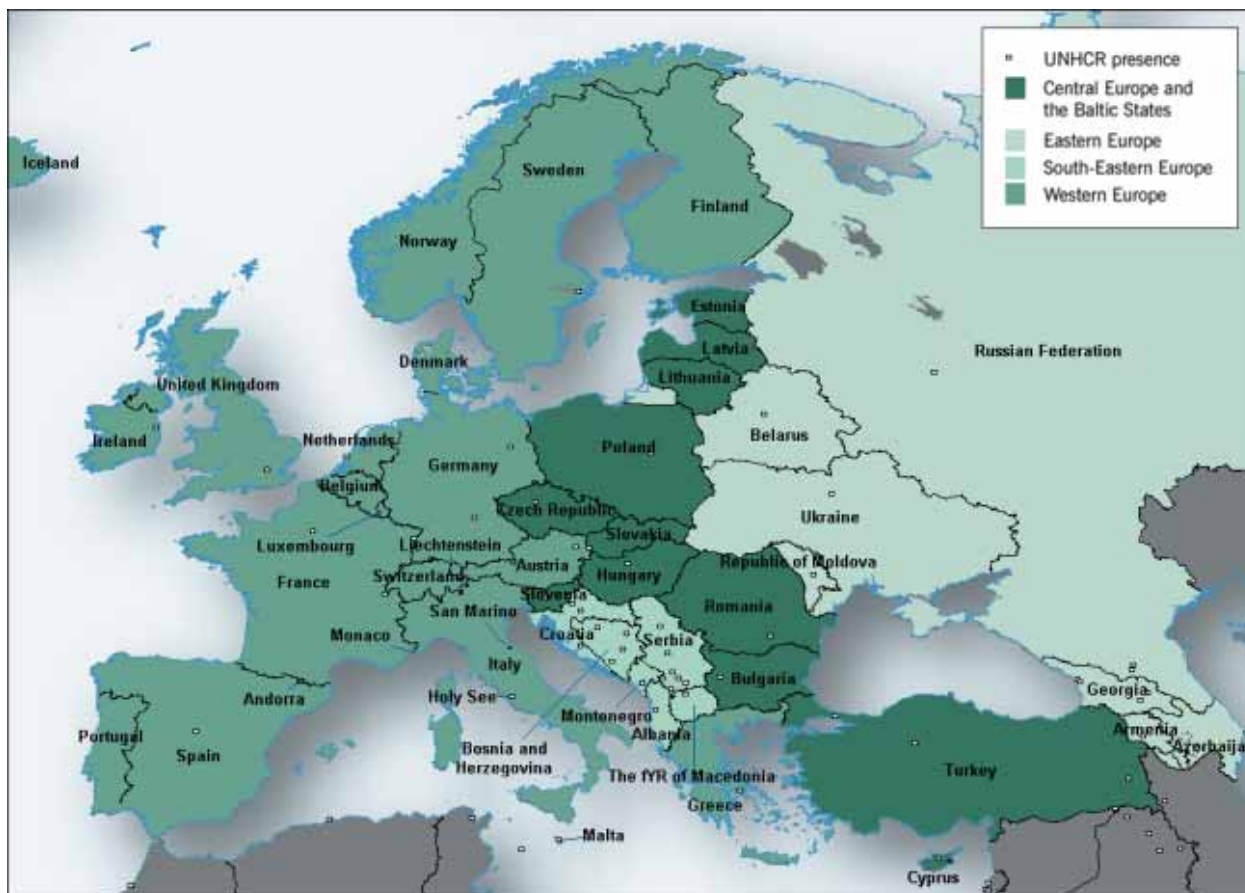


Europe



Working environment

UNHCR's operations in the subregions of Western Europe, Central Europe and the Baltic States, South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe are particularly affected by diverse challenges relating to irregular migration, internal displacement, the preservation of asylum and the return and integration of displaced people. Solutions can no longer be sought purely at country level, so the Office is pursuing various options through broader regional and subregional collaboration and initiatives.

In Western and Central Europe, a declining trend in individual asylum applications has continued in 2006. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of boatloads of illegal immigrants landing on the Italian island of Lampedusa, on Malta and on Spain's Canary Islands. It is of grave concern to UNHCR that many lives are lost at sea in these hazardous voyages, which are by no means limited to the Europe region. They reflect the desperation of so many asylum-seekers across the globe who are willing to risk life and limb to escape situations of fear or persecution.

UNHCR's operations in Turkey are shaped by the Government's decision to maintain the "geographic limitation" which restricts its obligation under the 1951 Convention to persons uprooted by events in Europe. Until a national asylum system for non-Europeans seeking international protection is established, UNHCR will conduct refugee status determination (RSD) under its mandate. Turkey does, however, provide non-European refugees with temporary asylum pending UNHCR's efforts to secure their resettlement. In view of Turkey's candidacy for membership of the European Union (EU), the Government has committed itself to implementing the EU *Acquis* on asylum, migration, border monitoring and human rights.

In Eastern Europe, the security situation remains volatile, but there has been some progress towards the resolution of long-standing conflicts. In the Russian Federation, UNHCR now has greater access to persons of concern in the northern Caucasus. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security recently relaxed security restrictions, which will allow UNHCR to open a field office in Grozny and provide more effective international protection and assistance to returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Chechnya.

The operational environment in the Caucasus remains volatile, making it all the more crucial that UNHCR protects refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs, besides collaborating with governments to find durable solutions.

The inhabitants of South-Eastern Europe, including some 130,000 refugees and 430,000 IDPs whose lives were disrupted by the wars in the former Yugoslavia, witnessed significant political developments in 2006. Perhaps the most important was a referendum in Montenegro in May that led to its declaration of independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro on 3 June 2006. A week later Montenegro became the 192nd Member State of the United Nations.

Although there was some improvement in security and more freedom of movement in Kosovo (Serbia), harassment, abuse and low-level violence against minorities in the province (particularly ethnic Serbs and Roma) continue. This highlights the need for international protection and greater preparedness on the part of UNHCR pending a decision on Kosovo's status.

Strategic objectives

UNHCR's strategic objectives for Europe in 2007 are to:

- Ensure full and unhindered access to asylum procedures and enhance the quality of government protection and asylum systems.
- Ensure effective border monitoring and capacity-building to governments, and improve conditions in reception facilities.
- Promote durable solutions for refugees, in particular local integration and naturalization.
- Strengthen partners, and by 2007-2008 hand over to them UNHCR's operations in Western Europe, especially those related to material assistance, social services and legal counselling.
- Address the asylum-migration nexus through inter-agency cooperation and regional and cross-border initiatives.
- Promote more resettlement in countries where the potential for reception and integration exists.
- Advocate including the issue of displacement in development and conflict-resolution processes to help find durable solutions and end protracted assistance programmes.
- Press for and provide protection and assistance to IDPs in partnership with international agencies and NGOs.
- Ensure that statelessness is addressed.

Challenges

In Western Europe, asylum and migration remain politically sensitive issues despite the significant decline in

the number of asylum-seekers. Little distinction is made by the public between refugees and others in need of international protection and economic migrants. States in general remain more focused on migration control than asylum. In this climate, UNHCR must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to identify asylum-seekers, grant them access to state territories and ensure their fair treatment. The challenges many governments face in the integration of immigrants have lessened their willingness to receive those in need of international protection.

One attempt to respond to the particular challenges posed by mixed flows of migrants and asylum-seekers is a ten-point plan of action developed by the Office in 2006. Collaboration with the Government of Italy, the IOM and the Italian Red Cross has helped to provide a framework for monitoring and assisting the large numbers of arrivals in Lampedusa. UNHCR has also increased its presence and capacity-building activities in the Canary Islands and in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and has assisted Malta to cope with the large number of arrivals there.

Despite the fall in the number of asylum cases in Central Europe and the Baltic States, it should not be forgotten that due to their location on the borders of the European Union, Central European countries face considerable pressure from broader migration movements. This makes the need for greater cooperation and burden- and responsibility-sharing among the Union's Member States all the more acute. It has also given rise to a tendency to impose more restrictive asylum measures in the context of the Union's directives.

One of the consequences of the economic austerity programmes introduced by governments in the region has been a reduction in funding for the maintenance and development of national asylum systems and infrastructure. This trend is of particular concern to UNHCR, as States bear the primary responsibility for protecting and assisting asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR will make every effort to ensure that asylum systems in the region receive the necessary human, financial and material support from the governments concerned. It will also ensure that civil society groups participate in asylum systems.

In Turkey, the aligning of the national asylum system with international standards may be affected if there is a slowdown in the country's negotiations to become a member of the European Union. Events in Iraq could result in large population movements into Turkey, which would be a challenge both to UNHCR's response capability and its plans to help build the Government's national asylum system.

In Eastern Europe, the tense security situation in Georgia, especially in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, could hurt UNHCR's operations there. The frozen peace process



Montenegro. Konic settlement of displaced Roma from Kosovo. UNHCR / J. Young

and the unresolved status of South Ossetia hamper the work of development agencies. The lack of a legal framework for the restitution of property in South Ossetia also impedes returns. The number of resettlement countries that accept Chechen refugees remains limited, and the number of Chechens resettled continues to decrease.

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is still not resolved, and this limits the implementation of durable solutions for the displaced in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine face similar challenges in establishing comprehensive migration policies, building national asylum systems and finding durable solutions for refugees. UNHCR will support their links with each other and with States in the European Union, in particular through the Söderköping process, which offers a forum for cross-border dialogue on migration and asylum.

The Russian Federation will face significant migration challenges, especially with regard to economic

movements and illegal migration. There is a significant gap between the Federation's legislation pertaining to refugees and asylum-seekers and its implementation. In the complex humanitarian and security environment of the northern Caucasus it is important to ensure that the rights of IDPs and returnees are respected.

In South-Eastern Europe, it is unlikely that the goal of the Sarajevo Declaration — to resolve the plight of hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs by the end of 2006 — will be met. This is partly due to the unresolved issue of tenancy rights in Croatia and generally poor socio-economic conditions that hinder reintegration or local integration across the subregion. In Kosovo, political uncertainty and lack of security limit UNHCR's ability to implement durable solutions. Still, UNHCR will endeavour to find durable solutions for persons of concern in the subregion and help governments and other national actors to bring asylum systems in line with international standards.

Budget (USD)

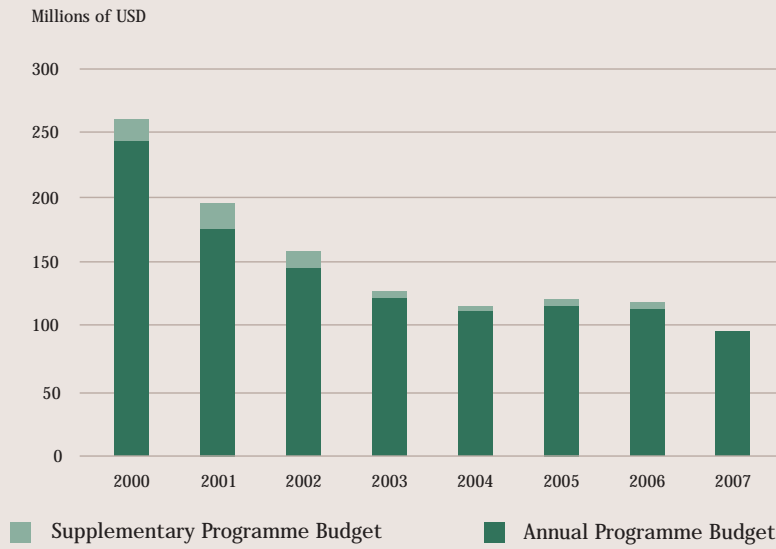
Country	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Armenia	1,535,176	1,410,270
Azerbaijan	3,564,813	3,023,063
Belarus	1,054,028	977,312
Georgia	4,304,911	4,462,858
Republic of Moldova	624,950	618,977
Russian Federation	15,609,817	13,415,656
Ukraine	3,054,883	3,073,876
Regional activities ¹	195,000	100,000
Sub-total Eastern Europe	29,943,578	27,082,012
Albania	1,119,392	734,890
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10,688,257	6,702,164
Croatia	4,513,641	3,191,177
Montenegro ²	0	2,162,812
Serbia ²	24,918,958	20,956,650
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,901,288	3,085,829
Sub-total South-Eastern Europe	45,141,536	36,833,522
Bulgaria	1,042,971	846,372
Cyprus	838,791	710,813
Czech Republic	927,603	420,643
Hungary	2,364,094	2,060,516
Poland	955,036	807,938
Romania	1,092,737	979,681
Slovakia	762,151	496,666
Slovenia	380,121	194,000
Turkey	7,065,521	6,716,171
Regional activities ³	300,000	240,000
Sub-total Central Europe and the Baltic States	15,729,025	13,472,800
Austria	1,425,580	903,189
Belgium	3,352,605	3,135,633
France	2,286,391	2,586,052
Germany	2,203,919	2,287,121
Greece	1,589,106	1,055,939
Ireland	640,596	622,061
Italy	2,519,308	2,583,528
Malta	55,235	35,320
Portugal	64,600	51,679
Spain	925,853	978,285
Sweden	1,964,978	1,712,091
Switzerland	694,874	653,170
United Kingdom	1,620,742	1,499,071
Sub-total Western Europe	19,343,787	18,103,139
Total Europe	110,157,926	95,491,473

¹ Includes activities in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

² In 2006, UNHCR's activities in Montenegro, amounting to USD 2,387,055, are included in the budget for Serbia.

³ Includes promotion of refugee law.

Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets 2000 - 2007



Note: The figures for 2000 to 2005 represent the final revised Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets as presented in the Global Reports 2000-2005. For 2006, the revised Annual and Supplementary Programme Budgets as at 1 September 2006 have been used. For 2007, the initial ExCom-approved Annual Programme Budget has been used.