



PRESS RELEASE

Thessaloniki, 29 April 2024

Lost in a legal maze. 10+1 stories of asylum seekers in Europe A series of videos

Launch on social media: 6 May to 8 June 2024

1st screening + Q&A: 13 May 2024, 19:30, Olympion Cinema – Thessaloniki

Through the stories of eleven asylum seekers, our video series "Lost in a legal maze" aims to reveal **the difficulties of navigating a legal system designed to fail them**. In these five-minute episodes, filmed in Greece in November 2023, eleven refugees in different stages of their asylum procedures share on camera their own legal journey – from pushbacks to unjustified rejections to retroactive laws.

Asylum systems in Europe, constantly revised, have become increasingly complex and have turned into a re-traumatising experience for many. Access to international protection is being heavily obstructed by EU and member-states' migration policies, severely affecting people's mental stability, health, and safety. This Europe-wide strategy has a purpose: to reduce the number of refugees arriving in the continent and to keep those already here out of sight, often in isolated detention sites at the EU's external borders. These methods will be exacerbated with the implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum recently adopted by the EU institutions.

Independence and dignity begin with the possession of legal documents. Without them, people on the move are stuck in a limbo, lost in a legal maze, deprived of access to health care, work and education.

Europe must live up to its commitments to provide protection and guarantee the respect of human rights for all. Europe must ensure that people in danger can seek for international protection without risking their lives.

- The 11 videos will be broadcast on social media from 6 May to 8 June 2024.
- A screening of the entire series and a Q&A session with the producers and the director will take place on Monday, 13 May 2024, at 19:30, at the Pavlos Zannas Hall, Olympion Cinema in Thessaloniki.

Production: Heinrich Boell Foundation - Thessaloniki Office

In collaboration with: Equal Legal Aid

Director: Sideris Nanoudis – Homo Ludens Productions

#lostinallegalmaze #asylumseekers #EU Pact on migration and asylum

Press contact:

Heinrich Boell Stiftung: Vasilis Pangalos - Vasilis.Pangalos@gr.boell.org - +30 2310 28 28 29

Equal Legal Aid: Heloise Mussard - media@equallegalaid.org - +30 6942 41 22 97

Heinrich Boell Stiftung Thessaloniki, headquartered in Berlin, is a political foundation close to the party Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. The foundation sees itself as an agency for green ideas and projects, as a reform policy future workshop and international network with partner projects in around 60 countries. The Heinrich Böll Foundation's office in Greece has been operating in Thessaloniki since June 2012. Through a wide range of activities - educational programmes, studies, research, conferences and debates, publications, support to civil society organisations - it attempts to demonstrate alternatives and highlight policies that lead to the transformation of the Greek economy and society towards a model of ecological development, gender democracy and intercultural inclusion.

Equal Legal Aid (ELA) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2019 with the aim of defending and promoting the fundamental right to asylum in Greece and Europe. ELA works to guarantee access to this right for displaced people, especially those in a precarious and marginalised situation. Since 2020, ELA's team of lawyers, interpreters and European volunteer lawyers has been assisting asylum seekers through community outreach activities and by providing free and high quality legal assistance at every stage of the asylum procedure. In the face of the alarming deterioration of the rights of asylum seekers, the Association is also developing its advocacy activities and is involved in strategic litigation.

Sideris Nanoudis, Homo Ludens Productions

Born and raised in Thessaloniki, Sideris Nanoudis studied at the Department of Cultural Technology and Communication at the University of the Aegean in Lesbos, where he experimented with audiovisual media and theatre as an actor and director. He worked two years in an audiovisual production company in Granada, Spain and continued his studies in directing and producing films. Back in Greece, he worked for six years for audiovisual production companies in Thessaloniki as a cinematographer and camera operator for music videos, short films and videos for performing arts. He has now been based in Athens for seven years, working on a wide range of projects (commercials, short films, documentaries) in Greece, the rest of Europe and the USA. Sideris has also recently graduated from the University of the Aegean with a Master's degree in "Culture and Documentary Film Production".