

Europe



FOREWORD

The protection environment for refugees and other people of concern varies widely throughout Europe. Divergences with international standards coupled with restrictive asylum policies in some States persist and contribute to irregular onward movements within Europe. Negative, even discriminatory, political discourse in several countries hampers healthy and results-focused policy development. With 85% of refugees under UNHCR's mandate in developing regions, insufficient support to host countries and lack of durable solutions contribute to movements towards and within the continent. In their quest for protection, many continue to attempt the increasingly perilous journey across the Mediterranean.

As of the end of 2018, Europe at large is host to more than 5.2 million refugees, Turkey remaining the largest host country with more than 3.9 million refugees. As the conflict in Ukraine remains unresolved, protracted large-scale displacement persists, with 1.5 million internally displaced.

Discussions on refugees and migrants continue to occupy a central place in the European political and electoral arena. However, public debates mostly fail to result in concrete solutions which are in line with European values and traditions of solidarity and responsibility. Political divisiveness and toxic rhetoric create an environment of fragility for refugees and other people of concern and in many countries, refugees speak of a growing climate of distrust and even fear.

Disembarkation of 58 people rescued by the Aquarius, Malta.

Notwithstanding, Europe and European citizens have also shown remarkable support to refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly at the community and municipal levels where numerous acts of solidarity and generosity take place. Many States and leaders also continue to uphold high standards of asylum policies and systems as well as generous solidarity measures towards refugees and host communities, both at home and globally.

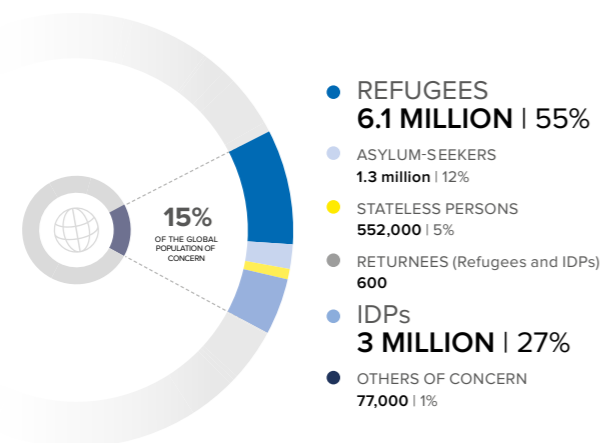
In Europe, UNHCR will continue to promote the adoption of viable and efficient asylum measures that can lead a commonly-managed system of protection based on principles of solidarity. New collaborations and partnerships should be encouraged to achieve comprehensive solutions for people of concern. In particular, well-designed financial investments and political commitments will also be required to support host communities but also peace and stability in the regions of origin and transit.

Pascale Moreau

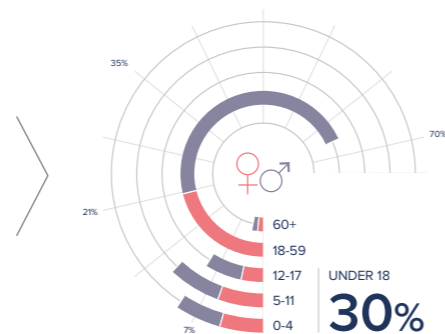
Director of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Europe



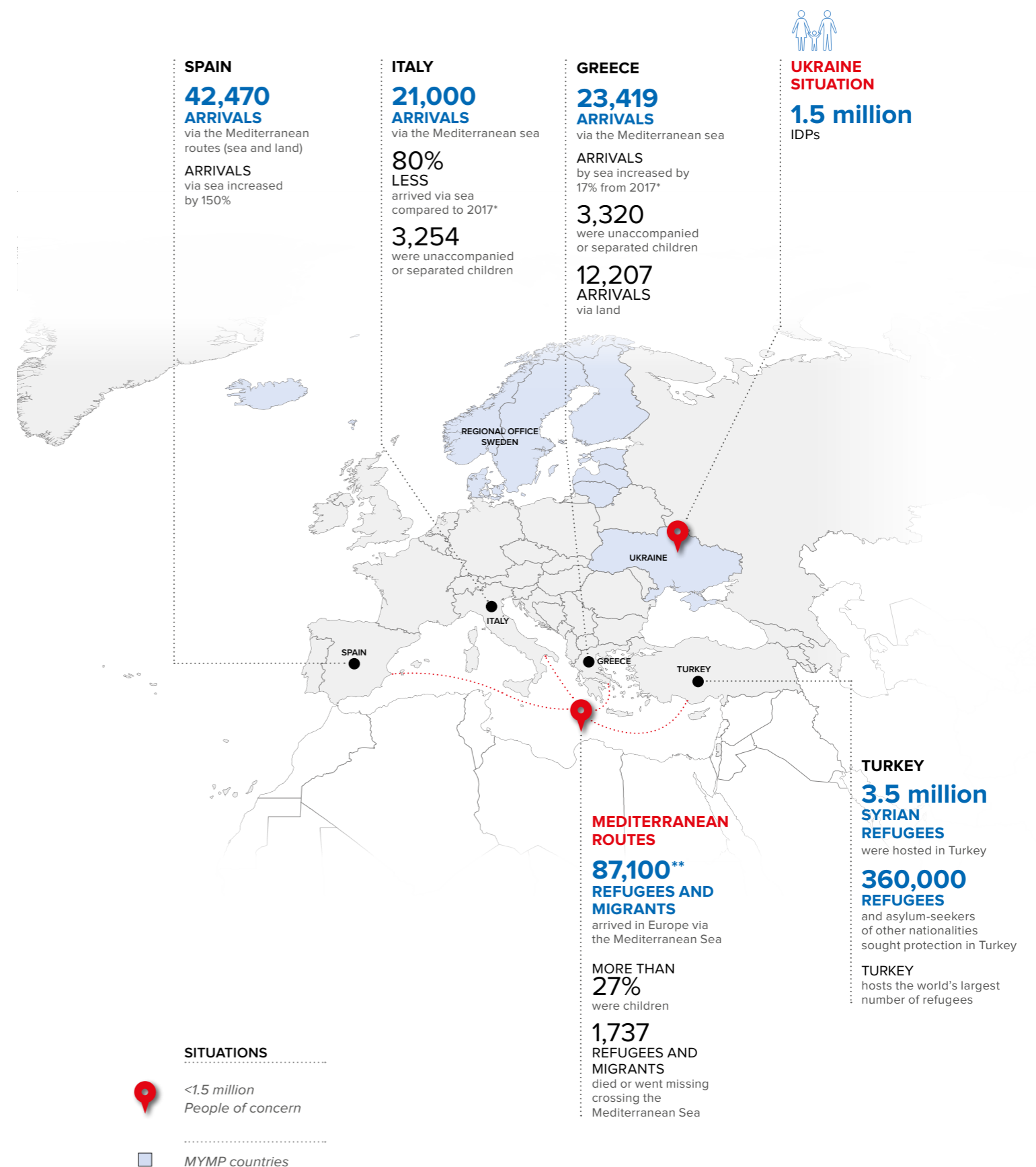
11 MILLION
PEOPLE OF CONCERN IN EUROPE



AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS



Official population figures as of January 2018



* 2018 figures are compared against the same period for 2017.
** Includes sea arrivals to Cyprus and Malta.

Population figures for the situations on this map are the most up-to-date as of September 2018.

MAJOR SITUATIONS

104,300
refugees and
migrants had
arrived in Europe
by September
2018.

By September 2018, 104,300 refugees and migrants had arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea or over land. Of those who arrived, 27% were children and 16% were women. More than 330,000 first-time asylum applications were received in the European Union (EU).

Europe refugee situation

Thousands of people continued to try to reach Europe in search of safety in 2018, along with many others traveling for different reasons, including economic and educational opportunities. Spain has become the primary entry point for those crossing the Mediterranean Sea with some 42,470 arrivals in 2018. While sea arrivals increased by 150% in Spain, overall in the Mediterranean, there were 30% fewer compared to 2017. The drop is due primarily to new measures targeting irregular migration in the central Mediterranean, further restrictions on the work of NGOs involved in search and rescue operations,

and limited opportunities for refugees and migrants rescued at sea to be disembarked in places of safety.

In Spain, UNHCR will strengthen its operational involvement following increased sea arrivals and support the government in addressing existing gaps in reception capacity. In collaboration with the authorities, the Office will provide guidance to ensure sufficient and adequate accommodation for asylum-seekers and refugees, with particular attention to people with specific needs. Furthermore, UNHCR will help to establish an outreach system to identify protection gaps and refer identified cases to relevant services.

Arrivals to the Greek islands continued and led to severe overcrowding in reception centres, where people stayed for months in appalling conditions. While continuing its process of transition, UNHCR will support the accommodation scheme and related services, as well as cash-based assistance, while transfers from the islands to the mainland and related

transportation activities will be handed over to the Government, as planned. Building on the progress made in case management and protection responses, particularly for unaccompanied and separated children, UNHCR will support the strengthening of the guardianship system, alternative care, and prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with the inter-agency coordination forum. The Office will also support the design of integration policies for people of concern in the country.

In Italy, the current asylum processing and reception capacities remain overstretched due to a significant increase in asylum applications over the last two years. UNHCR will continue to maintain its engagement in responding to the specific needs of asylum seekers, in particular survivors of SGBV, arbitrary detention, severe physical maltreatment and torture, as well as people with disabilities. In 2019, the Office will engage in community-based protection interventions and strengthen communication with communities to prevent SGBV and make protection services available to SGBV survivors and unaccompanied or separated children.

Mixed movements continue in Central Europe, albeit at a slower pace than in previous years, due to increased physical and legal restrictions that often push refugees and migrants towards unsafe routes. As collective expulsions continue to be reported throughout the region, UNHCR and its partners will work to strengthen asylum systems where possible

and provide protection to the most vulnerable people of concern, including unaccompanied and separated children, and survivors of SGBV.

In South-Eastern Europe, UNHCR will strengthen its protection monitoring in implementing international standards and corresponding national policies and procedures, including adequate reception and referral systems, with a particular focus on protecting children, survivors of SGBV, and other vulnerable groups. While coordinating with key stakeholders, UNHCR will develop and roll out a cross-regional strategy to address the creation of an environment that enables refugees and other people in need to seek and find protection where they are and to be integrated into national social service schemes. UNHCR will strategically engage with governments to advocate durable solutions for internally displaced people and vulnerable returnees.

Governments in North and Western Europe continue to make significant investments in programmes for social integration and refugees' inclusion. UNHCR will continue to focus on the promotion of such systems and to advocate refugee integration and other durable solutions. The Office will pursue efforts to ensure efficient and effective access to asylum, such as systematizing and strengthening monitoring and data collection capacities, supporting national legislative developments and through strategic judicial engagement.



Eritrean teen finds harmony after desperate journey to Europe

"In some hangars in Libya they would let us sing, in whispers. [...] In others, everything was forbidden. Thanks to the music, I kept my hopes up along my terrible journey," said 16-year-old Kokob*, who found solace in music and safety in Europe after a narrow escape from Libya.

A new report from UNHCR shows that while the total number of people arriving in Europe has fallen, the rate of deaths has risen sharply, particularly for those crossing via the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, often after a harrowing overland journey.



Kokob looks out from the balcony of a reception centre for unaccompanied girls in Pozzallo, near the southern tip of Sicily.

© UNHCR/Rafaela Rotundo

*Name changed for protection purposes.

90%
of refugees
in Turkey live in
urban settings.

Over 3.5 million Syrian refugees have found safety in Turkey, along with 360,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries. With 90% of refugees living in urban settings, UNHCR will continue to advocate and support their inclusion into national systems by strengthening cooperation with line ministries and institutions at national, provincial and local levels, and by providing technical and capacity development support. UNHCR will also promote protection-sensitive border management and access to protection for people of concern, including by improving access to information and legal assistance.

In all these regions, more concerted efforts will be made to diversify and multiply partnerships, focusing on municipalities, cities, private sector actors and ensuring that refugees and other people of concern are given a voice.

Ukraine situation



Approximately 1.5 million people remain internally displaced in Ukraine and many residents of non-government-controlled areas are expected to continue to commute

across the line of contact to meet their basic needs. Challenges will persist in securing protection and durable solutions for IDPs and other conflict-affected populations, particularly for those with specific needs. Freedom of movement and humanitarian access will likely continue to be curtailed. UNHCR will continue to promote measures to facilitate and expedite crossings, working closely with community-based organizations to support IDPs and people at risk.

REGIONAL STRATEGY

In 2019, UNHCR will continue to support governments throughout Europe in maintaining access to effective protection regimes by advocating the rights of asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons. The Office will seek to raise public awareness across Europe to help integrate refugees in their new communities. UNHCR will also continue providing support to European States on reception management, the identification of people with special needs, prevention and response to SGBV, and national child protection systems.

Safeguarding asylum space and providing appropriate reception conditions

In 2019, UNHCR will work closely with governments and other partners to enhance response capacity and contingency planning, particularly regarding reception arrangements. Strategic operational engagement in Europe will be maintained, including efforts to establish a better evidence-base for protection interventions and to strengthen communication with local communities to enhance prevention and response to SGBV. To improve prospects for refugees' integration and for child protection, UNHCR will explore new opportunities to collaborate with governments, local authorities, NGOs, the private sector, and national and international development actors.

The Office will collaborate with governments and partners to consolidate the progress made in improving conditions for people of concern in mainland Greece and in Turkey. An example of such collaborative efforts are the urban accommodation programme and the cash assistance scheme in Greece.

These provide direct and much-needed support to asylum-seekers and promote self-reliance.

In the Western Balkans, UNHCR will pursue a regional strategy to support the authorities' efforts towards building the capacity of asylum systems, communicating with communities to ensure that those who need protection seek it where they are and contributing to the development of appropriate reception conditions. The protection environment in Eastern Europe will be strengthened through the continuation of quality regional activities and strategic protection engagement, focusing on particularly vulnerable groups.

Monitoring practices at the borders of Europe will be continued, particularly in the Western Balkans and around the Mediterranean coast, to ensure that protection measures and sensitive border management are in place and that people who may be in need of international protection have access to territory and asylum procedures. UNHCR will work closely with local authorities, supporting them in strengthening their reception capacities and reinforcing the identification and referral of people with specific needs, using methodologies adapted to a context of mixed migration and onward movement context.

Building and maintaining fair and effective asylum and protection systems

Efforts to improve the current European Union asylum law, through the reform of the Common European Asylum System, remain challenging, particularly to the establishment of solidarity measures. While several States focus on border management, admissibility and

return, UNHCR will continue to stress the importance of access to territory and asylum procedures coupled with responsibility-sharing and increasing efforts to expand the availability of safe and legal pathways. As part of its efforts to propose concrete responses, in 2018, jointly with IOM, UNHCR proposed a regional disembarkation mechanism for the Mediterranean basin. Efforts towards increasing search-and-rescue capacities and ensuring predictable disembarkation will continue. Similarly, advocacy towards the adoption of accelerated and simplified procedures to process asylum claims will also be pursued.

In the Western Balkans, with the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, together with the European Asylum Support Office, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and IOM, UNHCR will play an integral role in building the capacity of governments to manage protection challenges in mixed movements and ensuring functional asylum and migration systems.

Balancing national security considerations with relevant provisions in international refugee law remains challenging. In Eastern Europe, the quality initiative (QIEE) has been successful in enhancing States' asylum capacity and fostering closer relations between UNHCR and the authorities in six targeted countries. This initiative will be vital to ensuring access to territory and quality asylum procedures. In 2019, UNHCR will build on its recent assessments to guide the development of the QIEE's work to appropriately respond to the identified gaps in asylum systems.

The Instrument
for Pre-Accession
Assistance



UNHCR estimates there are more than **550,000** stateless in Europe.

Securing durable solutions

In line with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the global compact on refugees, UNHCR will call on European States to demonstrate solidarity with those countries hosting the majority of the world's refugees. It will also advocate more resettlement and family reunification opportunities.

Recalling that 1.4 million refugees worldwide are in need of resettlement, UNHCR advocates for a more diversified resettlement base and more places, specifically targeting the most vulnerable.

UNHCR will also urge European States to develop complementary pathways of admission to supplement resettlement places. A number of European States have already demonstrated their capacity to pilot successful initiatives such as community sponsorship programmes and student scholarship schemes, or are in the process of exploring such possibilities. UNHCR will support such efforts under the framework of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, among others.

The Office will continue to advocate expanded access to family reunification for people in need of international protection. More family reunification opportunities would provide an additional safe pathway to Europe and reduce reliance on smugglers. UNHCR will campaign for the removal of legal and practical obstacles to family reunification, such as limits on the eligibility of spouses and unmarried adults, short application time limits, a lack of information and assistance in complex administrative procedures, difficulties in accessing travel documents, and prohibitive travel costs.

Preventing and resolving statelessness

As 2019 marks the mid-point of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, additional efforts will be made to find solutions for more than 550,000 stateless in Europe. UNHCR will step up its technical assistance to governments as they seek to close existing gaps in nationality laws by introducing safeguards that prevent statelessness at birth and later in life. Concerted efforts will continue to confirm the nationality of people who are entitled to access civil registration and documentation but have so far been unable to obtain proof of nationality, particularly in South-East Europe.

UNHCR will collaborate with the OSCE in building on two joint study visits aimed at addressing statelessness among the Roma people, which took place in 2017-2018 under the OSCE-UNHCR cooperation. At the same time, UNHCR will collaborate with governments and national institutions to improve the identification of stateless persons through the establishment and improvement of existing statelessness determination procedures. This is particularly relevant to identifying and recording statelessness among refugees and migrants arriving in Europe. Efforts will also be made to improve the availability of quantitative and qualitative data on stateless in Europe.

UNHCR will call on States to accede to the UN statelessness conventions, if they have not already done so, and will provide technical assistance in reviewing and aligning national legislation with these international instruments. UNHCR's close collaboration with the European Network on Statelessness will continue at country

and regional levels, including on capacity-building and advocacy efforts with the Council of Europe and European institutions.

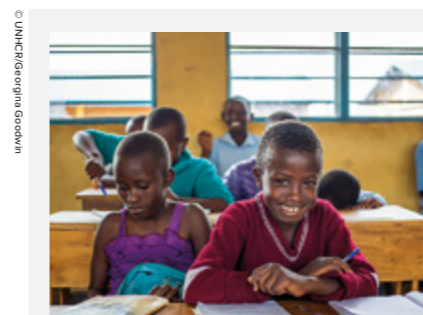
Strengthening external relations and strategic communication in the region

With rising levels of negative public and political rhetoric aimed at refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR will strengthen its public communications approach to address common public attitudes and build positive perceptions of refugees.

UNHCR will continue engaging with actors such as States, municipalities, EU institutions, NGOs, volunteers, private sector actors, academic institutions, as well as refugees themselves to enhance the economic, social, cultural and legal integration of refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe.

New integration laws and strategies recently adopted in Italy and Malta will offer valuable opportunities for UNHCR to collaborate closely with governments on refugee integration. Examples of such cooperation include the employment workshops organized with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to bring employers, government officials and employment agencies together with refugee and migrant communities.

UNHCR and UNDP will continue to co-chair the Issue-Based Coalition on large movements of people, displacement and resilience. This inter-agency platform aims at aligning key advocacy messages related to large displacement of refugees and migrants and advise governments in the development and application of their policies on the "leave no one behind" principle, in moving towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.



Nirinzia, 11, (left) and Muganzifuri, 12, (right) are students at Paysannat L school in Mahama refugee camp, Kirehe, eastern Rwanda.

Postcode Lotteries in the Netherlands and Sweden support education and sustainable livelihoods for refugees

The Dutch and Swedish Postcode Lotteries represent some of the biggest and most important partners to UNHCR globally and are a leading example of how private sector partners can make an impact on the lives of refugees. UNHCR's partnerships with the Dutch and Swedish Postcode Lotteries date back to 2002 and 2009 respectively. The support from both lotteries combines core funding with the chance to work on key initiatives through project-based grants, for instance supporting refugee education and improved sustainability. Millions of refugees benefit from this lifesaving support.

CONSTRAINTS

The protection environment for refugees and migrants varies widely throughout the European region from welcoming environments in some places to ones characterized by negative rhetoric and unwelcoming approaches. Divergences with international standards coupled with restrictive asylum policies in some States persist and contribute to irregular movements within Europe.

UNHCR is concerned by the existing restrictive legislation in many countries, including within the European Union, concerning border controls, asylum procedures and family reunification. This affects the search for common approaches that are needed to increase intra-European solidarity. Further restricting search-and-rescue opportunities and the lack of predictable disembarkation mechanisms can affect the safety of lives. Limited resettlement and family reunification opportunities also contribute to irregular movements and allow criminal networks to continue offering dangerous and irregular passage.

States continue to have fundamentally different views regarding responsibility-sharing for asylum-seekers and refugees, with some explicitly stating their unwillingness to welcome asylum-seekers on their territory, at times responding with xenophobic sentiment. These differences hamper efforts to support those States which, although willing, have asylum systems that are now under severe strain.

In Eastern Europe, security concerns coupled with economic hardship continue to dominate asylum policy and national asylum systems lack the capacity to ensure effective protection for the most vulnerable. In South-Eastern Europe, refugees and migrants are often determined to proceed onward and consider their stay as temporary. The reasons for this vary from a real or perceived impression of their experiences in the country. This approach reinforces the inclination of some States to consider themselves as transit countries instead of countries where refugees could rather find inclusion and opportunities.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Budget

- **\$833.3 million**, accounting for **10%** of UNHCR's overall budget.
- **-5%** compared to 2018 current budget mainly due to an anticipated reduction by 11% in the number of people of concern in Turkey, and of refugees and mixed migratory flows in South-Eastern Europe by 12% in 2019 together with the progressive transfer of accommodations responsibilities to Greek authorities started in 2018.

Regional budget breakdown per Pillar

- **96%** of the Europe budget is allocated to Pillar 1 (refugee programmes).
- 3% to Pillar 4 (IDP projects).
- 1% to pillar 2 (stateless programmes).

Sub-regional needs

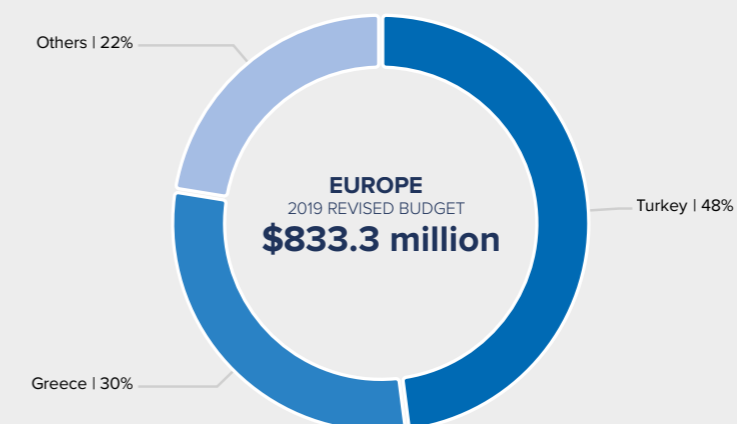
- **54%** of the regional budget (\$452 million) will be allocated to the

Eastern Europe sub-region mainly to cover the needs of people of concern in Turkey and in Ukraine.

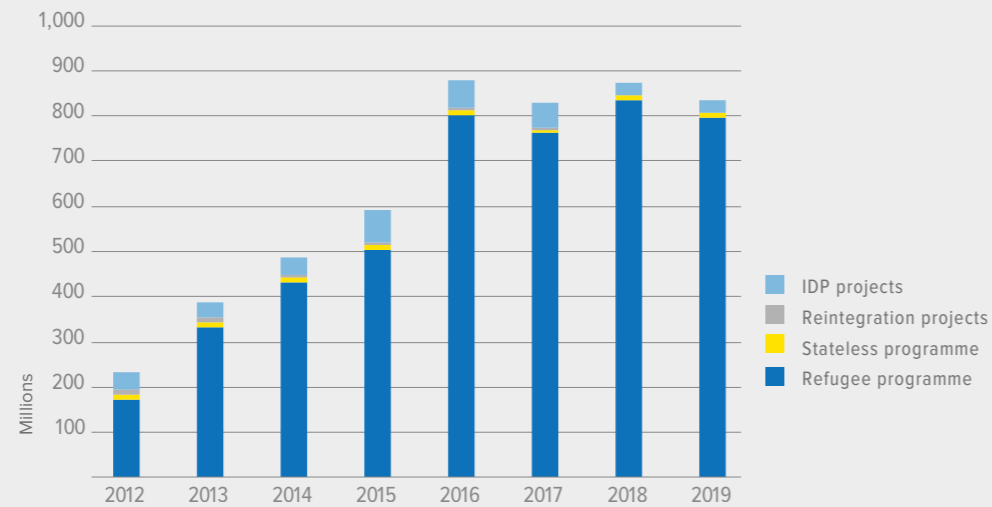
- 41% of the regional budget is planned for the Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe sub-region including \$246 million for the operation in Greece and \$30 million allocated to the UNHCR Regional Office in Italy for needs related to the refugee arrivals using the Mediterranean route.
- 5% is allocated to the South-Eastern Europe programmes mainly to advocate and support improvements to asylum systems.

Major rights groups

- **47%** of the regional budget is planned to cover the activities aiming to create a favourable protection environment (\$73 million) and fair protection processes and documentation (\$314 million).
- 30% of the regional budget (\$246 million) will be allocated to cover the basic needs and essential services for people of concern in Europe in 2019.



BUDGETS FOR EUROPE 2012-2019 | USD millions



* As of 30 June 2018

EUROPE 2019 BUDGET BY RIGHTS GROUP | USD millions



BUDGETS FOR EUROPE | USD

| OPERATION | ALL PILLARS | PILLAR 1 | PILLAR 2 | PILLAR 3 | PILLAR 4 | TOTAL |
|---|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | 2018 Current budget (as of 30 June 2018) | 2019 Refugee programmes | 2019 Stateless programmes | 2019 Reintegration projects | 2019 IDP projects | |
| EASTERN EUROPE | | | | | | |
| Belarus | 1,639,328 | 1,907,754 | 45,000 | - | - | 1,952,754 |
| Georgia Regional Office ¹ | 16,522,700 | 10,984,604 | 647,656 | - | 4,277,545 | 15,909,804 |
| Russian Federation | 6,148,481 | 5,585,930 | 876,487 | - | - | 6,462,417 |
| Turkey | 436,067,478 | 399,574,258 | 5,000 | - | - | 399,579,258 |
| Ukraine | 31,083,924 | 5,156,445 | 910,783 | - | 22,215,123 | 28,282,352 |
| SUBTOTAL | 491,461,911 | 423,208,992 | 2,484,926 | - | 26,492,668 | 452,186,586 |
| NORTHERN, WESTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE | | | | | | |
| Belgium Regional Office ² | 15,204,989 | 19,943,789 | 833,082 | - | - | 20,776,871 |
| France | 3,187,291 | 3,150,763 | 213,710 | - | - | - |
| Germany | 2,963,994 | 2,314,803 | 34,393 | - | - | - |
| Greece | 239,307,212 | 246,581,093 | 30,000 | - | - | 246,611,093 |
| Hungary Regional Office ³ | 15,736,198 | 13,734,845 | 477,248 | 255,925 | - | 14,468,018 |
| Italy Regional Office ⁴ | 30,992,559 | 30,790,600 | 135,927 | - | - | 30,926,527 |
| Sweden Regional Office ⁵ | 5,280,435 | 4,958,452 | 434,803 | - | - | 5,393,255 |
| United Kingdom | 2,350,920 | 1,954,766 | 404,163 | - | - | - |
| Regional activities | 24,156,179 | 14,846,123 | 350,000 | - | - | 15,196,123 |
| SUBTOTAL | 339,179,776 | 338,275,234 | 2,913,325 | 255,925 | - | 341,444,483 |
| SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE | | | | | | |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina Regional Office ⁶ | 45,029,501 | 34,920,930 | 4,769,808 | - | - | 39,690,738 |
| SUBTOTAL | 45,029,501 | 34,920,930 | 4,769,808 | - | - | 39,690,738 |
| TOTAL | 875,671,189 | 796,405,156 | 10,168,059 | 255,925 | 26,492,668 | 833,321,807 |

¹ Includes activities in Armenia and Azerbaijan.
² Includes activities in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the liaison office in Switzerland and, until 2018, in the United Kingdom.
³ Includes activities in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
⁴ Includes activities in Cyprus, Malta and Spain.
⁵ Includes activities in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway.
⁶ Includes activities in Albania, Kosovo (Security Council Resolution 1244 [1999]), Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.