



Northern Greece Campaign

01.09-06.09.2022

PROJECT ELPIDA E.V.



Why Northern Greece?

After we had already conducted campaigns in a border region (Samos) and a big city (Athens), it was now time to support three organisations in the north of Greece, more precisely in Thessaloniki and Kavala. Since 2015, the north of the country has mainly served as a kind of transit zone for refugees from the dangerous path via the Balkan route.

Since around 2020, the situation has been somewhat different: Due to the normalisation of pushbacks, fewer and fewer people manage to reach Greece at all. Those who still manage it try to get north as quickly as possible for fear of pushbacks. Even if they are in northern Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia or Bosnia, this does not mean safety at all. There are more and more reports of so-called "pushback chains", where people are pushed back to Greece or even Turkey by the respective border guards.

Many people who, after several attempts, have no money or strength to try again end up on the streets of Thessaloniki. Fearing further pushbacks, they hide from the authorities; an attempted asylum application can mean renewed police violence. For this reason, most of them try to remain undetected, living in uncertainty and danger.



Criminalisation of NGOs

The reports we received from staff and volunteers of our partner organisations on the ground are horrifying and show once again how people who work to uphold human rights at Europe's external borders are treated.

Arbitrary police checks on volunteers have been going on for years. Now there are also the first cases of staff members being arrested because they wanted to help undocumented people. At the same time, a law on the registration of NGOs is creating new difficulties. The high bureaucratic and financial hurdles make it impossible for most grassroots organisations to register officially. Although the Greek government is also dependent on their help, this legal grey area makes it possible to close down NGOs at any time from one day to the next.

Preparing the Campaign

The campaign in Northern Greece brought new logistical changes. With Kavala and Thessaloniki, we were active in two cities for the first time during a campaign. In addition, the war in Ukraine continues to overshadow other settings on Europe's external borders, which also has an impact on NGOs on the ground. With the help of the wonderful **DREISECHSEINS BOUTIQUE**, we were able to produce a second edition of our soli shirts. Furthermore, for the first time we organised our own clothing collection to support our partner organisation **WAVE**. A big thank you goes to the **KUCKUCKSEI** and the association **KIEZKULTUR ERHALTEN** for providing the collection points.

Northern Lights Aid

NORTHERN LIGHTS AID is almost the only NGO currently working with and for refugees in Kavala. About 120 people are currently living in the camp, most of them have received either a positive or a negative decision in their asylum procedure. For this reason, they are not entitled to the little state support that is available. **NLA** provides food packs and clothing, sewing and craft workshops, and a community centre with a garden as a retreat.

In the course of our campaign we were able to buy tea and sunflower oil, with oil being especially important as this could no longer be included in Food Packs due to the huge price increase over the last months. Furthermore, we were able to support the community garden with seeds, spices, soil and a lawn mower. This should help to make it an even more peaceful place, away from the camp.

We were able to provide their workshops with fabrics, paint, wool and various other materials for the next few months, mainly thanks to a very helpful local vendor who gave us a generous discount. In general, the cooperation between **NLA** and the local population seems to work very well in Kavala, locals bring clothes more often, but many also come to look around the Free Shop themselves. It is exactly this kind of peaceful and solidary cooperation that we as **Project ELPIDA** wish for and want to support.

Finally, we were able to pay three months' rent for a football field on site, which **NLA** rents in order to create a common togetherness on the field.

Equal Legal Aid

Legal assistance for people on the move generally receives little attention, yet it is one of the most important services for asylum seekers and people without documents (sans papiers). **EQUAL LEGAL AID** provides legal support to people on the move on a daily basis, for example in appealing against negative asylum decisions, preparing for interviews or accompanying entire asylum procedures

.Against the backdrop of daily pushbacks and ever-increasing bureaucratic hurdles, the right to asylum is becoming more and more restricted.

In the course of our fundraising campaign, we were able to support **ELA** with a total of two brand new laptops, four used laptops in perfect condition, a tablet and a mobile phone. A special thank you goes to **HAEBMAU** for the generous donation and the technical set-up of four working laptops.

Until now, the **ELA** lawyers had to work with their private laptops. Thanks to our donation, they now have technical working equipment for the whole team. The tablet will continue to be useful for their workshops, which **ELA** holds all over the north of Greece.

PARTNER- ORGANISATION 3

Wave Thessaloniki

WAVE has been working in Thessaloniki for years, supporting refugees and homeless people with hot meals and showers, sleeping bags and clothes, and their Community Centre as a place of retreat.

Since many visitors to their centre do not have documents, the police have already carried out frequent checks at Wave's distributions. This causes anxiety for refugees as well as **WAVE** volunteers and counteracts the safe space that the Community Centre is supposed to be.

In the course of our campaign, we have already collected winter clothes and sleeping bags for **WAVE** in Berlin, which we sent to Thessaloniki together with **WIR PACKENS AN** from Brandenburg. A total of 33 boxes were collected. A big thank you to **WIR PACKENS AN** for their support in logistics and transport.

In Thessaloniki itself, we were able to buy an additional 40 new sleeping bags. As winter is just around the corner, **WAVE** has a constant need for sleeping bags, which is why we want to continue to support them in the future.

NUMBERS AND FIGURES

Final Donation total

3.458,43€

Of the total €3,458.43, we spent €3,077.39 during the campaign. The remaining €381.04 will be used to cover costs during the campaign (car, flight, accommodation) and for future fundraising campaigns.

Spending per partner organisation



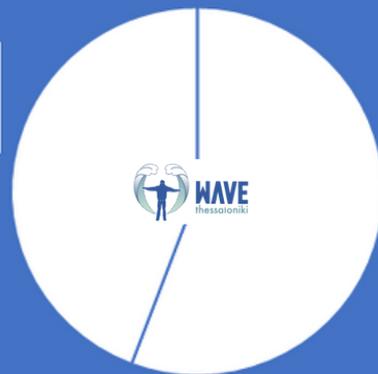
Clothing collected for Wave (number of boxes)



- 1 iPhone 8 (used)
- 1 Lenovo tablet (new)
- 2 Lenovo laptops (new)
- 4 DELL laptops (used)



Transportation Cost for Winter Clothes 500 € 44%



Sleeping Bags 629,97 € 56%

Food 24%

Workshop Materials 34%

NORTHERN LIGHTS AID

Board Games 4%

Garden Materials 24%

Rent for Football Field 14%



One year Project ELPIDA - what next?

Almost a year ago, we were registered as a non-profit organisation. 3 campaigns, 10 partner organisations and almost 15,000€ in donations later, we can now claim to have a good overview of the current situation and the respective needs at each of our previous locations.

In the second year we want to keep our rhythm of 3 campaigns per year and also our partner organisations will not change for the time being. We don't want our support to be a one-off, but rather we want to be able to support each of our existing partner organisations at least once a year.

In addition, we have also started to network with aid organisations from Germany. The cooperation with **WIR PACKENS AN** in the course of collecting winter clothes was a first step, the planning of the 10,000 sleeping bags campaign of the Germany-wide network **GRENZENLOSE HILFE** the next.

Furthermore, we want to organise our first soliparty in the winter months and we also want to sell more merchandise in cooperation with Berlin artists to finance future campaigns.



Team ELPIDA

Meet our Team

- **1st Chairman** Levin Schmidt
- **2nd Chairman** Lorenz Schmidt
- **Treasurer** Benjamin Schmidt
- **Social Media** Antonia Schmidt