

# EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



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Yara Al Adib (in purple) talks to Syrian refugees, as the Syrian-born entrepreneur opens her catering company's first kitchen in Antwerp. "Working is a way to feel useful again. It's a feeling that you are contributing, it gives you purpose."

## TRENDS AND KEY FIGURES

In April, nearly 7,300 refugees and migrants entered Europe via Italy, Greece and Spain, bringing the number of refugees and migrants who have arrived by land and sea routes to these three countries to nearly 24,300 in the first four months of 2018. This marks a significant decrease of 49% compared to the first four months of 2017, a period in which just over 48,000 refugees and migrants entered Europe via these three countries. The decrease so far this year is largely due to fewer people crossing from Libya to Italy. As of the end of April, the primary two nationalities arriving via the three Mediterranean routes to Europe were Syrians and Iraqis.

In Italy, just under 3,200 arrived by sea in April, an increase compared to February and March but still a significant reduction compared to April 2017 when nearly 13,000 people crossed the sea. Approximately 65% of sea arrivals to Italy in April, amounting to some 2,100 persons, departed from Libya. A further 1,400 refugees and migrants were disembarked in Libya last month after being rescued or intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard. Of those who have arrived by sea so far this year, the largest groups have been Tunisians (20%), mostly departing from Tunisia, and Eritreans (19%), departing from Libya. Arrivals so far also include over 1,400 unaccompanied or separated children, with the two biggest groups coming from Eritrea (25% of all unaccompanied and separated children) and Tunisia (20%). A further 17 persons were believed to have died in April while attempting to cross the sea to Italy contributing to a total of 363 deaths while attempting to cross from Libya so far this year. Of those making the journey from Libya, the rate of deaths in the first four months was approximately one death for every 19 persons who reached Italy.

In April, just over 3,000 refugees and migrants arrived by sea to Greece compared to just over 2,400 in March and fewer than 1,200 in April last year

Mediterranean  
**24,300**  
arrivals in 2018<sup>1</sup>

**609**  
estimated dead/missing in 2018<sup>1</sup>

<b>Greece</b>			<b>Italy</b>		
<b>8,362</b>			<b>9,467</b>		
1,256	2,441	3,032	1,058	1,049	3,171
Feb	Mar	Apr	Feb	Mar	Apr

<b>Spain<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>Cyprus</b>		
<b>6,479</b>			<b>12</b>		
1,518	1,300	1,479	12	0	0
Feb	Mar	Apr	Feb	Mar	Apr

**New asylum applications in Europe<sup>3</sup>**  
**89,561** applications in 2018  
**819,000** applications in 2017  
**1,323,000** applications in 2016  
**1,471,000** applications in 2015

### UNHCR 28-May-2018

<sup>1</sup> [data.unhcr.org/mediterranean](http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean) as of 30 April 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Includes land and sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands

<sup>3</sup> Sources: Eurostats for EU+ countries (Only until February 2018. All data is provisional and last updated 18 May 2018); UNHCR for Eastern Europe (as of 30 June 2017), Turkey (as of 31 December 2017) and South Eastern Europe (as of 30 April 2018).

# 34,689

**Relocated in total** <sup>4</sup>
<sup>4</sup> Source: [European Commission](#), as of 30 April 2018.

 from **Greece**  
**21,999**  
 (33% of 66,400)

 from **Italy**  
**12,690**  
 (31% of 39,600)

# 1,601

**Returns EU-Turkey statement** <sup>12</sup>
<sup>12</sup> Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 30 April 2018.

(a 162% increase). As of the end of April, most sea arrivals to Greece had been from the Syrian Arab Republic (41%), Iraq (24%) and Afghanistan (11%). Many of those arriving in recent months have been families with children comprising some 37% of all sea arrivals to Greece so far this year. As of the end of April, sea arrivals to Greece have increased by 62% compared to the same period in 2017 but remain far below arrival levels for 2015 and 2016. In addition, arrivals at the land border increased with over 3,600 recorded arrivals to Evros in April, including many families from Syria and Iraq, meaning that more refugees and migrants arrived in Greece by land than sea for the first time since 2013. The increased land arrivals, coupled with limited reception capacity in the Evros region prompted UNHCR to issue a [statement](#) calling on the Greek Government to improve conditions and expand reception capacity.

**Figures on support in Greece:** UNHCR continues to provide accommodation in rented housing across Greece, along with cash based assistance coupled with protection interventions, thus offering asylum-seekers decent living conditions and a return to normalcy. UNHCR's [Accommodation Scheme](#) is part of the ESTIA programme (Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation) of the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). By the end of April 2018, UNHCR had secured almost 24,500 places in the accommodation scheme, in 4,190 buildings, in 21 cities across Greece; and benefitting a total of over 47,290 people under the programme since November 2015. UNHCR also provides [cash assistance](#) in Greece, as part of the ESTIA programme, funded by the European Commission. During April, 44,753 eligible refugees and asylum-seekers (21,098 households) received cash assistance in Greece, in 93 locations. Additionally, UNHCR is providing support to the authorities through its stock of relief and shelter material in response to the increase in arrivals and limited availability of accommodation in mainland sites.

In Spain, just under 1,500 refugees and migrants crossed the land and sea borders from North Africa in April, an increase of 23% compared to April 2017, when just under 1,200 arrived in Spain by land and sea. So far, the primary countries of origin of arrivals are Guinea, the Syrian Arab

Republic and Cote d'Ivoire. Deaths continued to occur during attempts to cross the sea to Spain. In April, a further 89 people are believed to have died at sea along this route making a total of 227 in the first four months of 2018, more than occurred in the whole of 2017.

Movement through the Balkans, including of refugees and migrants moving onwards from Greece and Bulgaria, continued with a variety of routes in use. In the first four months of 2018, over 1,500 arrivals have been recorded in Albania (146% of the 2017 total), some 800 in Montenegro (already reaching the figure from the whole 2017) and an estimated 2,800 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is almost four times more than in entire 2017. Croatia has also noted some 1,400 attempts to irregularly enter the country between January and March in 2018, a 72% increase compared to the same period last year. Nearly 6,000 people are believed to have entered the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia this year, and in Serbia UNHCR has noted an increase in the number of people interviewed recently arrived through the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It has also been observed that many in Serbia continue attempts to move onwards with an increase in push-backs or other returns recorded from Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Dead and Missing:** In the first four months of 2018, more than 600 refugees and migrants died while trying to cross the sea to Europe. Most deaths continued to occur along the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy (363 or 63%) but there has also been a worrying increase in the number of deaths along the sea route to Spain. At least 23 refugees and migrants have died along land routes in Europe or at Europe's borders so far this year.

**Relocation:** According to the [European Commission \(EC\)](#), nearly 34,690 asylum-seekers have been relocated from Greece and Italy as of 30 April 2018, including nearly 22,000 from Greece (out of 66,400 originally foreseen, 33% of the total) and 12,690 from Italy (out of 39,600 originally foreseen, 32% of the total). The transfers of asylum-seekers from Greece to other EU Member States under the relocation scheme is now concluded.

## OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey **4.0 million**

**Refugees and asylum seekers** <sup>5</sup>

Syrian Arab Republic	<b>3,589,000</b>
Afghanistan	<b>170,000</b>
Iraq	<b>143,000</b>
Iran	<b>35,000</b>

<sup>5</sup> Source: UNHCR as of 30 April 2018

Ukraine **1.8 million**

**Internally Displaced Persons** <sup>6</sup> and **Conflict Affected Persons** <sup>7</sup>

Refugees:	<b>3,257</b>
Asylum seekers:	<b>5,570</b>
Stateless persons:	<b>35,294</b>

<sup>6</sup> Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).

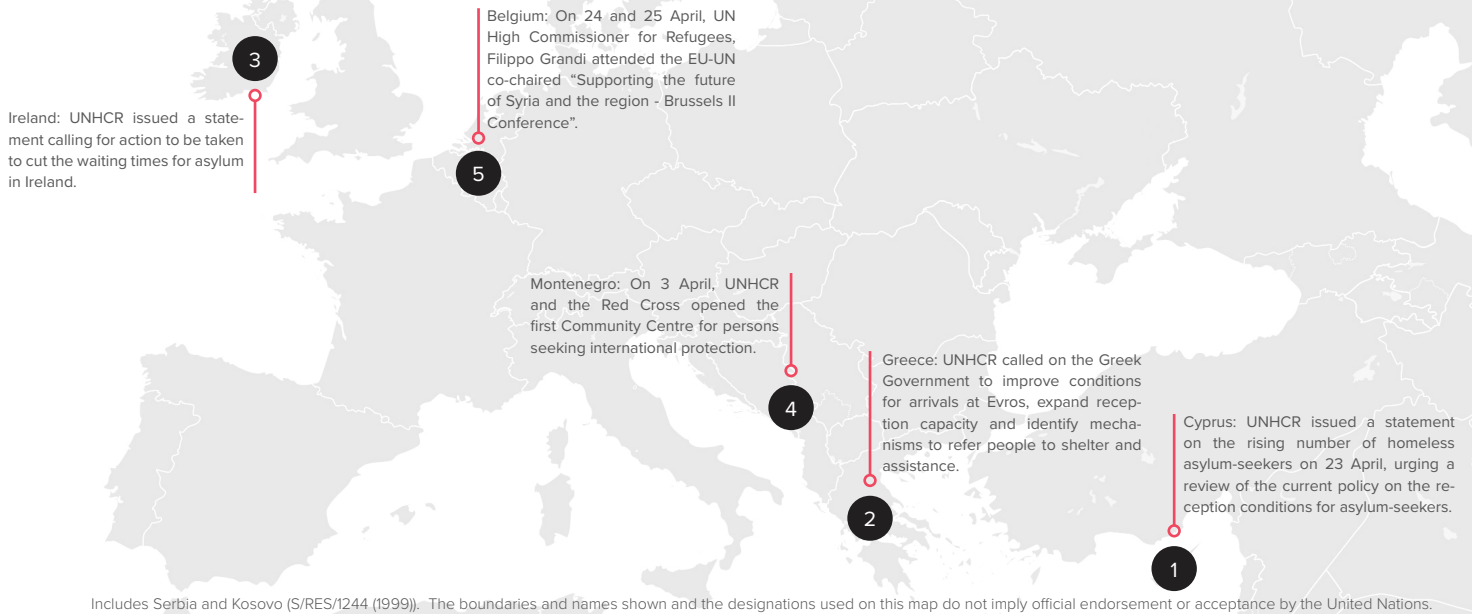
<sup>7</sup> Estimated number of conflict-affected people living along the line of contact in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 31/01/2018

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR as of 01/05/2018

<sup>10</sup> State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 31/01/2018

# KEY DEVELOPMENTS



**AUSTRIA:** On 18 April, the government presented draft asylum amendments. UNHCR issued a detailed legal analysis and [statement](#) addressing concerns regarding the proposed amendments, calling on the Federal Government to bring the idea of protection back to the forefront of asylum issues and to rethink the present amendment. Of serious concern are some measures proposed in the bill including the seizure of cash and electronic devices of asylum-seekers, and a prolonged waiting period for refugees before they are able to apply for Austrian citizenship.

**CYPRUS:** UNHCR issued a statement on the rising number of homeless asylum-seekers on 23 April, urging a review of the current policy on the reception conditions for asylum-seekers. In order to meet their needs, adequate assistance should be provided to asylum-seekers **1** outside of organized reception centres to ensure that dignified and decent housing conditions are available. UNHCR and partners stand ready to support local authorities in addressing risks of asylum-seekers becoming homeless.

**FRANCE:** A draft [law](#) on asylum was passed on 22 April. Although many amendments were tabled, the main provisions did not change. UNHCR welcomes adopted amendments including: provision of legal assistance to asylum-seekers at the start of the procedure, authorization of asylum-seekers to work if OFPRA (Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides) does not decide on asylum-seekers' claims within six months (instead of the previous nine), enhanced protection for children

at heightened risk and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and extension of residence permits for those recognized as in need of international protection (from the current one-year term to four years). Other provisions include the possibility to deny or cease protection to persons convicted for terrorism in certain third states and continued practice of detention of families facing deportation. UNHCR [recalls](#) its recommendations previously shared and [urges](#) the need to accompany this policy initiative with effective examination of asylum claims. It also stresses the importance of considering the best interest of children and urges the French authorities to put an end to the detention of children by providing appropriate management devices. The draft law will be further discussed by the Senate Law Committee on 6 June, and in plenary on 18 June.

**GERMANY:** The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Regional Bureau for Europe Director, Pascale Moreau, [visited](#) Berlin on 23 April and [met](#) with [Chancellor Angela Merkel](#), Minister of the Interior Horst Seehofer and other officials including Foreign Affairs Secretary of State Andreas Michaelis. In her [statement](#), Merkel welcomed Mr. Grandi to Berlin and stated that "Germany is trying to present itself as a reliable force to the UN organizations, both the UNHCR and the World Food Program." The High Commissioner recognized and showed appreciation for Germany's strong support to UNHCR both as a donor and a key partner on refugee matters.

Just a few days before the meeting, the German govern-



ment had announced that it would resettle 10,200 vulnerable refugees in 2018 and 2019. UNHCR welcomed this decision in a [press statement](#), but stressed that resettlement is not a substitute for the spontaneous access to the territory and the asylum procedure.



**Filippo Grandi** @RefugeesChief · Apr 23

Chancellor Merkel assured me that German leadership in global refugee issues will remain strong. I thanked her and the German people for their indispensable support.



On 16 April, in a [press release](#) regarding ongoing reforms to a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), UNHCR warned against outsourcing responsibility for refugee protection. "This does not help the refugees or Europe," said Dominik Bartsch, UNHCR representative in Germany. "We welcome that Europe is seeking a collaborative, functioning asylum concept," says Bartsch. "The federal government should not make the mistake of restricting protection and outsourcing to third countries. This may save costs in the short term, but in the long run it is the most expensive, least secure and most inhuman solution."

**GREECE:** Following a recent rise in arrivals at Evros via the land border with Turkey, hundreds of people were held in police detention facilities in harsh conditions. The increase in new arrivals strained the only Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) in Evros located at Fylakio. The centre was filled beyond its 240-person capacity, including with 120 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). With the Reception and Identification Centre overwhelmed, authorities struggled to conduct timely registration and identification, or to provide services such as medical and psycho-social care, and interpretation. The authorities initially placed people, including many children, in inappropriate police detention facilities **2** in the area while places at the centre opened up. In view of the untenable situation, many people were later released with no further assistance or accommodation. UNHCR [called](#) on the Greek Government to improve conditions, expand reception capacity and identify mechanisms to refer people to shelter and assistance. UNHCR also assisted the Greek authorities through the provision of protection and material support, including blankets, clothing, hygiene items, solar-powered lamps

and other non-food items.

UNHCR welcomed recent efforts made by the authorities to address the challenges. The response has generally improved, also as a result of a decrease in arrivals. Most people are now channelled through reception and identification procedures with fewer delays. Nevertheless, interventions are still needed to enhance the reception and identification capacity in the broader area and improve the conditions and services at facilities. Efforts are also needed to improve the referral of people, and to **3** provide them with accommodation and assistance once they have concluded initial procedures.

**IRELAND:** UNHCR issued a statement [calling](#) for action to be taken to cut the waiting times for asylum in Ireland. "Research shows that long periods of time spent in State-funded accommodation is leading to dependency and disempowerment among many people seeking protection, hampering their integration prospects" said Enda O'Neill, Head of Office with UNHCR Ireland. "The introduction of a more general right to work from June, for those who can avail of it, should ease some of the stress people experience while waiting. Ultimately however, they need certainty about their fate to move forward with their lives."

Provisional statistics from the Irish authorities for 2017 indicate that there were approximately 5,200 people awaiting a decision at the the International Protection Office (IPO) at the Department of Justice and Equality, at the end of 2017. In a conference held on 25 April, "Beyond McMahon – the future of asylum reception in Ireland", organised jointly by Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre and UCC's Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, UNHCR's Head of Office in Ireland said that asylum-seekers are now waiting on average of 19 months to be interviewed by the IPO.

**ITALY:** On 16 April, a local Tribunal ordered the release of the NGO Proactiva Open Arms' vessel which was impounded on 18 March, after prosecutors had accused the NGO of abetting illegal immigration in connection with a [rescue operation](#) that the NGO carried out in international waters, off the Libyan coast. However, charges have not been dropped and investigations will proceed. Furthermore, on 24 April, the Italian Court of Cassation upheld the impounding of NGO Jugend Rettet's Luventa vessel. Authorities in Trapani had ordered the impounding of the vessel in August 2017. The NGO did not sign the Italian authorities' Code of Conduct relating to SAR operations in the Central Mediterranean. Furthermore, the NGO staff are undergoing investigations for abetting illegal immigration on the basis of allegations to have **4** conducted unnecessary rescue operations and to have contacts with smugglers.

**MONTENEGRO:** On 3 April, UNHCR and the Red Cross opened the first Community Centre for persons seek-

ing international protection. The centre which is located near the Ministry of Interior Asylum Centre will host educational workshops and other activities for children and adults who are registered with the asylum system of Montenegro.

**SERBIA:** On 02 April, the new laws on Asylum and Temporary Protection, Foreigners and on Border Control came into effect following their adoption by Parliament in late March. UNHCR [issued](#) a press release welcoming the new laws, all of which are important for regularizing the status of foreigners, including asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants in the country. Many improvements in the new Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection have been included, such as the introduction of provisions aimed at ensuring gender-sensitive asylum procedures, as well as the inclusion of gender identity and gender-based violence in the refugee definition. UNHCR also welcomes improvements in provisions related to asylum-seeking children, particularly the inclusion of relevant definitions of UASC as well as various other improvements of the procedure.

**SPAIN:** UNHCR welcomes the Spanish government's announcement to step up response to delays in accessing to asylum in some Spanish cities and in processing asylum applications, the Ministry of Interior General Directorates for Home Affairs and for Police have taken various measures to increase their capacity to deal with increasing numbers of inland asylum applications. Spain has experienced a 200 per cent increase in asylum claims in the past two years. The vast majority of applications are lodged at police stations across the country. This increase, along with limited preparedness, have resulted in serious obstacles in accessing relevant procedures and reception facilities. UNHCR has proposed to organize, jointly with the Spanish Office of Asylum and Refuge, several training activities on international protection and interviewing techniques addressed to Police officers dealing with asylum-seekers.

**UKRAINE:** On 6 April, the Ukrainian Government [published](#) an Action Plan for the implementation of some elements of public policy regarding Crimea. Regarding the situation for those affected by the conflict in Crimea, the Action Plan covers improvement of conditions at checkpoints on the administrative border and ensuring freedom of movement; simplification of the procedures related to birth and death registration, as well as the provision of identification documents for Crimea residents; monitoring of the human rights situation in Crimea; and ensuring access to education for Crimea residents.

**Council of Europe:** The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted on 26 April its [resolution](#) and its [recommendation](#) on the humanitarian needs and rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Europe. Mrs. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, UN Special Rapporteur on

the human rights of IDPs, recalled that the protection of the human rights of IDPs rests on the primary responsibility of States. On occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Assembly expressed in its resolution the concern that within Europe more than four million people are displaced inside their own country due to armed conflict and violence. The Assembly invites States affected by armed conflicts or other causes of forced displacement to regularly assess and publish the humanitarian needs of their IDPs, possibly together with the UN, the EU and the ICRC, in particular regarding the needs of IDPs in terms of housing, education, health care, employment and financial assistance.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted in addition its Resolution on the Integration, empowerment and protection of migrant children through compulsory education. The Council of Europe urged States to provide free schooling for all migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children, in line with their international undertaking and to treat them in the same way as other children for educational purposes. The Assembly indicated that schooling of migrant children in mainstream classes provided continuity, promoted individual wellbeing and social stability as well as favouring future integration.

**OSCE:** Between 24 and 25 April in Vienna, the OSCE held the 18th Alliance Conference against Trafficking. The conference was hosted by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and was attended by UNHCR's Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean Route, Vincent Cochetel. The Conference called for broad, inclusive and a multi-agency approach based on strong partnerships with a focus on child trafficking and human trafficking along migration routes.

Separately, following the OSCE Ministerial Council [Decision](#) on the OSCE's Role in the Governance of Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees of December 2016, the OSCE Secretariat presented its updated Compilation of Migration-Related Activities of OSCE Executive Structures for 2017-2018. The key areas of OSCE's engagement on asylum and migration include: enhancing border management capacities, addressing smuggling and trafficking of human beings, preventing abuse and exploitation, particularly of children and those with special needs, and activities in support of both people on the move and communities by addressing human rights and the promotion of non-discrimination and integration.



## EU RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

In April, UNHCR released [recommendations](#) on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework. The recommendations cover both external funding and the budget allocated for policies and activities within the EU. The recommendations promote the principles expressed as part of the New York Declaration and the elaboration of the Global Compact on Refugees, including solidarity, responsibility-sharing, and the whole-of-society approach.

On 02 April, the European Commission announced its EUR 180 million contribution to the "[Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation \(ESTIA\)](#)" program in Greece which was launched in July 2017. Out of these EUR 180 million, EUR 155 million have been allocated to UNHCR in 2018 in order to scale up its rental accommodation scheme by gradually setting up 27,000 places in urban settings by the end of 2018, as well as pursue the multi-purpose cash assistance program with the aim of providing assistance to 45,000 refugees and asylum seekers through monthly cash transfers. The ESTIA Program also fund additional projects targeting refugees and asylum-seekers such as projects linked to psycho-social support, non-formal education, interpretation and primary health care.

On 24 and 25 April, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, **5** Filippo Grandi attended the EU-UN co-chaired "Supporting the future of Syria and the region - [Brussels II Conference](#)". The objective of the conference was to garner political support for the UN-led peace process and to mobilize humanitarian aid through further pledges and through increased humanitarian access. By the end of the conference, some USD 4.4 billion had been pledged for humanitarian and development programs in 2018 and USD 3.4 billion in multi year pledges for 2019-2020.

During the conference, Vice President/High Representative Federica Mogherini reflected on the critical situation for Syrians. In a video [message](#), UN Secretary General

António Guterres addressed the forum urging the international community to renew and strengthen its support to Syria's people. As for the High Commissioner, he reminded the conference about the importance of supporting the peace process in Syria, adding that the vast majority of refugees want to return home. He added that, "for now the conditions for return are not in place amid conflict, premature refugee returns would be disastrous...". Furthermore, Grandi asked attention for increased internal displacement within Syria expressed his hope that sustained support is provided to host countries, stressing the new financing instruments such as the EU facility for refugees in Turkey and the World Bank concessional funding. The High Commissioner also called for sustaining and expanding progressive refugee policies in host countries by increasing access to legal pathways, work permits and other livelihood opportunities. Lastly, Grandi invited countries present at the conference to expand resettlement programmes for Syrian refugees.

In the margins of the Brussels II Conference, the High Commissioner met with European Parliament President Tajani, European Commission President Juncker and EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Hahn. This was an opportunity for UNHCR to raise issues relating to the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), the next EU budget in line with [UNHCR's recommendations](#), resettlement, and the Central Mediterranean, as well as the situations in the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Turkey. Following his meeting with the High Commissioner, President Tajani [stated](#), "I have expressed my appreciation and reiterated our full support for the UNHCR and the role it plays in defending refugees throughout the world who are forced to leave their homes in search of protection and asylum".



Participants of the 2018 Brussels Conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the region



# UNHCR AND OECD LAUNCH ACTION PLAN TO BOOST REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT

On April 24, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [launched](#) an ambitious action plan to try and boost employment opportunities for refugees through a number of innovative actions.

The plan aims to ensure that the economic potential of refugees is fully harnessed, offering a win-win to all – refugees, employers and hosts. ReDI's Digital Women's Programme is one of such innovative actions.



## REFUGEE STORIES

### [German school helps women refugees hone tech skills](#)

By Josie Le Blond in Berlin, Germany

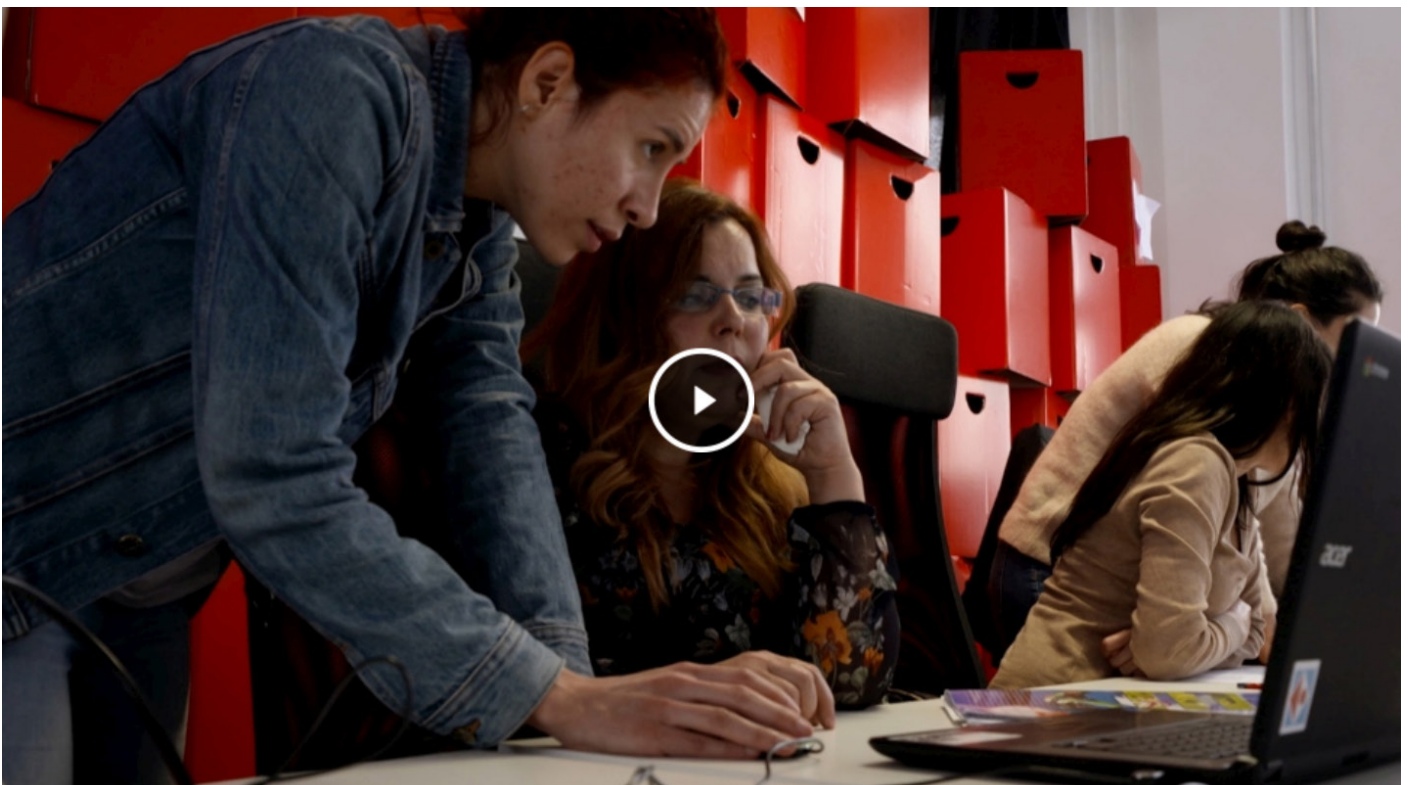
Free coding and digital courses enable newcomers to brush up computer knowledge and join growing network of women working in technology.

Syrian civil engineer Anan Jakich risked her life to bring her family to safety. Now a refugee in Germany, she has joined a community of women newcomers rebuilding their lives through a shared love of technology.

Finding a full-time job in Germany was her priority. In Syria, she had qualified as a civil engineer at Al-Baath University in Homs and ran her own company.

She soon realized the years of conflict and flight, during which she had had no computer access, had taken its toll on her IT skills. It was then that she heard about ReDI, a Berlin-based non-profit school offering free coding and digital courses to newcomers.

Anan became one of the first students to join ReDI's Digital Women's Programme, a series of all-female courses aimed at getting more women learning about technology. "Educating women has a ripple effect on the community," explains Edlira Kasaj, head of the ReDI Digital Women Programme. "The benefit gets passed down through family structures to many more people." Anan, who uses her updated IT skills in a new job at the German rail network Deutsche Bahn, is no exception.



## [From Syria With Love in Antwerp: Entrepreneur refugee brings Syrian cuisine to the heart of Europe](#)

By Josie Le Blond in Antwerp, Belgium and Lisbon, Portugal



From Syria With Love, Belgium-based catering collective was created by 29-year-old Yara Al Adib, a Syrian-born refugee and entrepreneur who grew up in Kuwait. With a team of four women, all refugees from Syria, Yara's brainchild has blossomed from a street food market stall into a fully-fledged catering business able to feed up to 800 people at a time. Now, she and her team are opening their first permanent site, a kitchen and takeaway, in a suburb of Antwerp where the delicious kibbeh, baba ghanoush and tabbouleh are easing interaction between newcomers and locals. Millions of Syrians have fled the war in their country. Most are living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan while others made it to European countries where they are starting new lives and contributing to their adopted societies and economies.

## [French village opens its doors and its heart to African refugees](#)

By Céline Schmitt and Kamilia Lahrichi in Thal-Marmoutier, France

Fifty-six women, men and children evacuated to France via Niger find a warm welcome in a tiny rural community.

On a winter's day, a group of refugees newly arrived from Africa walks through the falling snow in a village in eastern France. For the next four months the 56 women, men and children will be hosted by Franciscan nuns in their convent as a French non-profit organization, France Horizon, helps them put down roots.

Twenty-five – from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan – had been stranded and detained in Libya, and were evacuated to Niger by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. There they joined others from the Central African Republic, Mali and Nigeria and all were flown to France for resettlement.

The mayor of Thal-Marmoutier, Jean-Claude Distel, said the operation had gone smoothly. "The refugees have appreciated the welcome they received from the residents and, for our part, we are glad we were able to make a small contri-

tribution to their resettlement and provide them with all they need to integrate into the life of the nation."

Outside the convent's schoolroom, the children sit on the floor while the teacher stand in the middle and mouths the words. This class is a springboard to enrolment in a public class.

"These are just delightful students," says the teacher, Sylviane. "They are motivated students who really want to learn. They give their all to learn."

The adult refugees spend most of their day in intensive French classes organized by the French Office of Immigration and Integration. Mohammed, the French teacher, is preparing them for life in France. He teaches them how to introduce themselves, talk about where they come from and their family circumstances and tells them how to find their way around and read street signs. "We introduce them to life in France, public transport, how to read a map at a bus stop... the small things of everyday life," says Mohammed. The French classes also teach the newcomers about cultural differences, how life works in France, how elections are organized, the separation of powers and the diversity of French society.

Pierre and Denise live across the road from the convent and, at first, they were unsure about the arrival of the refugees. However, experience quickly proved that their fears were unfounded and now they want to show that the residents can play a part in welcoming and integrating the refugees.

## [The long wait for refugee status in Ireland does not curb Congolese businesswoman's positive attitude](#)

By Svenja Von Reuss in Dublin, Ireland

Pelagie Siete-Mimauzet waited six years for a decision on her refugee protection application. A successful businesswoman with fluent Russian and French, she quickly secured work when she received refugee status.

For 21 years, Pelagie Siete-Mimauzet lived happily in Ukraine, where she moved as a 19-year-old from Congo Brazaville. "I had a master's degree and owned my own business. I worked hard and paid my taxes. Then the war started in 2011." Pelagie fled Donetsk in eastern Ukraine and came to Ireland with her 14 year-old son, where she waited six years for a decision on her asylum application.

"I couldn't go and look for a job because I wasn't allowed to work while staying in Direct Provision. The waiting was terrible." Other challenges followed. She developed breast cancer while in direct provision, which she successfully overcame and now works with Accenture in Dublin. "If you think you are nothing and you are nobody, you won't overcome the challenges. That's why you have to be ready for everything you face."

According to the UNHCR's own [research](#), long stays in direct provision accommodation is leading to dependency and disempowerment among many people seeking protection, hampering their integration prospects. "Give them the opportunities to learn and work" says Pelagie.



# THE FACES OF STATELESSNESS IN EUROPE – THE ANSWERS TO THE ‘WHERE’S’, ‘WHYS’ AND ‘HOWS’ ON STATELESSNESS

**Do you ever wonder where stateless people live, what their day-to-day lives look like or how they try to solve their predicament?**

In an attempt to answer these questions UNHCR launched a new publication called “[The Faces of Statelessness in Europe](#)”. The brochure showcases the issue through the stories of stateless people from all parts of Europe. Whether it is the story of Maria who finally confirmed her Moldovan citizenship at the age of 74 or the story of 29-year old Victoria who was officially recognized as a stateless person in France in 2015 and now dreams of becoming a French citizen one day. All of these stories shed light on the lives of stateless people who live among us. They all have the right to belong.

Other stories of stateless people will make the reader think how often we take our citizenship for granted and what our lives would look like if we had none: Did you know that Michael, living in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, cannot be included as the father on the birth certificate of his son Stefan, because he is stateless and has no documents to prove his identity or that Maria, who was abandoned at birth and raised in Poland, was stateless and could only obtain Polish citizenship 17 years later?

The Faces of Statelessness in Europe not only shows that there are stateless people in every European country, but also explains why people are stateless and what actions have been taken so far and still need to be taken by multiple stakeholders in order to end statelessness. Cooperation between different actors in Europe is vital to end statelessness, be it governments, regional organizations,



national and local grassroots organizations and international NGOs, stateless people themselves or the United Nations. All of these have a role to play in ending statelessness. There is no doubt that a key role belongs to stateless people themselves and the need for their voices to be heard across Europe is essential. UNHCR has been conducting participatory assessment meetings with stateless people in different European states in order to learn from them about the obstacles they face in order to access or confirm citizenship in the country they live in, often the only country they have ever known.

## DESPERATE JOURNEYS

**UNHCR Desperate Journey’s report provides snapshot of changing refugee movements to Europe.**

UNHCR issued a new report detailing changing patterns of movement for refugees and migrant along route to Europe. Despite a drop in the number of refugees and migrants reaching Europe last year, the dangers many face along the way have, in some cases, increased. While the overall number of Mediterranean crossings remained far below the levels of 2016, the UNHCR report also finds a rise in arrivals to Spain and Greece in the latter part of 2017. In particular, the journey to Italy has proved increasingly perilous, the death rate amongst those crossing from Libya increased to one death for every 14 people who reached Italy from Libya in the first three months of 2018, compared to one death for every 29 people in the same period in 2017.

As Pascale Moreau, Director of UNHCR’s Europe Bureau, observed, “Journeys to and through Europe for refugees and migrants remain fraught with danger.” Access to territory and to swift, fair and efficient asylum procedures for people seeking international protection

is vital. Managing borders and offering protection to refugees in line with States’ international obligations are not mutually exclusive nor incompatible.” Last year over 3,100 people are believed to have lost their lives at sea last year while traveling to Europe compared to 5,100 in 2016. As of the end of April, over 600 more have died or gone missing since the beginning of 2018. The UNHCR report also stressed the abuses and extortion endured by refugees and migrants at the hands of traffickers, smugglers or armed groups along various routes to Europe. The report provides several recommendations including regarding the need for access to territory and to swift, fair and efficient asylum procedures for people seeking international protection as well as other recommendations related to the need to increase solidarity.

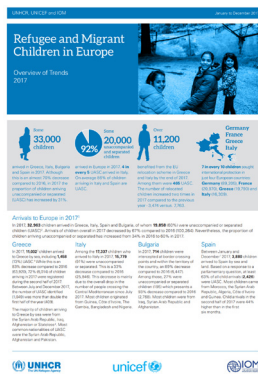


## Key Documents from the Web Portal



### [Desperate Journeys - January 2017 to March 2018](#)

Overview of trends of movements by refugees and migrants to and through Europe in 2017



### [Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe in 2017](#)

Accompanied, unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children in Europe.



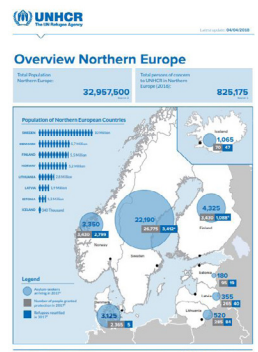
### [Resettlement to Europe December 2017](#)

Overview of resettlement submissions to European countries.



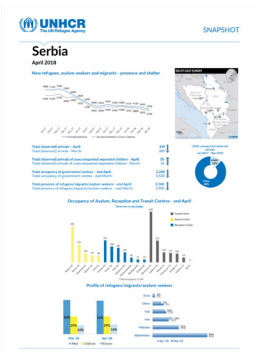
### [Greece Cash Assistance April 2018](#)

Rented housing scheme for vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece.



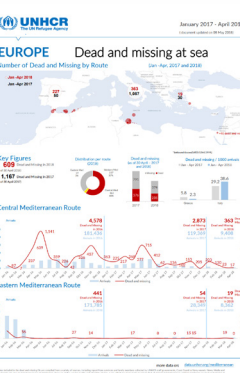
### [UNHCR Northern Europe Country Factsheets](#)

Key data on persons of concern in Northern Europe.



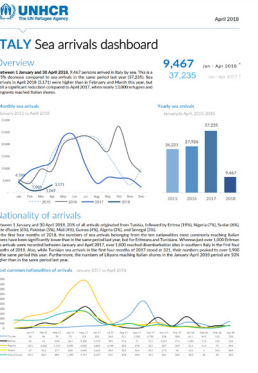
### [Serbia Snapshot April 2018](#)

Summary of population statistics including asylum applications and observed pushbacks.



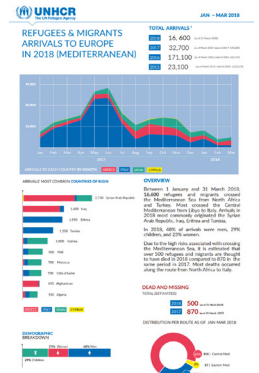
### [Mediterranean: Dead and Missing at Sea - April 2018](#)

Number of dead and missing in the Mediterranean by route.



### [Italy sea arrivals - April 2018](#)

Summary of key statistics of recent arrivals to Italy as well as asylum applications and relocation.



### [Mediterranean arrivals to Europe January to March 2018](#)

Summary of arrivals to Europe via the Mediterranean.

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# TIMELINE OVERVIEW

