

Helping refugees in the Mediterranean: Greek association "Agkalia" awarded Raoul Wallenberg Prize

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Strasbourg, 22.12.2015 - The jury of the Council of Europe [Raoul Wallenberg Prize](#) has awarded the 2016 Prize to Agkalia, a Greek association on the island of Lesbos, for outstanding achievements in providing frontline assistance to thousands of refugees irrespective of their origin and religion.

As Lesbos has become a European gateway for refugees, Agkalia has been providing temporary shelter, food, water and medical aid to people in need, assisting some 17,000 refugees and migrants since May 2015. Through its work to assist refugees, Agkalia also promotes tolerance and human rights.

Founded by Father Efstratios ("Papa-Stratis"), who passed away in September 2015, Agkalia has continued to gain steady support as its devoted associates pursue the Father's endeavour.

"As a small and flexible local organisation based on volunteers, Agkalia sets a leading example of effective action by European civil society on a burning global issue", stated Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, announcing the jury's decision. *"Agkalia's activities reflect the fundamental values of the Council of Europe and contribute to its work to promote and protect human rights in Europe and beyond,"* he added.

The award ceremony of the 10k euro prize takes place on 13 January 2016, at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg.

The Council of Europe Raoul Wallenberg Prize was established in 2012 at the initiative of the Swedish Government and the Hungarian Parliament. The first prize, which is biennial, was awarded in January 2014 to Elmas Arus, Turkish film director of Roma origin.

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