

HELLENIC MINISTRY FOR MIGRATION
GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF MIGRATION

- **Steps taken for the regularization of third country nationals who can prove that they have developed strong ties with the country**

The "Migration and Integration Code (hereinafter Code)" provides for the right to acquisition of a **residence permit for exceptional reasons** for migrants that have developed strong ties with the country. Especially, the Code provides for a procedure in order to regulate the residence status or reactivate the legal status of third country nationals, including workers illegally residing in the country. Regarding art. 19 as modified by law 4332/2015 and the Ministerial Decision 4471/2016, the Decentralised Administration may exceptionally grant a two-years residence permit, after an opinion, where necessary/appropriate, of the committees referred to in Article 134 of the Code, to third country nationals who can prove that they have developed strong ties with the country. This residence permit gives access to dependent employment or to provision of services and may be renewed only for one of the other reasons referred to in this Code. Specifically, third country nationals,

- a) who reside in Greece for minimum seven years and can prove that they have developed strong ties with the country such as (a) very good Greek skills, (b) attendance to a Greek primary or secondary education school by the applicant or his children, (c) duration of residence, primarily legally, in Greece, (d) time insured, where applicable, with a Greek primary insurance organisation, and performance of tax obligations, and (e) blood relations to a Greek national or expatriate.
- b) who were holding a residence permit for at least five years within the last decade or were holding a residence permit without completing a five-year legal stay within the last decade. In the second case the applicants should submit documents proving their continued stay and links with the country from the expiry of their residence permit until the date of submission of the application. In the first case the ties with the country are proven/presumed without submitting the above mentioned documents due to the five years legal stay

- **Measures taken to prevent reduce statelessness of persons belonging to racial, national and ethnic minorities**

Where a third country national is unable to produce a valid passport or other valid document, national legislation, (in this case art. 6 and art. 134 of the Code) by way of derogation from general provisions, and in order to ensure fair and equal treatment, recognizes the right of residence without the requirement of the valid passport or of other valid document, case by case. In particular the third country national concerned should claim and prove its objective inability due to particular conditions or circumstances while subsequently the Committee referred to in Article 134 par. 2 of the Code should deliver an opinion on the existence of objective, temporary or permanent inability to present a valid passport.

- Safeguards designed to ensure that immigration laws, policies and practices do not discriminate – in purpose or effect – against certain groups of non-nationals

The Migration and Social Integration Code (entered into force in June 2014) provides for transparent procedures on entry and residence of third country nationals and guarantees migrants' rights with particular respect on children and vulnerable groups of migrants. Basic principle of national migration policy is to ensure respect for all fundamental rights of migrants without discrimination based on any ground such as race, colour, ethnic or social origin, language, religion or belief.

Foreigners legally residing in Greece enjoy the same social security rights as Greek nationals, the right to social protection, equal access to public services, access to employment, freedom of association and affiliation, education and vocational training, right to family reunification, etc.

It should be here underlined that foreigners residing in Greece, **regardless of their residence status** enjoy the right to education including the enrollment to public schools for children of refugees and access to healthcare institutions for emergency treatment or childbirth. Foreign minors have access to health care regardless of their residence status or that of their parents.