lesvos (“ELIL”) is a charity registered in Germany and Greece. It was founded by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and the German Bar Association (DAV) in 2016. These organisations represent the bars and law societies of 45 European member, associate and observer countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers

Our team of Greek asylum lawyers and volunteer European asylum lawyers provide free, independent legal assistance to asylum seekers on Lesvos.

ELIL was inspired by belief in the fundamental importance of upholding the rule of law, protecting human rights and ensuring meaningful access to legal assistance. We believe that every asylum seeker should be able to receive free legal assistance, from an independent lawyer experienced in asylum law, before their asylum interview.

We are one of the few providers of legal assistance on Lesvos and have been working in Moria camp, the main camp on Lesvos, since August 2016. Since then we have provided free legal assistance to over 9,400 people.

We are the largest provider of legal assistance to asylum seekers on Lesvos. We are also the primary provider of legal assistance to unaccompanied minors incorrectly registered as adults and provide assistance to asylum seekers in detention.

Our main activity is the provision of one-on-one legal consultations to prepare asylum seekers for their asylum interview. We also help reunite families by assisting with family reunification applications under the Dublin Regulation. In addition, we provide three group legal information sessions in Moria each month. We have also recently prepared a legal information leaflet in collaboration with Oxfam and the Greek Council for Refugees, which was translated into 10 languages - 13,000 copies of this leaflet are currently being distributed to asylum seekers on Lesvos.

Our work has real impact and demonstrates the importance of asylum seekers having access to legal assistance: of those we have assisted, 74.5% have been granted asylum, compared to an average of 46.5% in Greece.

We operate from an office in the Olive Grove, next to Moria camp, which enables asylum seekers to freely access our services and guarantees us direct access to those we assist. All assistance is provided in our three dedicated consultation rooms in our office in the Olive Grove, to ensure that privacy and confidentiality are preserved. We also operate in the detention centre within Moria.

Our team is a mix between permanent staff and shorter-term volunteers. Our core staff are two full-time Greek asylum lawyers (one as legal coordinator), a legally-trained coordinator, a project manager and Arabic and Farsi interpreters. Our team also includes up to six volunteer European asylum lawyers and two volunteer legal assistants.

To respond to the unprecedented need for legal assistance on Lesbos, we are looking to recruit a committed and experienced asylum lawyer to join our team in Lesbos to provide legal assistance to asylum seekers.

Role

The start date for this role is November 2019. We offer a competitive salary, details of which are available on request.

The role reports to the Legal Coordinator. The role is based in Lesbos, Greece.

Role responsibilities

- Providing individual legal assistance, counselling, information and, where applicable, representation for asylum seekers, including for unaccompanied minors
- Researching and drafting submissions in support of asylum seekers' applications for international protection, where applicable
- Assisting with family reunification applications under the Dublin Regulation
- Responsibility for an interesting and varied case load
- Developing and maintaining good relations with applicants for international protection, relevant stakeholders and other actors
- Representing European Lawyers in Lesbos in legal aid/protection coordination meetings, as required

Skills and experience required

- Law degree and registration with a Greek Bar Association
- Detailed knowledge of Greek asylum law
- Familiarity with relevant Greek asylum procedures
- Excellent verbal and written English and Greek skills
- Excellent drafting, analytical and communication skills
- At least two years' experience of practising asylum law, preferably with experience of working for an international organisation or INGO/NGO
- Experience of providing face-to-face legal assistance in a humanitarian/emergency context, preferably including to unaccompanied minors
- Undergraduate or graduate degree in a relevant field (e.g. international law, human rights, refugee law, international relations) desirable
- Knowledge of international refugee law and human rights law desirable
- Ability to adapt to a changing legal, humanitarian/emergency-response environment
- Ability to work in a fast-paced, multicultural environment and to cope with competing demands under tight deadlines
- Excellent interpersonal and teamwork skills and experience of establishing good working relationships with a variety of people of different nationalities
- Capable of being proactive and working independently
- Passionate about supporting the rights of refugees and migrants
- Culturally sensitive
- High professional ethics

To apply for this role, please send a CV and cover letter in English by email to the Project Coordinator, Philip Worthington (pworthington@elil.eu).

Closing date for submission of applications: 17 November 2019.

Applications will be processed as they come and the position maybe filled before the above deadline. Only short listed candidates will be contacted. All applications will be treated with strict confidentiality.