



January 2026

MONTHLY REPORT





The word 'paréa' in Greek means "company, circle of friends": **everyone is welcome in Paréa!** Located within walking distance from the CCAC (*Closed and Controlled Access Camp*) on Lesvos, our community center **Paréa Lesvos** offers a safe space where people on the move, locals and internationals can meet and spend time in a peaceful and welcoming environment.

Paréa is run by **Europe Cares** responsible for the safety, major facility costs, maintenance and development of the center. It is also a **home** to another 10 **civil society organisations**: **Artists Giving Back**, **Collective Aid**, **Makerspace Lesvos**, **Médecins Sans Frontières Brussels**, **Médecins Sans Frontières Greece**, **Refocus Media Labs**, **Refugee Relief Doro Blancke**, **TerraPsy**, **Yoga and Sport with Refugees** and **Welcome Office Lesvos**. In a time of high political uncertainty and constant withdrawal of support and international attention from Lesvos, our network of partner organisations joined forces to offer people on the move a **wide range of services** including food and NFI distributions, medical, legal and psychosocial support, education and social care activities. But first and foremost, we offer a **sense of community and belonging**.

We are **one community in solidarity**. **Will you join us?**



Number of arrivals January



Population in the CCAC



Lesvos Updates

This January, Lesvos recorded **368 new arrivals*** - twice as many people compared to January 2025. By the end of this month, **1,174**** people were living in the Lesvos Closed Controlled Access Center (CCAC), which is a small increase in the number of people on the move in the camp from December 2025. Additionally, 63 transfers to the mainland were recorded on the island in January 2026, which is 14 more than in December 2025. As of the 12th of January, the main countries of origin of people residing in the CCAC include Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea. Pushback numbers in the Aegean for this month are currently inaccessible and is possibly linked to the European arrest warrant issued in February by the Greek authorities for Tommy Olsen who runs the NGO Aegean Boat Report recording and publishing data on people seeking safety - once again criminalising a NGO committed to helping people on the move. The ABR is the only reliable source **documenting the pushbacks and abuses** experienced in the Aegean.

A significant step towards justice for humanitarians in Lesvos - On the 16th of January, after living in limbo for over 7 years, the Lesvos Court of Appeal **acquitted 24 humanitarians facing charges related to migrant smuggling** during search and rescue operations on the island. Having received widespread international attention and criticism, **this trial is the biggest case of criminalisation of solidarity in Europe*****. The charges included 'membership of a criminal organisation, facilitating the entry of third-country nationals and money laundering', however the presiding judge declared that the defendants' intent was not to commit crimes but to offer humanitarian aid. While being a crucial win for the upholding of human rights, many humanitarian groups emphasised that the prolonged case has led to a **significant decrease in humanitarian operations in the Aegean**, affecting the support for people on the move.

Severe restrictions on NGOs in Greece continued this month. On the 20th of January, 79 Greek NGOs - including Europe Cares - signed a joint statement demanding the withdrawal of the unjust changes to Articles 24 and 25 of the Migration code proposed by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum which criminalises NGO work. Under the changes, working for an organization in the Greek NGO registry becomes a '**punishable offence**', with felony-level penalties for staff facilitating the arrival, exit, or stay of third-country nationals in Greece of up to 10 years imprisonment and significant fines of thousands of euros. These measures are another way of **criminalising NGO workers** and protection actors have expressed fears that this will considerably hinder the ability for NGOs to continue supporting people on the move.

Encouragingly, Spain has offered a **hopeful example** of a more just approach to migration deviating from the hostile policies favored by many other EU countries. On the 27th of January, **the Spanish government announced its plans of a regularization measure legalizing the status of undocumented migrants** who have lived in the country for at least five months and have no criminal record. The measure will grant people with a one-year renewable residence permit, **ensuring access to employment, healthcare and other basic rights**. This policy is set to start in April until the end of June, and is expected to **benefit over 500,000 people**. Resulting from significant mobilization over the years by civil society and migrant organisations, this initiative acknowledges the essential contributions that undocumented migrants have for Spanish society and economy and ensures legal stability, inclusion, and access to human rights. Not only does this show the power of grassroots advocacy, but **it should also be an example to other EU countries of the possibility and effectiveness of rights-based migration policies**.

*<https://aegeanboatreport.com/>

**<https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>

***<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/16/greece-refugee-crisis-aid-workers-people-smuggling-acquittal>



January in numbers



Basic Needs



Support Sessions





Highlight of the month

This January, our partners MSF started a collaboration with our Women's Space to host weekly discussions every Thursday focused on women's health and needs. This was initiated in response to the recognition that there needed to be a dedicated space on health topics for women as most of the people visiting MSF in Parea were male.

The team consists of 1-2 health promoters with different language skills including farsi, a midwife, and doctor. They visit the women's space every Thursday from 11:00 to 13:30 during which **different health topics introduced by MSF or based on questions for women can be discussed**. Building on these group discussions, MSF also offers the opportunity for one on one consultations with women to . In the first session at the start of the month, four women were engaged in the discussion centered on **menstruation and children's health**.

This collaboration continues to ensure that women on the move visiting Parea **can access a safe space dedicated to improving their access to health care and information regarding their needs**.



Faces of Paréa

“ For me, when I come here, I usually enjoy everything. I play volleyball in the court, drink coffee and talk quietly... It's easy to communicate with people here and they like to welcome you and smile at you. ”



Hamzah from Yemen



In the Spotlight

Meet our partner Refugee Relief Doro Blancke



Refugee Relief Doro Blancke plays a **vital role** in supporting displaced individuals on Lesvos through a **diverse range of services** such as **education, aid, and community services**.

In Paréa Lesvos center they offer **legal support** in collaboration with Defence for Children International (DCI) and run the **very popular barbershop**.

Outside of Paréa, they provide **food distribution** for self-accommodated asylum seekers and assistance to vulnerable individuals and other NGOs. As well as **support** other NGOs on the island, such as **Safe Shelter Lesvos**, covering the monthly rent for the women's shelter, and some of the running costs.

Through these initiatives, they **assist** people on the move by meeting **basic needs** and providing **long-term integration support**.

Since taking over the laundry in December from our Partner Collective Aid, **the laundry service has been expanding and getting busier!**

We have focused our efforts this past month on **increasing the availability of the laundry service** to ensure that our visitors have clean and dry clothes, which is especially **crucial during these harsh cold and rainy winter months**.

Alongside fixing two dryers, we have increased the operations of the laundry service from **two days to three days a week** - Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays! At Paréa, our laundry service is a vital space ensuring people on the move continue to **have access to the essential basic need of hygiene and warm clothing**.

Welcome to our space: The Laundry





DORO BLANCKE
FLÜCHTLINGSHILFE



RED NOSES
In Laughter there is Hope



LEGAL
CENTRE
LESVOS



lean on
us



Would you like to join our community?
Contact us at contact@europecares.org



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