



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗΣ & ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ
HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN & FOREIGN POLICY

**Antonia-Maria Sarantaki
(Hellenic Foundation for European &
Foreign Policy) tells us about what the
team have been up to over the summer**

What research have you been up to?

We've been doing fieldwork for wp3, 4, 5 and 6. We've done 55 interviews so far and we need to keep going gaining contacts. We've interviewed stakeholders, officials and representatives as well as asylum seekers and refugees and we've collected important information on the asylum situation in Greece. Of course Greece is one of the most affected by the crisis in the EU. We conducted fieldwork in July in Athens. Especially in the summer period the airport is very busy there are many flights daily but this enabled us to see what happens at the border and what kind of security processes are in place, including talking to police officers. There are random security checks due to the high number of passengers. But we found that some people find it easier to travel on counterfeit documents and that's why there are more security checks. There are specially trained police officers who are trained to spot these counterfeit documents which was interesting.

How has the Crisis been framed in Greece?

It's been framed in combination with the economic crisis – so the social and economic situation is hard. It's difficult for Greece itself to deal with registration because of the exceptional circumstances and we need help from other EU countries and international organisations to provide funding and support.

Have you found much of a difference between different interviewees about how they view the crisis?

We tried to keep up with developments but it's a field in constant flux. Due to the exceptional circumstances it's difficult for Greece to deal with because of this double crisis – facing both the economic crisis and a high number of asylum seekers. The political situation is still fluid as well, we might have elections. So we've got political tension, economic and asylum crisis and it's a difficult combination to deal with



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Any surprising findings?

The politicisation context – the refugee situation hasn't been terribly politicised there are debates in parliament but they are mostly framed in economic terms. It's concerned with the next bail out agreement. The economic crisis dominates the debates

What methodological challenges have you faced?

Gaining access to interviewees and conducting the interviews over the summer has of course been challenging. Greece is a small country and has specific processes so national officers get interviewed all the time by different institutions such as other NGOs, Media etc. and this creates problems to gain access and to find the time for them to give us an interview

What's coming up next for your team?

We need to keep interviewing people. We have some people in reception centres and for wp4 we have the legislators to interview which is difficult for us to gain access. It's not easy to get contacts and get these connections and to get them to talk to us openly.



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