

1 September 2016

GREECE: ACCOMMODATION FOR RELOCATION PROJECT FACTSHEET

As part of the EU-funded project:

"Support to Greece for the development of the hotspot/relocation scheme as well as for developing asylum reception capacity"



CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS

10,571 accommodation places established for relocation candidates and asylum-seekers in Greece.

11,803 beneficiaries
(Cumulative number of current and past occupants, persons relocated to Member States and irregular departures and/or abandons).

8,003 places pledged by EU Member States for relocation from Greece.

6,224 persons accepted by the EU Member States for relocation from Greece.

3,407 persons left Greece to other EU countries under the relocation scheme.

343 places for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) established.

Highlights of August

- The accommodation capacity in support of the relocation programme funded by the European Union reached more than 10,000 places- **10,571 places as of 31 August**, representing 53% of the 20,000 target of UNHCR and its partners by the end of 2016.

Over 11,800 persons benefitted from the project, which includes the cumulative number of current and past beneficiaries, persons relocated to EU Member States and irregular departures and/or abandons.

- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi visited the Greek operation and met with the relocation candidates** living in an apartment managed by Municipality of Athens through Athens Development and Destination Management Agency on 24 August (Photo Gallery). The High Commissioner mentioned that the future of many the refugees in Greece is linked to the Relocation programme which must be accelerated to meet the targets. The visit was covered by various national and international press.

- **Medical services in response to the needs of the relocation candidates started on 17 August** with the partnership of Municipality of Athens through Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (Municipality of Athens) at the Municipal Health Clinic at Ano Patissia, Athens. The services prioritize the 3,000 beneficiaries of ADDMA's targets, but are also extended to the beneficiaries of the other partners (within the project except those of PRAKSIS who provides medical assistance to its own beneficiaries) and the host community through appointment. In Lagadikia site, Doctors of the World Greece (MdM) provides free quality primary healthcare services and psychosocial support to a target of 500 beneficiaries.

- **Brochures to clarify the Accommodation for Relocation eligibility criteria have been produced** in three languages (Arabic, English and Greek) and on eligibility to accommodation under the project are being distributed to sites and Asylum Service offices country-wide to provide access to information to asylum-seekers.

Photo Gallery



The High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visits a relocation family on 24 August, managed by partner ADDMA. He praised the Greek's hospitality in accommodating asylum seekers. © UNHCR/Won-Na Cha



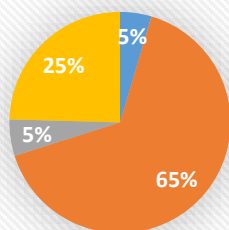
A relocation candidate family poses in the improved Lagadikia site, Municipality of Lagadas © UNHCR/Liene Veide



The accommodation for Relocation criteria has been clarified through brochures in three languages and distributed country-wide. © UNHCR/Won-Na Cha.

Where are they located?

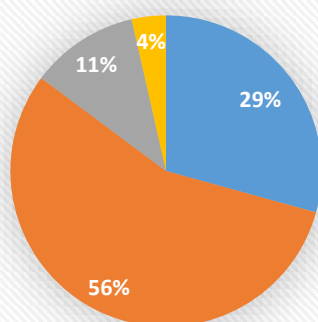
As of 1 September, 2016



■ Islands ■ Attika region
■ Central Greece ■ Northern Greece

What are the types of Accommodations?

As of 1 September, 2016



■ Hotels/buildings
■ Apartments
■ Relocation sites
■ Host family programmes

What is Relocation?

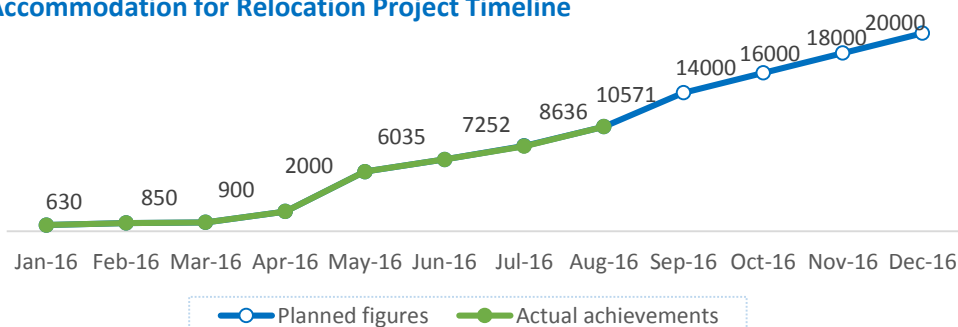
Relocation is an EU Justice and Home Affairs Council decision to transfer a total of 160,000 asylum-seekers from Greece (66,400) and Italy (39,600) to other EU Member States where their application for asylum will be processed. If their applications are successful, they will be granted refugee status with the right to reside in the respective EU Member State, where they have been relocated. The relocations should take place over two years starting from September 2015.

Partners and the planned accommodation places

Partner	Available and/or in use as of 01/09/2016	Places planned to be available by end of September
Praksis	5,071	7,200
Municipality of Athens through Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)	588	1,200
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	0	220
Arsis	504	600
Solidarity Now	584	700
Nostos	372	372*
Iliaktida	226	226*
Municipality of Thessaloniki	8	330
UNHCR through hotels/ apartments	2,028	2,541
UNHCR through relocation sites (Lagadikia and Ioannina)	1,190	1,190*
Total	10,571	13,981

(*) indicates that the current targets have been met

Accommodation for Relocation Project Timeline



Main Challenges

- **The number of pledges by the EU Member States remain low and the persons actually relocated even lower.** As of 31 August, a total of 3,407 persons were relocated to other EU Member States and Switzerland who participates on a voluntary basis, lower than the monthly target of 6,000 set by the European Commission. This represents just over 5% of the 66,400 target of persons to be relocated from Greece until September 2017.
- **Anxiety continues among the relocation candidates** as the pledges from EU Member States and the actual relocation stay low, prolonging their wait in Greece. The planned period for the procedure was initially much shorter which continues to strain UNHCR and the partners' capacity to provide accommodation to more persons of concern.
- **UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government for allocation of relocation sites**, which could accommodate larger number of relocation candidates than through the existing scheme of private apartments, host families, hotels and other buildings.

Highlights from the previous months

The Accommodation for Relocation project Factsheet is a monthly publication for external audiences to highlight the up-to-date achievements and current issues. The Greek version is also available on the UNHCR Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response (URL: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>).

Past Issues of the Accommodation for Relocation project Factsheet

- **June issue** featured:
 - Main points of the EU funded project and UNHCR's Accommodation for Relocation project; Challenges and UNHCR's strategy
 - A beneficiary's story – "Saeed's long pursuit of a safe home"
- **July issue** featured:
 - Monthly highlights – High-level visits and the start of a country-wide pre-registration project
 - Towards out-of-camp assistance and sustainable livelihoods-in line with the global [Policy on Alternatives to Camps](#)
 - Clarification of the eligibility criteria of the Accommodation for Relocation project
 - A beneficiary's story – "Learning from differences will make us all better people"
- **August issue** featured:
 - Monthly highlights – Over 10,000 beneficiaries since November 2015 and pre-registration process completed
 - Main challenges – The slow process of the EU pledges and visible agitation amongst the relocation candidate
 - A beneficiary's story – "It doesn't matter where we are, as long as we stay safe"; "This desire for a home has never been stronger"

A beneficiary's story (I): "Everyone said I was very lucky to have survived"

LESVOS, Greece, 17 July (UNHCR) Maice Salama looks nervous as she describes the afternoon that changed her life and her family's lives forever. Her home of Darzur was already under the influence of ISIS, but she went on with her daily life. On the fateful day, she met an acquaintance in town and was returning home in the early evening. Suddenly, the taxi was showered with bullets from all directions. The neighbor she was sharing the taxi with, died instantly in front of her eyes. Shrapnel dug into Maice's back. Somehow, she was rushed to the emergency room, only to meet with other 50 survivors of the day. Most of them died a few hours later. "Everyone said I was very lucky to have survived".

Maice Salama (32) is a former nursery teacher. In the poorly equipped hospital, the operation only removed the large pieces of shrapnel, while the smaller bits remained. To this day, it disturbs her breathing and she relies on painkillers. The family knew that they could not stay any longer. Shootings became more common and travel within the city was restricted. Neighbours and families already started to leave for Saudi Arabia or Europe.

The journey just to get out from their own village was dangerous. Groups identifying themselves as government or ISIS (Daesh) would randomly stop them and go through their papers and take away their belongings. Eventually, they held nothing but their IDs. Their passports, school certificates and medical reports were confiscated.

"They would take your cell phone and go through all the pictures and text messages, looking for information or simply to harass you, to show who is in power. If you didn't obey, they would shoot you on the spot".

The family paid the smugglers 600 USD each - 5,400 USD for the entire family to cross the sea from Turkey. They arrived in Lesvos on 19 March and have been there ever since.

"People say that we only want to go to rich European countries. This is completely untrue. We don't have a preference of where to go as long as we have peace and a safe, legal status that allows us to carry on as humans", Maice says. Her mother Shareera adds "...and also watch TV. There was no electricity in our village for the entire year, we have not watched TV since. It is difficult to understand what is going on, and what happened to our country, our people. While we were travelling, there were people who would treat us very harshly. Perhaps I can find the answers once we start watching TV again".

They want to be relocated to another EU Member State, so they can apply as refugees and receive legal protection and, hopefully, treat Maice. The Accommodation for Relocation scheme is funded by the EU and managed by UNHCR through its partners, including Iliaktida, where Maice's family is seeking temporary shelter.



Maice Salama shares her account of surviving a shooting, which triggered her whole family to leave.



Front row: Hamza (20). He is a computer science student and an aspiring engineer.

Second row from left: Maruwa (28), Shareera (56) and Maice (32). Maruwa was working on child development. Shareera is the mother of the family. Maice is a former nursery teacher, and a survivor of a brutal shooting.

Back row: Mohammed Taha (23) and Hibatula (23) are engaged. They were history students in university and aspiring teachers. All photos © UNHCR/ Won-Na Cha

A beneficiary's story (II): "Happiness can be found elsewhere"

Athens, Greece, 23 August (UNHCR) – Usually asylum-seekers tend to keep together in similar cultural groups as valuable sources of information sharing, however not always. For those who are discriminated solely on their identity, their struggle for shelter is not only from bullets but also from social discrimination. This is the story of a young Syrian couple, Sidahmed (23) and Bashir (27).

"I wanted to go to the Acropolis, but it was so expensive! I told them I am Syrian, I don't have that money, may I jump over the fence instead...and the lady said I may, but I could end up in prison!" Bashir is a lively 27 year old, former fashion store manager with years of experience. Ironically, he met Sidahmed a year ago as an inmate. Sidahmed was also from Latakia and was serving his second year for refusing to be conscripted in the army. Bashir was accused of anti-government protesting. "But now in Syria, people would go to prison for anything without a trial". Bashir was released after a year but Sidahmed had another year to go. "So, I went to see him every two weeks".

After Sidahmed was released, he was automatically sent to join the army. He asked the authorities for permission to visit his family first. Then, he quickly made his way to Turkey. "You know what the funny thing is?" Bashir speaks on behalf of Sidahmed (he speaks relatively good English which he learnt during the last few months in Greece), "the person who smuggled him out of Syria was a soldier himself".

Bashir was happy to learn that Sidahmed escaped the conscription,



Sidahmed and Bashir (names changed) pose for a picture with a message for other LGBTI asylum-seekers in English and Arabic. The couple will soon be relocated to France. © UNHCR/ Won-Na Cha

but his invitation to be reunited with him in Turkey was not very appealing at the beginning. He has 11 siblings and although he missed Sidahmed, he felt his place was still at home, in his own country. Two events triggered his immediate departure. One was his private party being sabotaged by the police who surrounded the scene, beat his group of friends and released them only after forcibly examining their bodies. The second was the call for conscription.

“Lebanon was the only place I could go without a passport. I immediately took the plane. I finally reunited with Sidahmed in Turkey”, but it took them both to work a minimum 12 hours each to make ends meet. The discrimination and the fear of violence did not diminish. “I wanted to be safe as who I am, in an environment that would accept us as we are”. Once the decision was made, Bashir was so eager to leave that he volunteered to steer the tiny boat crowded with 45 people. He did not have any sailing experience but he was not afraid of anything, as he was just about to change his life. “At first, the sea was calm; then it started to get very rough. It took a whole five hours to reach the island of Samos. Once we arrived, we were so relieved”.

LGBTI is an untold subject in Syria, is heavily scrutinized and condemned. People would report of LGBTIs to the police and receive price money. “I know cases of people pretending that they are part of the community themselves and make contact. Their targets are found dead afterwards, but no one would be prosecuted”.

The couple have been recently notified that they will be relocated to France. Bashir says that he already feels free. “Where we go, it doesn’t really matter. I am already free because I am with him. We told UNHCR of our special case and that we must stay together, and our wish was granted”, he continues. “We want to do the best for our new home. Sidahmed keeps on saying that he lost all his muscles and would like to get them back. For me, I would like a job too, but I first want to get to know the French people. I think they will understand who I am, not like how the others treated us along the journey. Also in the far future, I would like to help other people in a similar situation and show them that life continues and happiness can be found elsewhere”.

Lagadikia, Greece, 28 July (UNHCR) - It is still early in Lagadikia site this morning and most of the close to 900 refugees are just waking up. However, it is not a usual morning today, as there are workers already present at the site and erecting poles to create a shade over close to 200 tents. At the other side of the site, there are specialists from UNHCR and its partner Danish Refugee Council (DRC) assessing water tanks and infrastructural elements to find better ways how to improve the living conditions for refugees.

“On the one hand this is not a good sign for us, as it means we will have to stay here for quite some time; on the other hand, we are glad the situation will improve,” says Arif Ibo. Arif with his wife and four sons reached Lesbos island earlier this year, then moved to the mainland where for a month and a half his family stayed at the Eko gas station, an unofficial site on the way to FYROM. Eventually, they moved to Lagadikia in mid-April.



WASH facilities have been improved in the sites by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)



The poles and shading over the tents provide a cooler environment for the relocation candidates in Lagadikia. All photos © UNHCR/ Liene Veide

“Compared to how it was here back in April, the living conditions are getting better. But it is still not easy to keep on waiting,” Arif says. A like many other inhabitants of Lagadikia site, Arif’s family is awaiting to be relocated to another EU Member State. His family has passed all the necessary interviews, and are hoping to receive a notification from an EU country. “I will not shave my beard until we are relocated,” Arif jokes, and then adds how much they appreciate the politeness and friendliness of all the people working with refugees in Lagadikia.

The site is right at the doorstep of Lagadikia village and an hour drive from Thessaloniki. It was set up by UNHCR in collaboration with the Alternate Minister of Migration Policy in a location identified and allocated by the Ministry of Defense. UNHCR prepared the site through levelling and graveling, and purchased and installed 82 prefabricated toilets and showers for men and women, equipped with solar panels and providing hot water. When the site was opened on 21 April, more than 18,400 core relief items such as mattresses, jerry cans, kitchen sets, rubber mats, mosquito nets and others were distributed.

UNHCR was directly ensuring site management for the first two months after the opening of the site, and has just recently handed it over to its partner DRC. UNHCR continues providing individual counselling to the refugees on a daily basis and referring cases to different actors.

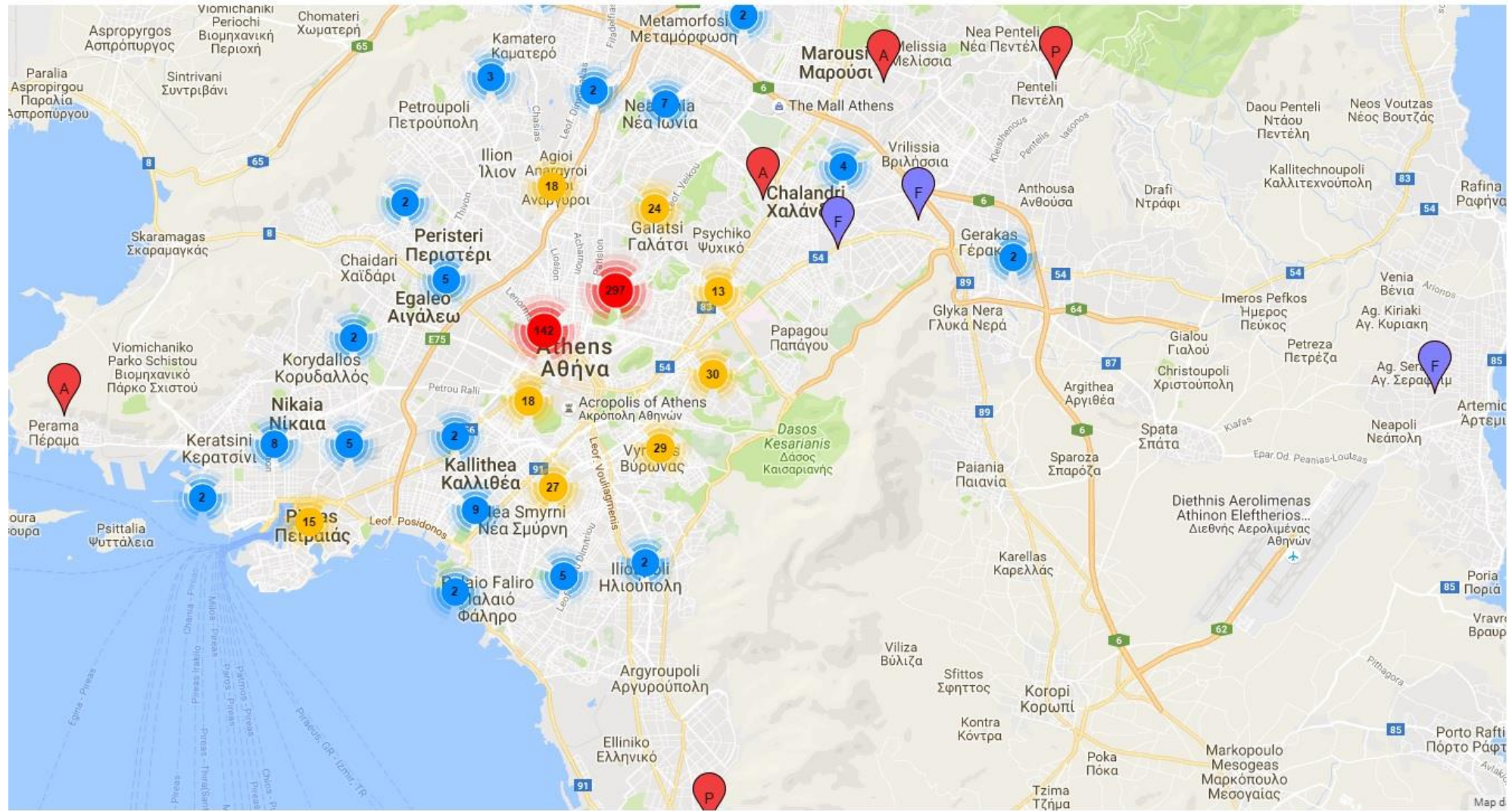
Among them is Medecins du Monde (MdM), whose team assists refugees with primary health issues, referrals to specialists working in the Greek public health system and psychosocial support.

All humanitarian actors and a representative of the Alternate Minister of Migration Policy who are present on site, meet regularly to discuss the on-going and planned activities and the additional interventions needed. The activities are implemented by UNHCR, through DRC and other partners, with EU funding.

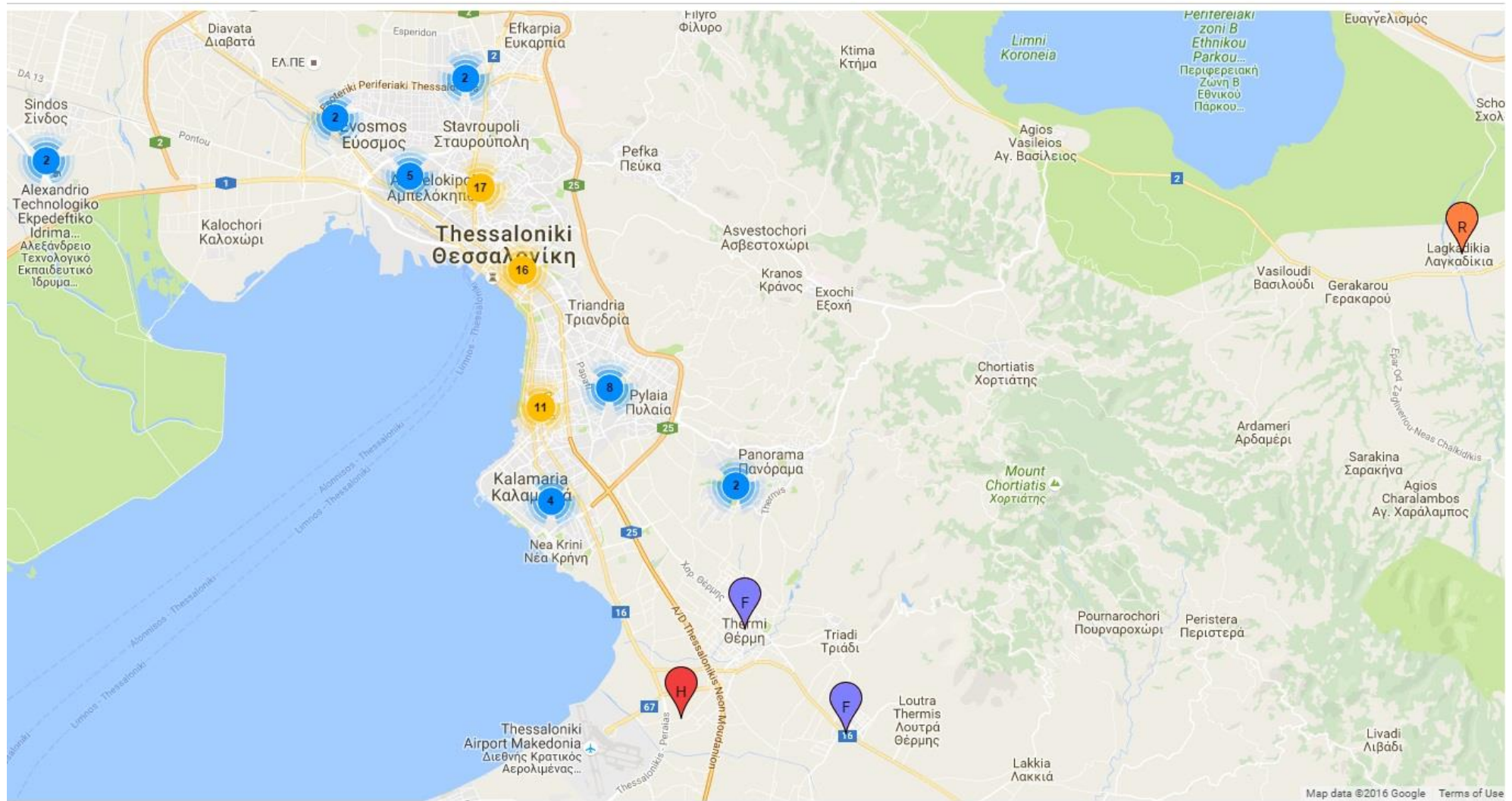
In the near future, UNHCR and DRC plan to establish a communal kitchen where refugees can cook their own meals, while a market area is already in place. Longer term shelter solutions are being designed to replace tents with containers or other forms of transitional shelter. The existing infrastructure on the site will be rehabilitated to ensure adequate facilities for administrative and social services. Besides the already existing child friendly space managed by UNHCR’s partner ARSIS, a child play area is planned to be established.

By Liene Veide, UNHCR Thessaloniki

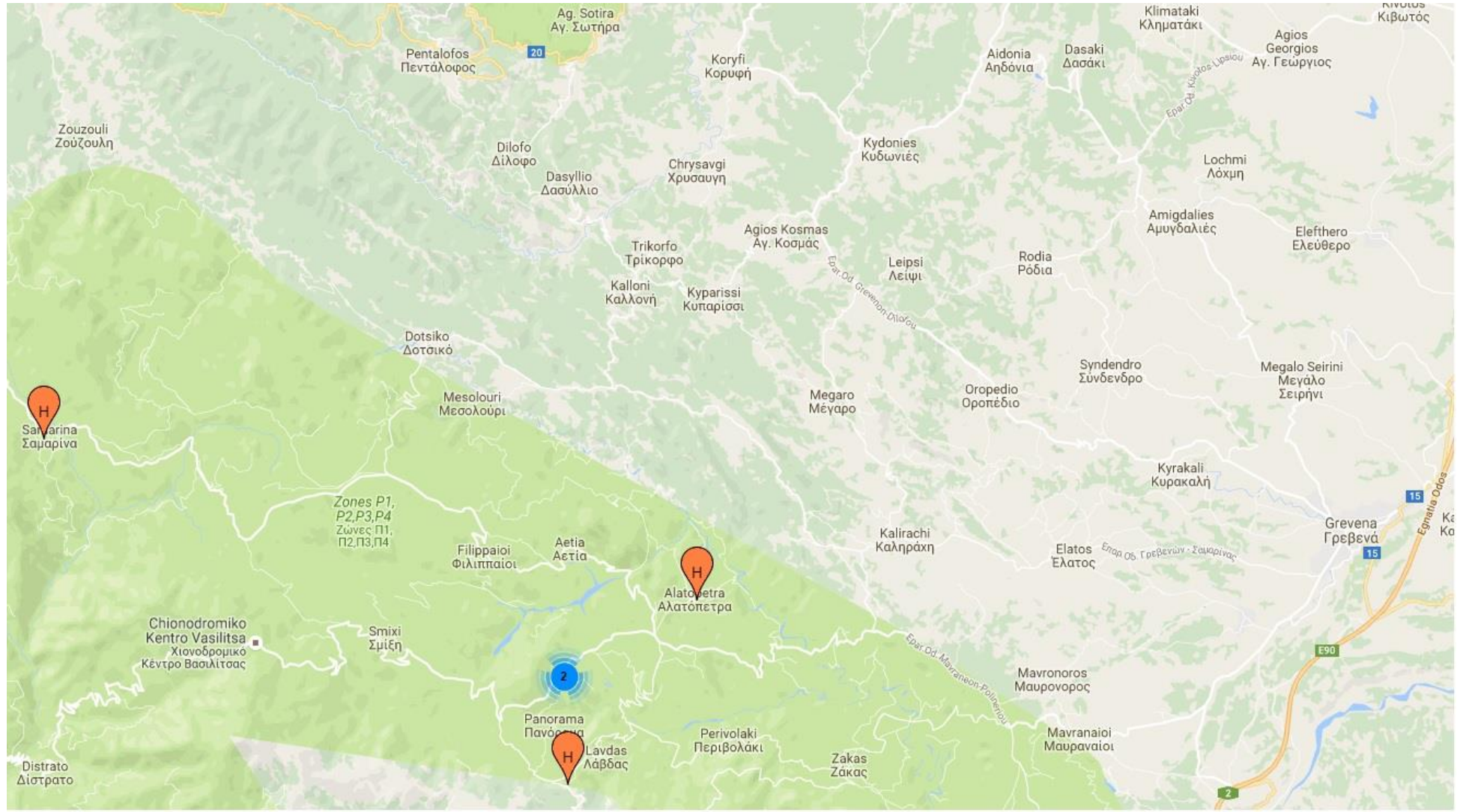
MAP OF ACCOMMODATION – ATHENS (I)



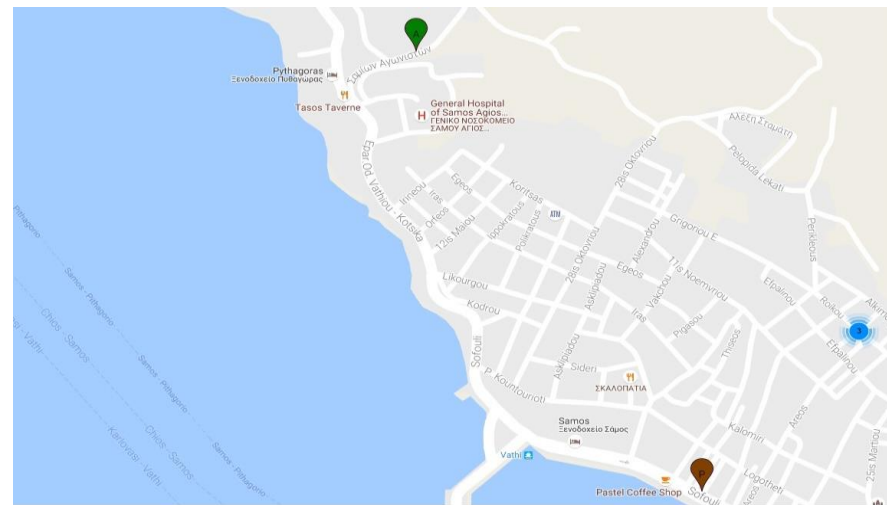
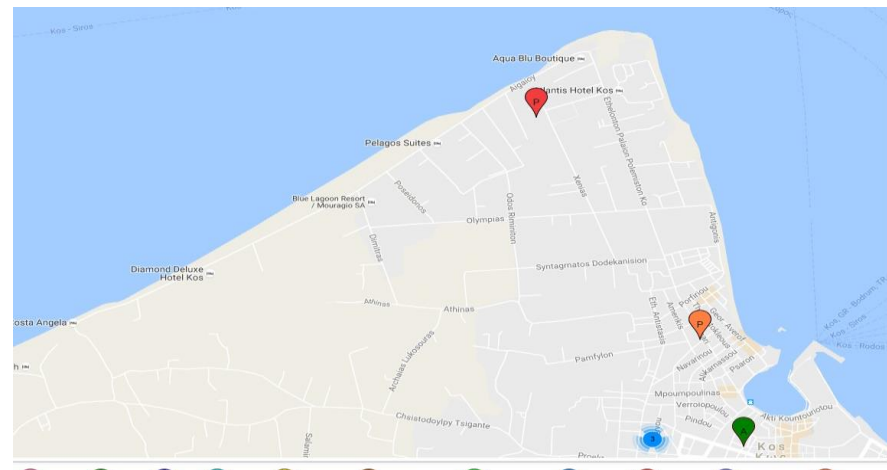
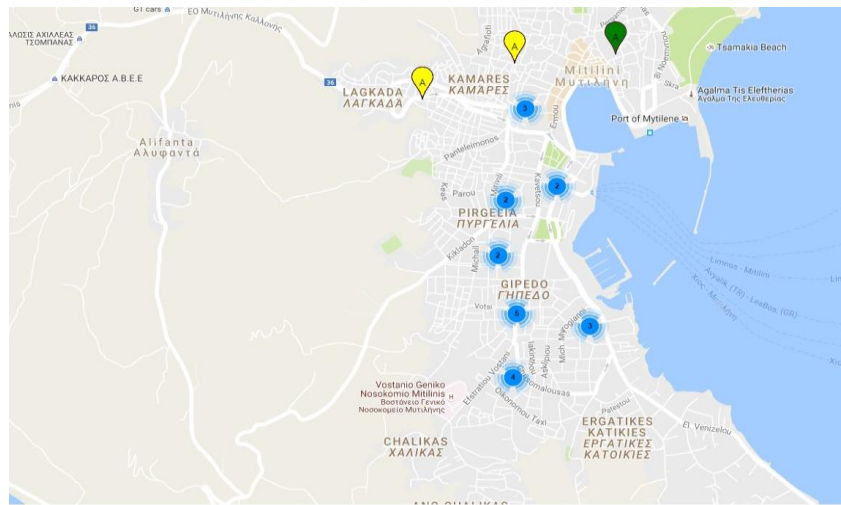
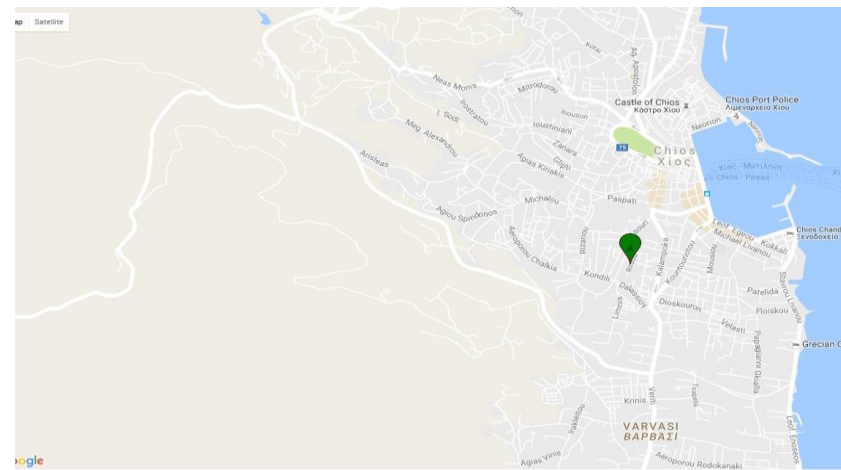
MAP OF ACCOMMODATION – THESSALONIKI (II)



MAPS OF ACCOMMODATION – GREVENA (III)



MAPS OF ACCOMMODATION – CHIOS, KOS, SAMOS, LESVOS (IV) (Clockwise)



MAPS OF ACCOMMODATION – COUNTRY WIDE OVERVIEW (V)

