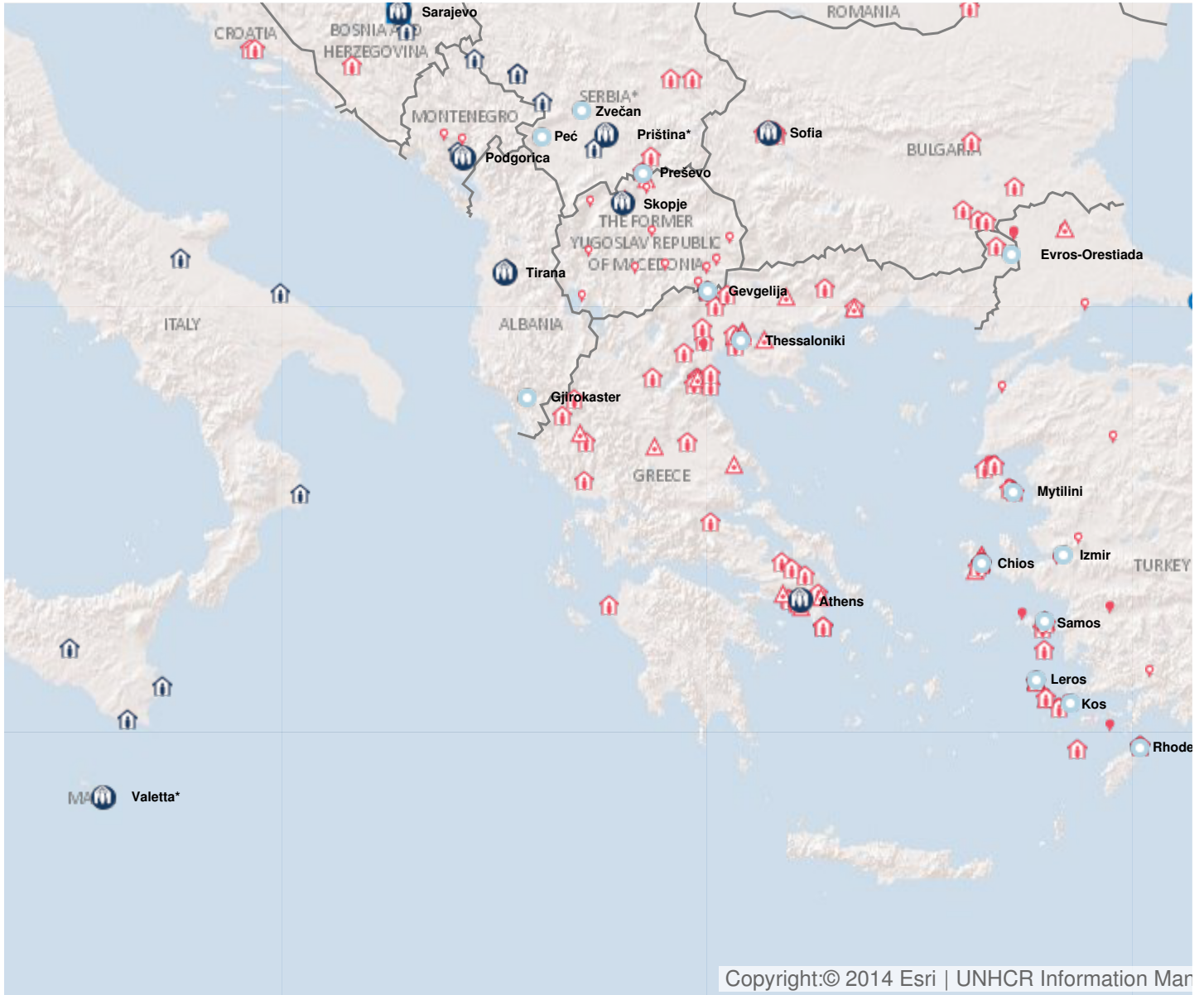
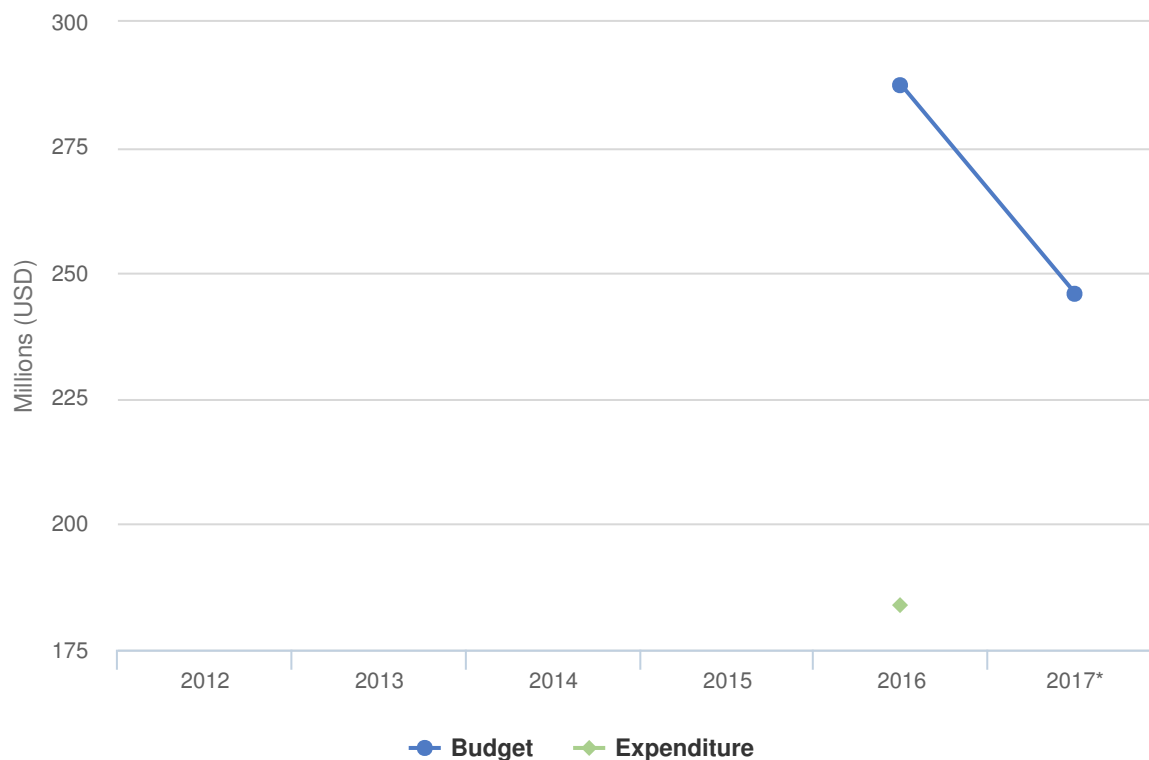


Operation: Greece



Latest update of camps and office locations **21 Nov 2016.**

Budgets and Expenditure for Greece



Year-end Overview

Working environment

In 2016, the operational context in Greece was characterized by the large number of refugees moving through the region, the continuously shifting travel routes they adopted, making the distribution of assistance and extension of protection to people with specific needs particularly challenging.

From January to March the operational focus was on providing emergency assistance to the high number of daily arrivals from Turkey transiting through Greece.

The “European Union–Turkey statement” of March 2016 resulted in a substantial change in the situation, with significantly fewer people trying to reach Greece from Turkey. While the number of arrivals dropped to less than 100 per day, UNHCR continued its operations at the islands while focusing simultaneously on the mainland response.

Simultaneously, the *de facto* closure of the western Balkans route led to a rapid rise in the number of people of concern remaining in Greece.

With funding from the EU, UNHCR set up a total of 20,000 individual spaces in urban accommodation such as rented apartments, hotels and host families. This provided much needed accommodation for families and people who were candidates for the relocation programme as well as vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees. The accommodation programme was accompanied by a basket of services, such as psycho-social support, interpretation, legal aid, transportation and medical assistance.

Towards the end of the year UNHCR focused on preparing a number of sites for winter. Preparations included distribution of core relief items, installation of housing units, winterization of tents and transfer of refugees to hotels and apartments.

Population trends

During the second half of 2015 and the first months of 2016, Greece experienced an unprecedented high number of arrivals by sea from Turkey. Despite a significant drop in numbers in March, more than one million refugees and migrants transited through the country in 2016. At the end of 2016, there were over 62,000 people of concern, mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, but also increasingly from other countries, such as Algeria and Pakistan. In addition, there were almost 200 stateless people.

The number of unaccompanied minors continued to increase with an estimate of more than 2,000 currently present in the country and in need of special attention. UNHCR created more than 700 accommodation places with specialized services for unaccompanied children, with, however, a large number of those children still in need of specialized care arrangements.

Achievements and impact

- UNHCR's monitoring and interventions, as well as direct services helped establish procedural guarantees within border asylum procedures that were essentially lacking (such as provision of information and proper servicing of decisions). UNHCR carried out the identification of people with specific needs and ensured their prioritization within the registration and asylum processes.
- UNHCR established a total of 21,057 accommodation places (including 704 places for UASC), benefitting a total of 23,047 relocation applicants and vulnerable asylum-seekers. In conjunction with shelter UNHCR provided a complete package of services - food, hygiene items, transportation, basic medical checks, translation and legal aid.
- UNHCR implemented its winterization plan which consisted of emergency interventions in existing sites. Apart from infrastructure upgrades, solutions included the provision of 3,645 family tents and 415 winterization kits, 762 pre-fabricated housing units with fittings in 8 sites, winterization of tents on islands, where there was no other option, evacuation of sites and transfer of people to apartments, hotels and buildings. A total of 1.5 M core relief items (CRIs) were also provided during 2016.
- UNHCR also led the coordination and provision of standardized essential protection services and referral systems for children and families through children and family protection support hubs. 11 'Blue Dots' were established, supporting 17,000 children and ensuring services were provided, with focus on safe areas for children, women, as well as assistance to people with specific needs.
- UNHCR supported the Greek Asylum Service to conclude a large scale pre-registration exercise resulting in 27,592 people of concern pre-registered; UNHCR also implemented a legal aid project, in cooperation with the Asylum Service to provide legal assistance to asylum seekers, deploying a total of 68 lawyers through its partners. UNHCR experts (quality assurance) supported the newly established asylum offices in the Reception and identification centres on 5 islands.

Unmet needs

- Living conditions in many of the sites, both on the islands and the mainland, deteriorated both due to congestion and the harsh climactic conditions at the end of the year, particularly concerning for people with specific needs, such as unaccompanied or separated children.
- Winterization of the open accommodation sites and conditions in the RICs were challenged by insufficient clarity on roles and responsibilities with respect to competencies of the authorities and subsequent delays in the definition of technical parameters.
- Main cross cutting gaps and concerns in protection related to the physical safety and security of people with specific needs, in particular women, and the risks of SGBV specifically in sites with substandard conditions.
- Further support was required to implement an out of camp policy in particular as conditions in many sites remain substandard.

- Despite the support extended to the new Greek asylum offices, discrepancies in the processing of claims from various nationalities persisted and UNHCR will continue to focus its advocacy on that front in 2017.
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