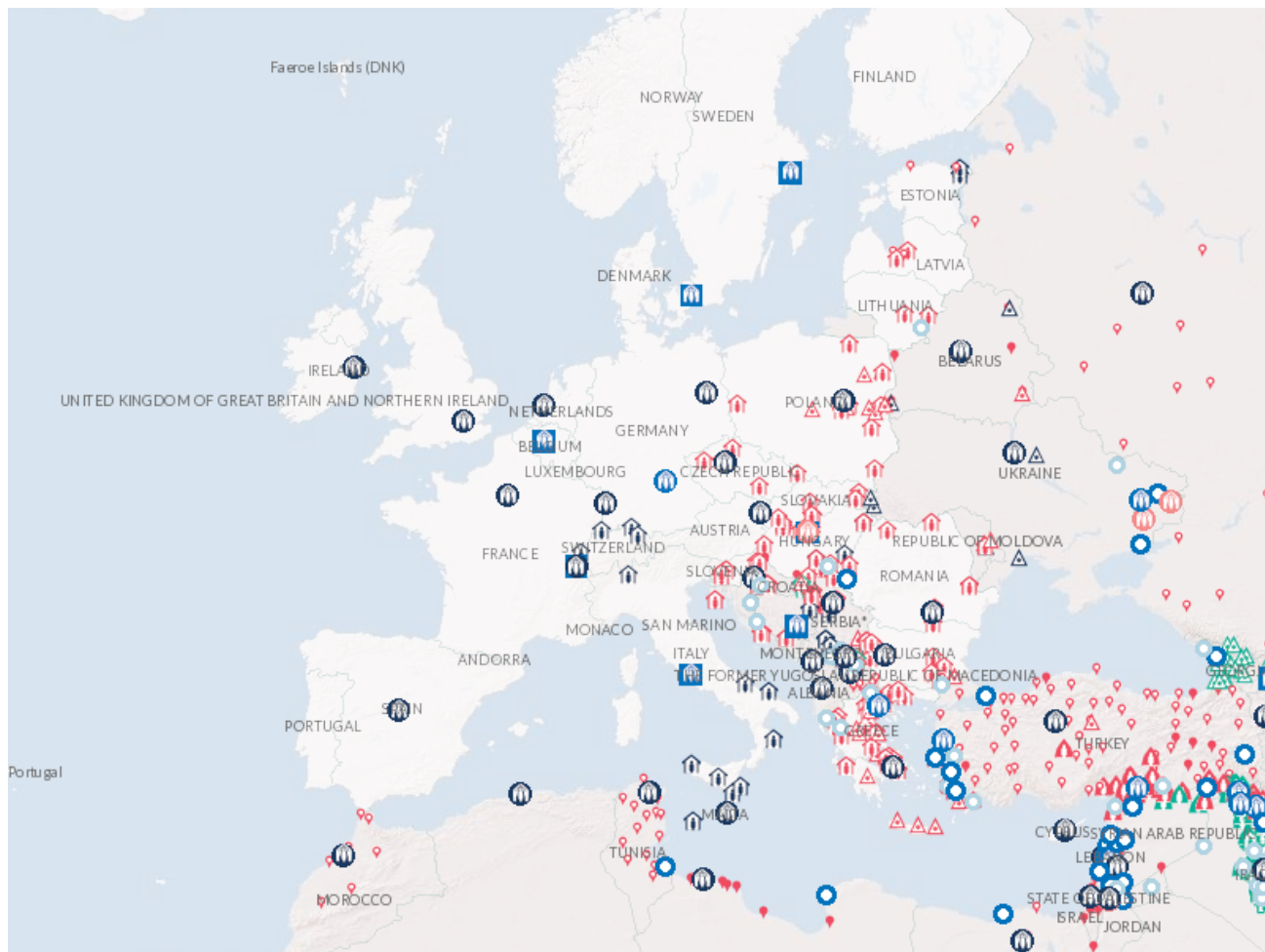
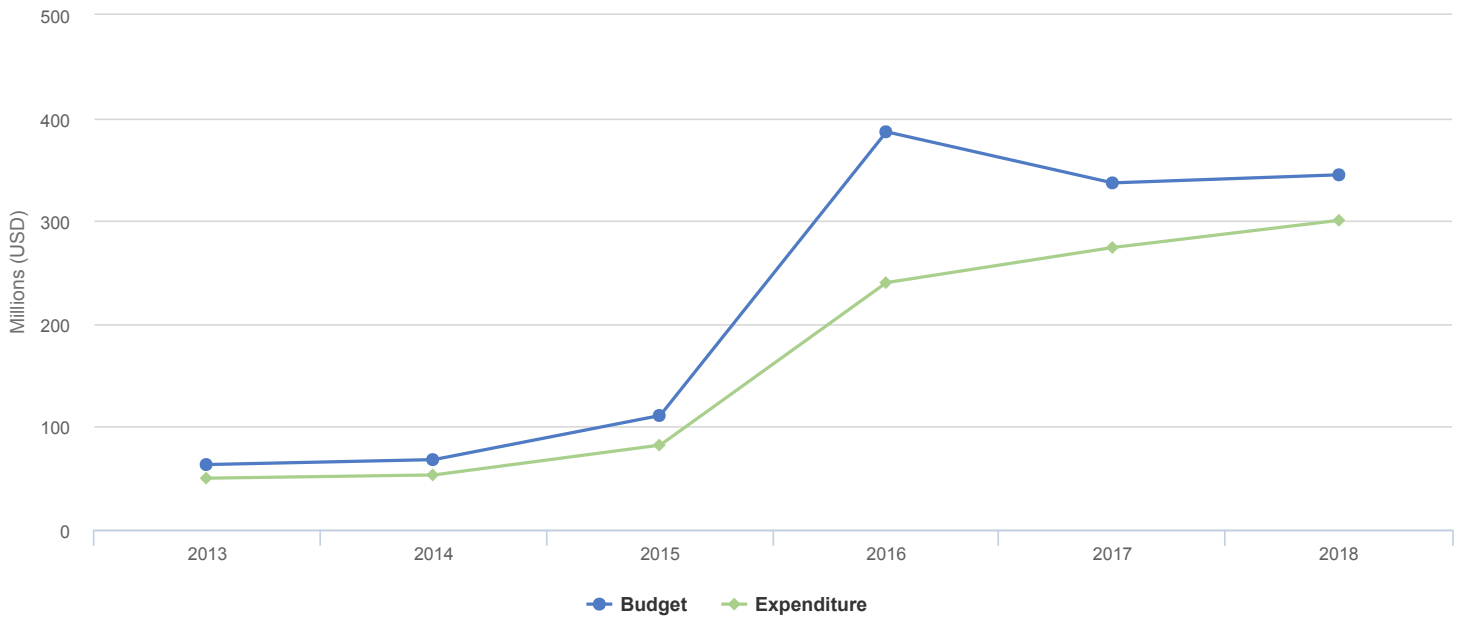


Subregion: Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe

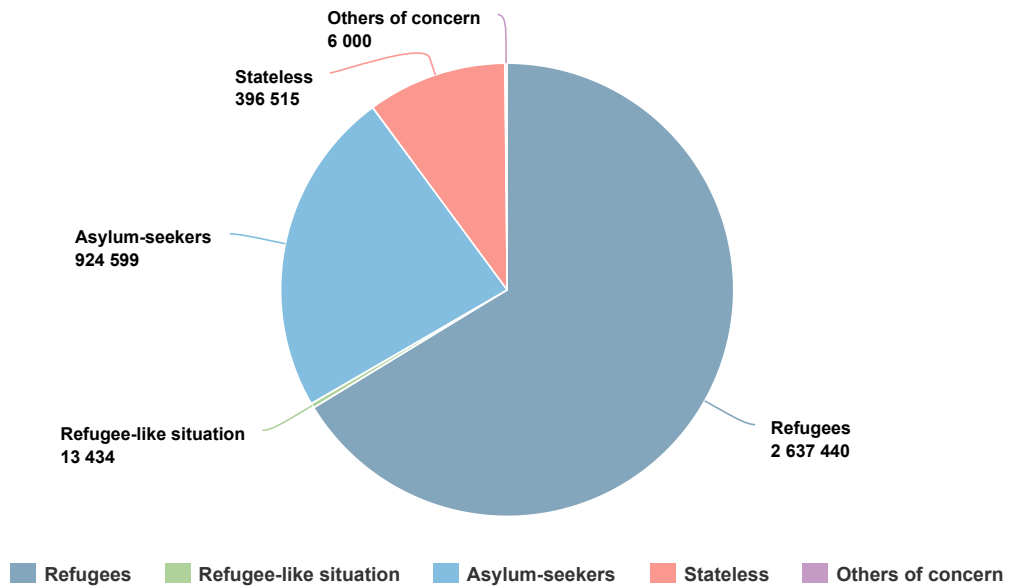
| Albania | Andorra | Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Croatia | Cyprus | Czech Republic | Denmark | Estonia | Finland | France | Germany | Greece | Holy See (the) | Hungary | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Latvia | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Netherlands (the) | Norway | Poland | Portugal | Romania | San Marino | Slovakia | Slovenia | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the) |



Budgets and Expenditure in Subregion Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe



People of Concern - 2018



Response in 2018

In 2018, some 141,500 refugees and migrants arrived to Europe from North Africa and Turkey, the majority to Spain (65,400), Greece (50,500) and Italy (23,400). Overall, the number of arrivals in Europe decreased by 24% compared to 2017, largely due to a reduction in the numbers from North Africa to Italy (80% reduction), although, at the same time, significant increases were reported in the numbers from North Africa to Spain (130% increase) and from Turkey to Greece (70% increase).

Due to the high risks associated with crossing the Mediterranean Sea, it is estimated that close to 2,280 refugees and migrants died in 2018. Most deaths occurred along the route from North Africa to Italy.

During the reporting period, UNHCR's main focus remained on access to territory, acceptable reception conditions and safeguarding asylum space; protection work continued through monitoring to gather evidence, advocacy, legal aid and strategic litigation, public information as well as individual interventions when possible.

Key priorities included the protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and provision and support to national authorities for the identification of and appropriate assistance to other people with specific needs. UNHCR also continued to advocate for an expansion of resettlement programmes and the introduction of other complementary pathways for people of concern.

Operations in 2018

In **Northern Europe**, the overall number of asylum-seekers decreased by almost 20%, due to remaining internal checks at EU borders, strengthened controls at the external borders of the EU and the cooperation between the EU and Libya, Turkey and several African countries.

The roll-out of the multi-year multi-partner strategy led to strengthened cooperation and new partnerships in all priority areas. UNHCR continued to focus on addressing restrictions and advocate for better standards of asylum through training, research, law comments and judicial interventions. UNHCR intervened, among other things, on extensive use of internal flight alternatives (IFA), cessation, recognition rates through quality assessments, and provision of country of origin information (COI), as well as provided technical advice and training that led to improved refugee status determination (RSD). Challenges regarding access to territory were addressed through monitoring visits, training of border guards, litigation and advocacy. Improved quality of legal aid and litigation was achieved through provision of support to lawyers' networks and NGOs to monitor practices, identify cases for strategic litigation and training.

UNHCR engagement in integration matters focused on overall policy as well as legislative proposals and amendments. Available resources required strict prioritization and hampered opportunities to further strengthen legal networks, provide quality legal aid, and pursue judicial interventions.

In **Western Europe**, despite sustained low arrival rates to the EU, the reverberations of the 2015-16 emergency persisted at the political level with the further development of restrictive approaches in some EU member states, resulting in shrinking protection space, including access to territory and disembarkation in situations of rescue at sea.

Protection strategy focused on regional priority areas: improved reception; strengthened SGBV prevention response; protection of children/UASC, improved quality of national asylum procedure, expansion of legal pathways including access to family reunification, integration as well as eradication of statelessness. Strong advocacy efforts were made to support the adoption of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) as well as for the adoption of the Global Refugee Compact.

Available funding, or funding made available late in the year, resulted in gaps in areas such as statelessness, mixed migration, border monitoring, capacity building, quality of asylum procedures, integration, public information campaigns and community mobilization.

Anti-foreigner sentiment remained prevalent in **Central Europe** in 2018 although the number of asylum-seekers continued to decrease and labour markets experienced acute shortages of workers. Several countries persisted in rejecting compulsory solidarity schemes, namely relocation and resettlement, and advocated for preventing arrivals in Europe. Restrictions on family reunification opportunities also had an effect on onward movements to and within Europe. In Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova and Poland, physical and legal barriers continued to be used to deter asylum-seekers, exposing them to serious protection risks such as exploitation by smugglers, unlawful returns and violence by the border police. In this context, integration opportunities remained limited and insufficient to be successful

Against this background, UNHCR drafted and disseminated a number of strategic-direction papers to advance its regional goals such as the regional protection strategy, the regional judicial engagement strategy and a note on child protection.

UNHCR's support for advocacy at country level through engagement with municipalities and private sector facilitated the promotion of access to territory and asylum procedures and respect for the rights of asylum-seekers with specific attention to women and children. As positive

achievements, the exemption from immigration detention was granted to all UASC as of June 2018 in all Central Europe and detailed rules on the application of alternatives to detention were established.

In Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania, strategic litigation interventions complemented advocacy efforts to improve access to the territory and reduce the use of detention, albeit with varying impact on government policies.

Considering the absence of state integration support despite the adoption of Action Plans on Integration of refugees (2015-2020 in Bulgaria and 2017-2019 in Croatia), UNHCR was directly involved in delivering financial or in-kind assistance particularly in Bulgaria and Croatia.

UNHCR's advocacy on statelessness yielded positive results in the sub-region through capacity-building, information and awareness campaigns, trainings and provision of free assistance to persons in need.

Southern Europe

The protection environment significantly changed in **Italy**, leading to the adoption of immigration and security reforms introducing more restrictive policies such as "closed ports" approach and lowered protection standards. In this context, UNHCR adjusted its operational advocacy and strengthened its protection outreach, monitoring and strategic delivery, with particular emphasis on community-based programming and engagement with refugee communities. Thanks to consistent advocacy, UNHCR influenced members of the Parliament to change a few provisions of the new law and leveraged on key partnerships to set-up a comprehensive strategy on its implementation. As a follow-up to the pilot projects introduced in 2017, UNHCR consolidated the partnership with the Ombudsperson for the Rights of the Children by rolling-out innovative participation methodologies and providing visibility at national level to protection gaps faced by UASC.

In **Cyprus**, 2018 was marked by a sharp increase in the number of asylum applications, which strained the country's response capacity and resulted in stricter policies on detention, reception and refugee status qualification. The increased number of asylum applications led to over 10,940 people awaiting a decision on both first and second instances.

UNHCR's enhanced public information interventions yielded positive results when compared to previous years.

With the resumption of sea arrivals from Libya to **Malta** in June, operational activities to respond to the needs of new arrivals increased significantly, including support to the Government with ad hoc transfer arrangements (pre-departure interviews and registration), interpretation support as well as legal information and counselling together with partners. UNHCR also supported the Government in promulgating a Local Integration Charter to link local councils with specific integration benchmarks at the local level.

Spain became the main sea and land entry point of refugees and migrants heading to Europe, with a massive influx of arrivals to the Andalusian coast, 65,400 people in 2018 alone. In consequence, UNHCR further consolidated its protection presence at the main arrival points and its advocacy efforts on the importance of identifying protection and other immediate reception needs, leading to better monitoring of main border entry points, extensive capacity-building for border guards, prevention of refoulement, guaranteed access to asylum procedure and counselling.

2018 Voluntary Contributions to Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe | USD

Earmarking / Donor	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	All pillars	Total
Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe overall				
European Union	910,711	0	0	910,711
Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe overall subtotal	910,711	0	0	910,711
Belgium Regional Office				
Austria	0	0	378,517	378,517
European Union	26,522	0	0	26,522
France	652,047	0	0	652,047
Ireland	267,230	0	0	267,230
Luxembourg	0	0	10,753	10,753
Private donors in France	28,409	0	0	28,409
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	322,617	0	0	322,617
Belgium Regional Office subtotal	1,296,825	0	389,270	1,686,094
Germany				
Germany	22,222	0	663,569	685,791
Germany subtotal	22,222	0	663,569	685,791
Greece				
European Union	231,345,081	0	0	231,345,081
International Organization for Migration	99,767	0	0	99,767
Private donors in France	341,297	0	0	341,297
Private donors in Greece	23,148	0	0	23,148
Private donors in Switzerland	505,051	0	0	505,051
Switzerland	803,213	0	0	803,213
Greece subtotal	233,117,557	0	0	233,117,557
Hungary Regional Office				
Croatia	0	0	12,479	12,479
Czech Republic	0	0	38,100	38,100
European Union	1,008,108	0	0	1,008,108
Hungary	0	0	332,728	332,728
Poland	0	0	87,000	87,000
Romania	0	0	103,521	103,521

Earmarking / Donor	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	All pillars	Total
<i>Hungary Regional Office subtotal</i>	1,008,108	0	573,828	1,581,936
Italy Regional Office				
Italy	8,647,183	0	196,344	8,843,527
Private donors in France	227,531	0	0	227,531
Private donors in Italy	24,691	0	0	24,691
Spain	444,524	0	366,783	811,307
<i>Italy Regional Office subtotal</i>	9,343,929	0	563,127	9,907,056
Regional activities				
Austria	0	0	16,354	16,354
International Organization for Migration	24,948	0	0	24,948
<i>Regional activities subtotal</i>	24,948	0	16,354	41,302
Sweden Regional Office				
Russian Federation	0	200,000	0	200,000
<i>Sweden Regional Office subtotal</i>	0	200,000	0	200,000
Total	245,724,300	200,000	2,206,148	248,130,448

Note: