

Europe

Eastern Europe

South-Eastern Europe

Central Europe and
the Baltic States

Western Europe



Working environment

In South-Eastern Europe, the main developments dominating the working environment included the beginning of talks concerning the status of Kosovo, as well as the independence of Montenegro. The Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General prepared a comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement, which included UNHCR's input relating to the rights of refugees, minorities and IDPs.

After a successful referendum, the Montenegrin Parliament declared the country's independence on 3 June 2006, and Montenegro was admitted to the United Nations as its 192nd Member State on 28 June.

The Mediterranean region saw a significant rise in the number of undocumented migrants arriving by sea on the Italian island of Lampedusa, Malta and the Canary Islands, among whom was a small but still important percentage in need of international protection. These mixed migration flows drove the asylum debate in Europe, and led governments to tighten border controls in a manner that could compromise access to asylum.

In 2006, there was some improvement in the security situation in the Russian Federation's province of Chechnya, but in the conflict zones of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia the situation remained tense. The unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict continued to affect relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the prospect for finding durable solutions for the more than 500,000 IDPs in Azerbaijan.

Achievements and impact

Drawing on UNHCR's Global Strategic Objectives (GSOs), the Office's main objectives in Europe in 2006 were to support governments in establishing and maintaining national asylum systems (GSO No. 1); promote stability and solutions in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (GSO No. 3); maintain or establish a permanent presence on the Mediterranean border of European countries facing an influx of new asylum-seekers (GSO No. 1 and 2); and strengthen European political and financial support for UNHCR's programmes and activities worldwide (GSO No. 4).

GSO No. 1: Advocate for and support governments in the creation and maintenance of an international protection regime

Recognizing the importance of the development of a common asylum system in the European Union by 2010, UNHCR contributed to the assessment of the impact on asylum-seekers of the transposition and implementation of the asylum directives adopted by the

EU, as well as on improving reception conditions within member States.

In Turkey, UNHCR conducted mandate refugee status determination for asylum-seekers while working to facilitate the transfer of RSD responsibilities to the Government in accordance with the National Action Plan.

GSO No. 2: Ensure international standards of protection for girls, boys, women and men of concern to UNHCR are met

Throughout the continent, UNHCR submitted interventions in precedent-setting cases before national and regional courts, providing advice on the interpretation of international refugee law. It promoted understanding of, and respect for, international standards and best practice, in particular through its training activities, and issued position papers to provide its assessment on the protection situation in countries of origin as a way of ensuring that protection is granted by asylum countries.

GSO No. 3: Pursue voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration, resettlement or local integration

The number of refugees and IDPs in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe decreased from 600,000 at the end of 2005 to 504,000 by the end of 2006. This decrease is partially accounted for by the repatriation and return of refugees and IDPs originating from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also by the local integration of refugees in Serbia. UNHCR thus targeted its assistance programmes at those with special needs among the remaining refugees and shifting its operational focus towards IDPs. In the western Balkans, UNHCR pursued, together with the European Commission and the OSCE, the so-called "3x3" initiative that resulted in the Sarajevo Declaration of January 2005, in order to assist the concerned governments to overcome the outstanding obstacles impeding durable solutions for the remaining refugees in the region. As a result of negotiations mediated by UNHCR, the Government of Serbia and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of the Kosovo Province signed a protocol on voluntary and sustainable returns in June 2006.

In the past year, UNHCR emphasised a humanitarian perspective in peacebuilding efforts in the Northern and Southern Caucasus, and has been an active partner in efforts to resolve the territorial conflicts in the Southern Caucasus.

Based on the Ten-Point Plan of Action for Addressing Mixed Migratory Movements, in October UNHCR issued a paper outlining the main activities and initiatives for the Office to deal with refugee protection issues within broader mixed migratory movements along the



UNHCR/C. Casarò

Two hundred and fifty displaced Roma families from Kosovo live in very difficult conditions in Konic 1 camp, in the suburbs of Podgorica.

Mediterranean borders. The paper puts particular emphasis on partnership approaches as done on the Italian island of Lampedusa, support for strengthening of reception capacities and the need for a new debate on responsibility sharing for refugees in countries like Malta.

GSO No. 4: Pursue management reform to enhance the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of UNHCR's operations

Although budgetary restrictions in 2006 made it a challenge, particularly in Western and Central Europe, UNHCR recognizes the importance of its continued presence in many European countries. This is

particularly so in relation to protection advocacy and resource mobilization. To strengthen its presence in the Mediterranean region, a new office was opened in Malta. As a result of an agreement reached in 2005 between the Italian authorities, international partners and UNHCR, a permanent presence was established on the island of Lampedusa.

Advocacy on behalf of asylum-seekers and refugees remained a key element in UNHCR's regional strategy. The Office continued to target governments, the media, civil society groups and the public at large, emphasizing the need to fight intolerance and xenophobia. The Office's media campaigns, public outreach and training activities reached a wide variety of Europe's citizens.

Constraints

Throughout 2006, access to asylum remained a concern for the Office in Western and Central Europe. Accordingly, UNHCR sought to boost its capacity to provide support along the land, sea and air borders of the EU Member States to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers are granted access both to territory and to appropriate procedures. In the Central European and Baltic States, the changing pattern of asylum has increased the burden on countries, leading to increasingly tighter border controls and restrictive asylum policies.

Political and security tensions remained high in Georgia, affecting UNHCR's programme delivery. Despite some improvement, security concerns also remained in and around Chechnya and hampered access to beneficiaries and project monitoring in Chechnya and North Ossetia-Alania. Reception conditions for asylum-seekers in the Russian Federation remained inadequate, as was the case for the implementation of a fair and efficient asylum procedure.

The political stalemate surrounding the future status of Kosovo attenuated UNHCR's search for durable solutions for refugees and IDPs from the territory. The "3x3" initiative in the western Balkans has to date failed to solve the outstanding issue of occupancy and tenancy rights and the validation of pension rights concerning refugees from Croatia.

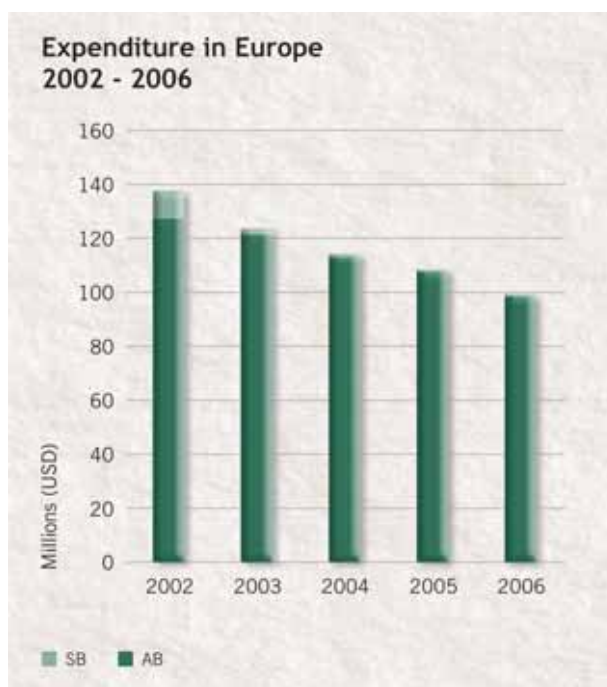
Financial information

In Eastern Europe, decreasing budgets have led offices to search for additional sources of funding to provide assistance, as actual needs remained far greater than UNHCR's ability to satisfy them. For example, external donors were asked for contributions to provide firewood to IDPs in Georgia and raise stipends for urban refugees in Azerbaijan. In the Balkans, funding limitations resulted in the suspension of vocational training in Serbia and a reduction in legal assistance to refugees in Croatia.

Funding constraints in Bosnia and Herzegovina accelerated the Office's planned phase down of operations. In Kosovo, food assistance was discontinued and the provision of humanitarian assistance and self-reliance activities decreased.

To prevent further reductions, UNHCR offices in Western and Central European countries continued building and strengthening relations with governments to ensure steadfast political and financial support for UNHCR's programmes and activities worldwide.

Expenditures in Europe decreased from USD 137 million in 2002 to USD 99 million in 2006, primarily due to the phase down of assistance in much of the western Balkans, but also owing to the fact that 13 governments in the region provided full or partial funding for UNHCR's office premises and utilities; and that some countries provided earmarked contributions tied to UNHCR's involvement in RSD-related activities. Furthermore, UNHCR's regionalization process, already well advanced in the European context, has resulted in some budgetary savings.



Budget and expenditure (USD)

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	AB	SB ¹	Total	AB	SB	Total
Eastern Europe						
Armenia	1,902,345	0	1,902,345	1,733,147	0	1,733,147
Azerbaijan	3,858,800	0	3,858,800	3,477,350	0	3,477,350
Belarus	1,319,833	0	1,319,833	1,291,288	0	1,291,288
Georgia	4,887,532	0	4,887,532	4,157,938	0	4,157,938
Republic of Moldova	786,301	0	786,301	725,543	0	725,543
Russian Federation	15,379,981	0	15,379,981	12,974,325	0	12,974,325
Ukraine	3,816,670	0	3,816,670	3,112,706	0	3,112,706
Regional activities ²	570,992	0	570,992	543,649	0	543,649
Sub-total Eastern Europe	32,522,454	0	32,522,454	28,015,946	0	28,015,946
South-Eastern Europe						
Albania	1,763,552	0	1,763,552	1,427,060	0	1,427,060
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9,885,180	0	9,885,180	8,722,414	0	8,722,414
Croatia	4,915,391	0	4,915,391	4,210,120	0	4,210,120
Montenegro ³	982,918	0	982,918	747,735	0	747,735
Serbia ³	22,645,599	0	22,645,599	19,835,518	0	19,835,518
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,520,897	0	3,520,897	3,087,886	0	3,087,886
Sub-total South-Eastern Europe	43,713,537	0	43,713,537	38,030,733	0	38,030,733
Central Europe and the Baltic States						
Bulgaria	1,008,414	0	1,008,414	886,074	0	886,074
Cyprus	811,952	300,452	1,112,404	637,744	70,014	707,758
Czech Republic	1,056,977	0	1,056,977	907,613	0	907,613
Hungary	2,316,485	0	2,316,485	1,901,792	0	1,901,792
Poland	1,018,466	0	1,018,466	807,365	0	807,365
Romania	1,532,015	0	1,532,015	1,322,702	0	1,322,702
Slovakia	875,711	0	875,711	755,777	0	755,777
Slovenia	344,225	0	344,225	333,710	0	333,710
Turkey	7,762,450	836,064	8,598,514	6,184,417	409,087	6,593,503
Regional activities ⁴	363,989	0	363,989	313,520	0	313,520
Sub-total Central Europe and the Baltic States	17,090,684	1,136,516	18,227,200	14,050,713	479,101	14,529,814
Western Europe						
Austria	1,337,258	0	1,337,258	1,117,032	0	1,117,032
Belgium	4,286,546	0	4,286,546	3,298,065	0	3,298,065
France	3,166,716	0	3,166,716	2,428,873	0	2,428,873
Germany	2,524,672	82,628	2,607,300	1,964,225	82,628	2,046,853
Greece	1,636,805	0	1,636,805	1,337,011	0	1,337,011
Ireland	794,028	0	794,028	594,206	0	594,206
Italy	3,428,332	0	3,428,332	2,799,844	0	2,799,844
Malta	37,994	0	37,994	21,731	0	21,731
Portugal	49,289	0	49,289	43,300	0	43,300
Spain	1,565,636	0	1,565,636	1,212,869	0	1,212,869
Sweden	2,387,079	0	2,387,079	1,739,235	0	1,739,235

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	AB	SB ¹	Total	AB	SB	Total
Switzerland	574,809	0	574,809	508,637	0	508,637
United Kingdom	1,956,649	188,818	2,145,467	1,344,059	188,818	1,532,877
Sub-total Western Europe	23,745,813	271,446	24,017,259	18,409,087	271,446	18,680,533
Total Europe	117,072,488	1,407,962	118,480,450	98,506,479	750,547	99,257,026

¹ Does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² Includes regional activities in western Newly Independent States.

³ Expenditure for Serbia includes activities in Montenegro for USD 1,177,410.

⁴ Includes activities relating to the promotion of refugee law.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)	
Donor	AB
Australia	33,842
Austria	52,247
Belgium	146,767
Canada	181,818
Council of Europe Development Bank	1,034,361
Dutch Postcode Lottery (NPL)	200,000
European Commission	4,650,814
France	527,623
Germany	929,618
Ireland	83,204
Italy	516,870
Japan	1,500,000
Japan Association for UNHCR	28,252
Liechtenstein	31,008
Netherlands	1,965,923
Norway	3,433,067
Private donors in Cyprus	28,192
Private donors in the Russian Federation	4,456
Russian Federation	950,000
Spain	371,217
Sweden	5,025,126
Switzerland	5,356,415
United Kingdom	561,576
United States	22,466,954
Total	50,079,350