

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

INTERACTING WITH THE POLICE

This infosheet contains general information about **your rights when interacting with the police in Greece**. It is based on Greek law provisions and accurate as of July 2021. In practice, the provisions are not always respected by the authorities, such as police officers themselves. The infosheet is not exhaustive and is subject to changes. **We recommend that you consult a lawyer licensed to practice law in Greece or NGO providing legal support about your specific case in any event.**

1- In case of a police control in the street or at your home

- If a police officer **asks for your identity papers**, and you show them valid documents (for example "ausweis" or asylum seekers card, residence permit, police registration paper, asylum decision or passport, etc. with a valid date and photo), the police officer does not have the right to ask you to follow him/her to the police station to check your identity or your papers.
- If the police officer **wants to subject you to a body search**, he/she needs to show you a warrant for this. In case there is an attempt by the officer(s) to do the body search, you can say "I know my rights: you do not have authority to do a body search without a warrant".
- If the police **come to your home**, you are not obliged to open your door and let them in unless they show you a warrant and a judge or a prosecutor is present as well.
- If the police **have a warrant to do a body search or search your home** make sure you can see the warrant first, and, since it will be in Greek, if you do not speak Greek fluently and/or cannot read the Greek text ask the police to wait until your Greek lawyer arrives.
- In order to be able to identify the officers you interacted with, **make a note of the identification number** of the particular police officer(s) as written on the police uniform sleeves, or the symbols on the riot police officers' helmet or shield. **These can identify the officers, including in the event that their conduct caused you any problem or violated your rights.**

2- If you are being taken to a police station

I. The police are obliged to allow you to make one successful phone call (when the person on the other end answers).

- Ask to call your Greek lawyer from the very first moment.
- If you don't have a Greek lawyer's phone number, call a friend or someone you know who can contact a Greek lawyer for you and inform the lawyer that you are in the police station and need help.
- If you don't know which police station you are in, ask a police officer for details (name of the police station, address).

II. You have the right to remain silent and you have the right to a translator to translate what the police officers say to you and any papers you are given.

- It is best not say or sign anything without a Greek lawyer present.
- Always ask for an interpreter.
- If the police question you, you can say "I am waiting for my lawyer, whatever I have to say I will say it in front of the responsible judicial authorities".
- If the police continue to question you, you can continue to say "I am waiting for my lawyer".

III. You have the right to know why you are arrested and what you are charged with.

- The police are obliged to give you a written document, which sets out your rights in a language that you understand. This document should be translated in your mother tongue or in a language you understand.
- Do not say or sign anything in relation to questions or documents that are in a language you don't understand.
- Within 24 hours in the police station, the police must bring you before the prosecutor. If not, they must release you.

3- If you are asked to testify as a witness:

- You have the right to refuse to testify.
- The police can use your testimony to incriminate you - that means, to use the evidence you give in testimony to accuse you of committing crimes.
- Always speak with a Greek lawyer before agreeing to give testimony.

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