



## **No more Morias?**

Origins, challenges and prospects of the hotspots on the Greek islands

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Webinar: "No more Morias"? Past and future of the hotspot approach at Europe's border

## The Greek hotspots: state-of-play today

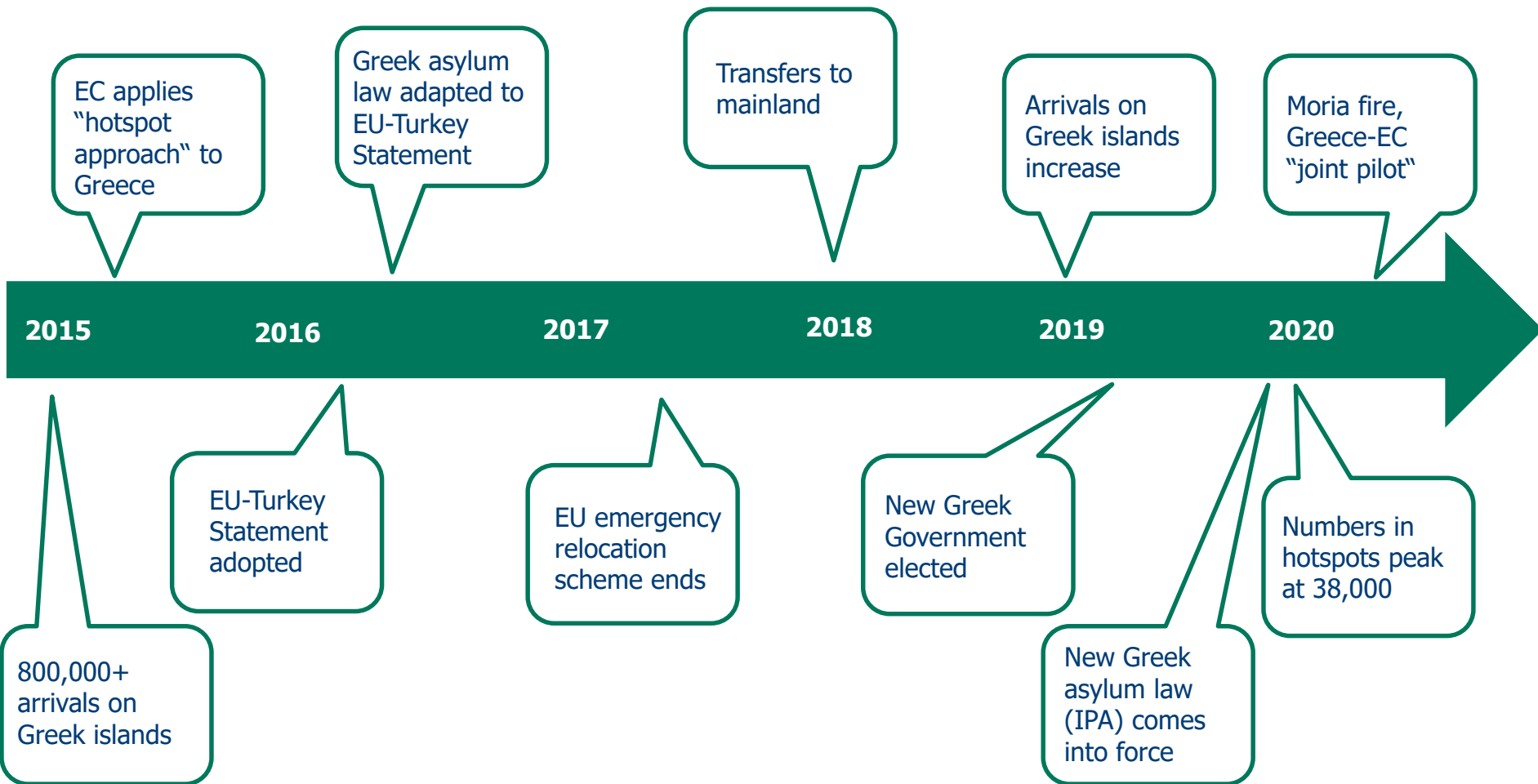
- Approx. 11,000 asylum seekers in the “hotspots”
- Some hotspots now within capacity, but infrastructure & conditions still poor
- Faster pace of asylum-decisions (...for some)
- Returns to Turkey on halt
- Ad hoc relocations to 13 European countries: 3,654

Research question:

**Are the problems of the Greek hotspots  
structural in nature  
or are they the result of poor  
implementation?**

# How did we get here?

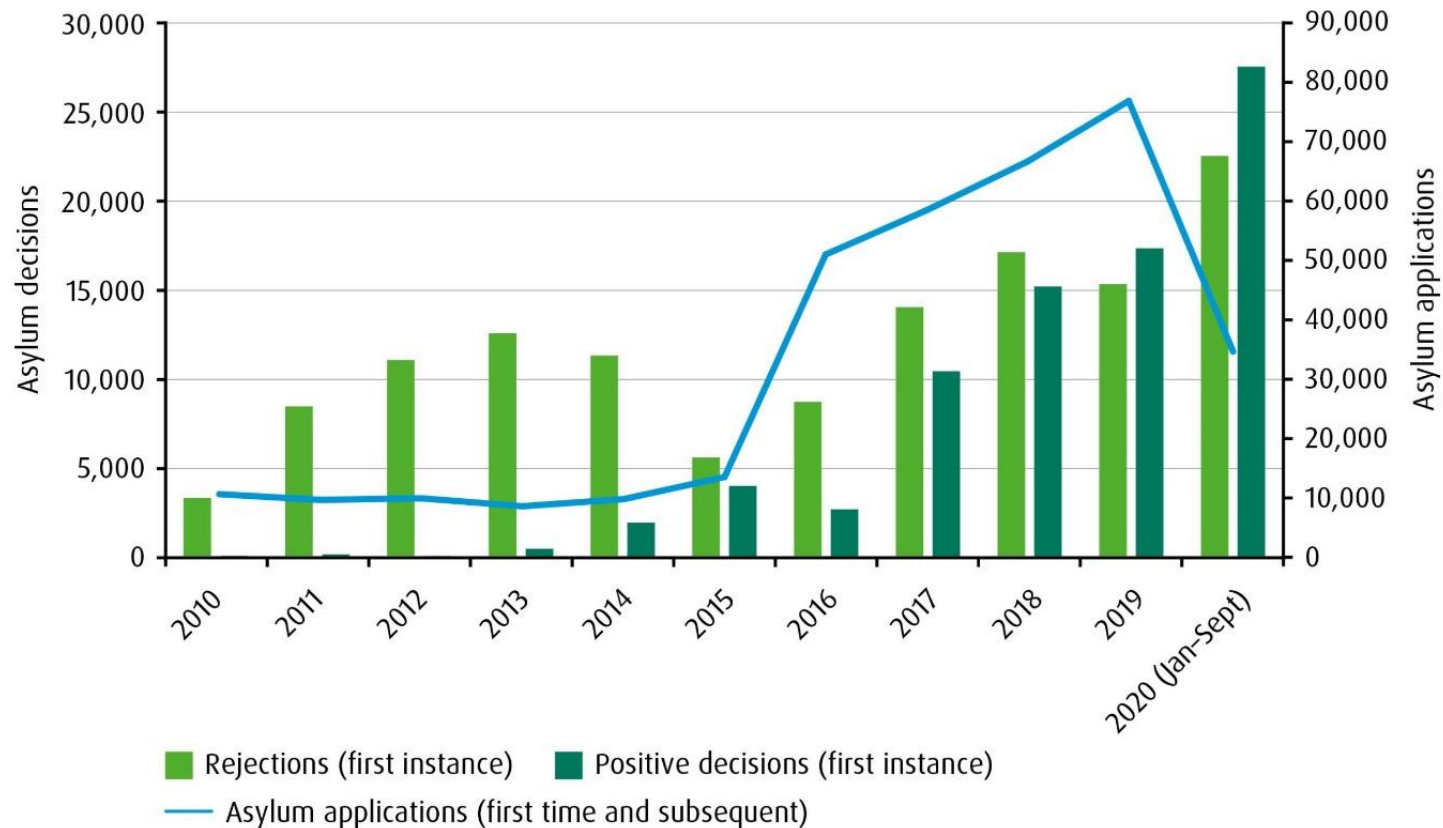
## A short chronology of the hotspots



# How did we get here?

## A short chronology of the hotspots

Asylum applications and decisions in Greece



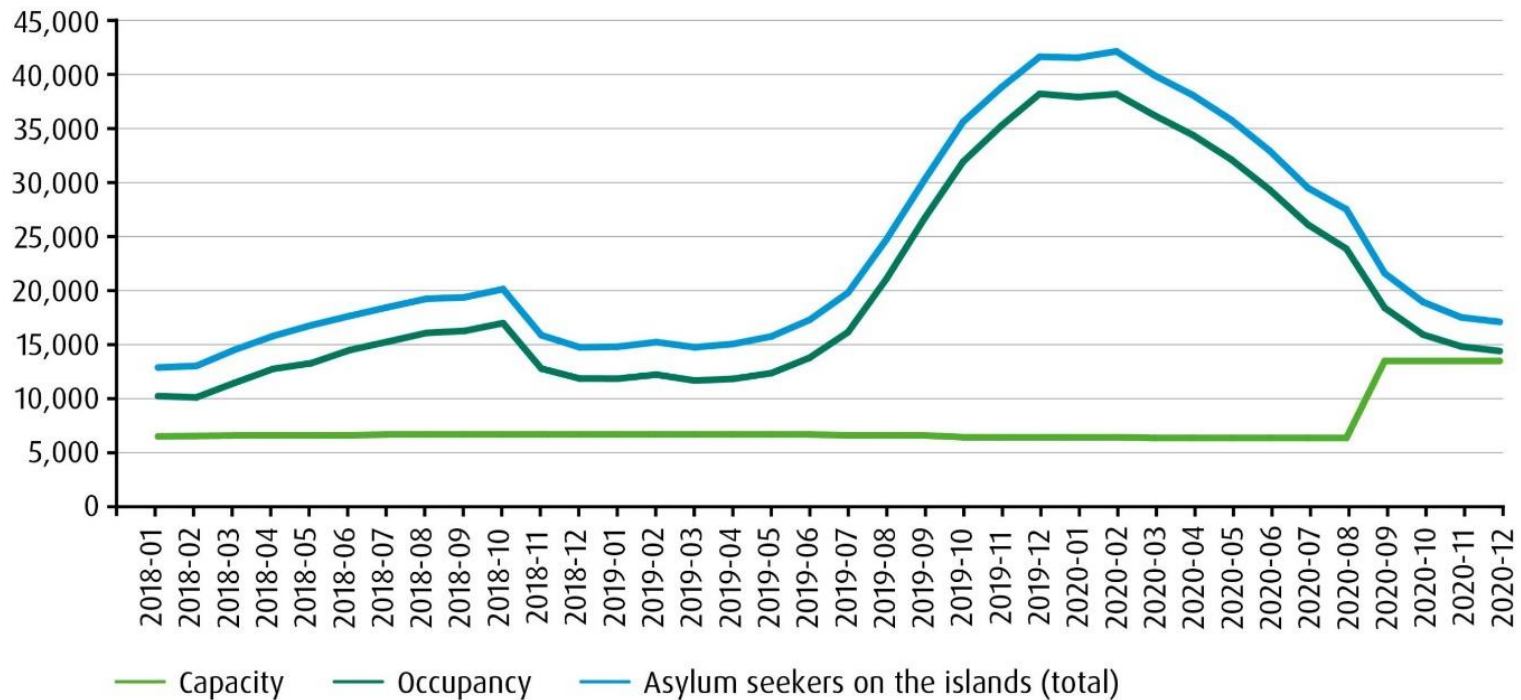
NB: The category "rejections (first instance)" includes both rejected asylum applications and those that have been declared inadmissible (see Chapter 3.1).

Source: Eurostat 2020a; 2020d; 2021a; 2021b

# How did we get here?

## A short chronology of the hotspots

Capacity and occupancy of the hotspots on the Greek islands (Chios, Leros, Lesvos, Kos and Samos)



NB: Value at the end of each month. The increase in capacity between August and September 2020 is due to the start of the construction of a temporary camp at Mavrovouni (Kara Tepe) after the fire in Moria.

Source: General Secretariat for Information and Communication 2021

# How did we get here?

## Root causes of the problems of the hotspots

### EU-Turkey statement

Changes in Greek asylum system; geographical restriction to islands; limited returns to Turkey

### Greek politics & administration

Unprepared and underresourced first reception, asylum and integration systems; slow procedures; centralised decision-making structures; local resistance

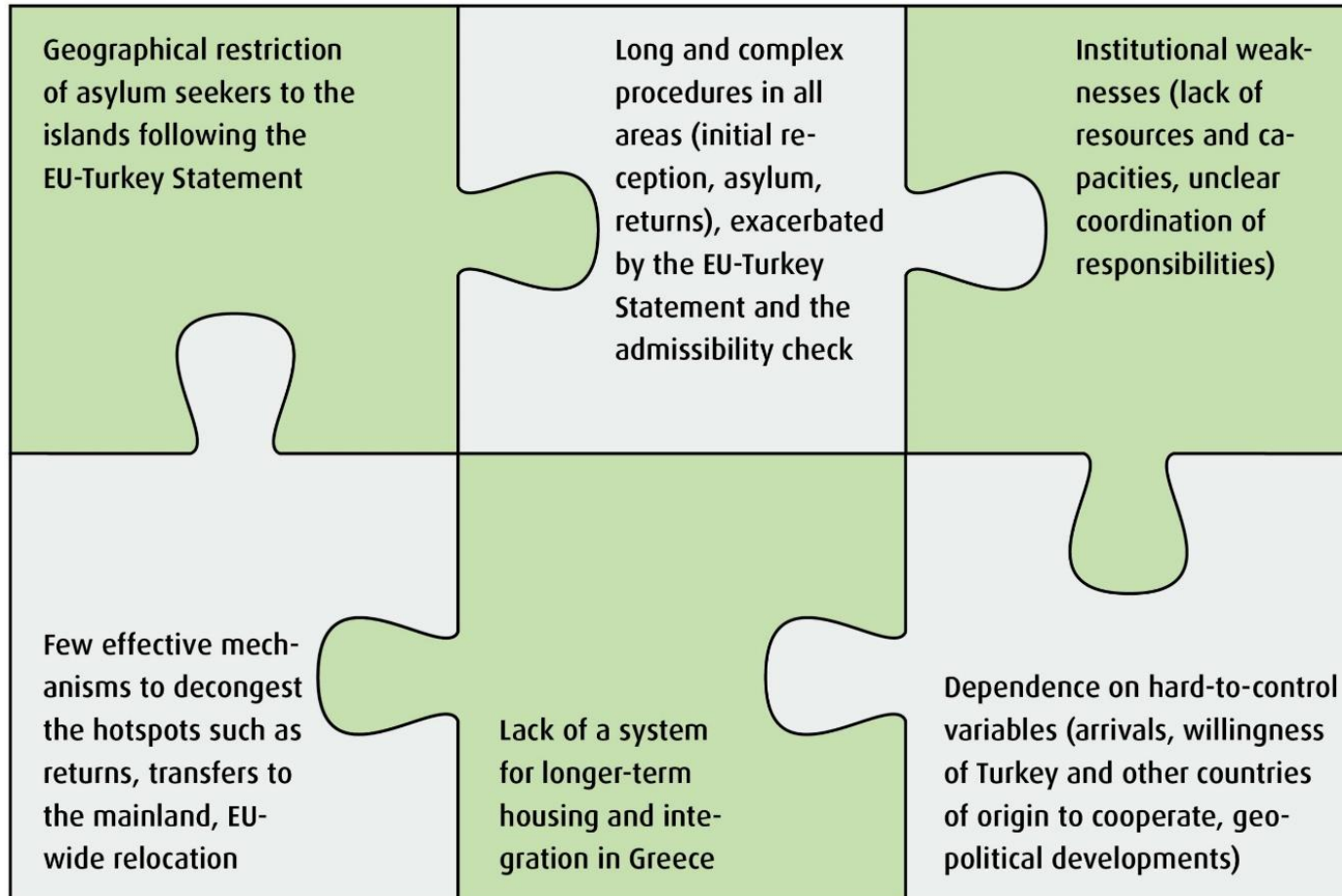
### EU asylum system

Lack of EU-wide responsibility-sharing; ill-defined responsibilities and accountabilities of EU vs. national actors

# How did we get here?

## Root causes of the problems of the hotspots

Summary: Causes of the failures of the hotspots



Source: SVR

## Policy options?

- Upgrade infrastructure and operation of reception facilities
- Improve services and living conditions for persons in conditions of vulnerability
- Limit length of stay in hotspots (irrespective of state of asylum procedure)
- Improve access to asylum and accelerate procedures
- Accelerate returns
- Create long-term prospects for recognized refugees
- Establish systematic relocation mechanisms within EU



## Conclusions: Lessons learned or hotspots reloaded?

Problems in Greece are largely structural: design flaws, gaps in the system and weak capacities...

...“No more Morias” vs. hotspot-like proposals in EU Pact on Migration and Asylum...

...A warning: replication elsewhere, under similar conditions, will reproduce the issues...

... and a proposal: Europeanisation of asylum?

SVR Policy Brief 2021-1

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**The Expert Council**  
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**Thank you for your attention.**



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