



KEY FIGURES

615,416

Refugees and migrants have arrived to Europe by sea in 2015 as of 15 October.

3,105

Refugees and migrants estimated to have died / gone missing at sea in 2015.

475,020

Sea arrivals in Greece as of 14 October.

137,500

Sea arrivals in Italy as of 15 October.

143,279

Registered/arrivals in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 19 June to 15 October.

213,929

Registered/arrivals in Serbia as of 15 October.

180,500

Arrivals in Croatia as of 15 October.

403,726

Arrivals in Hungary as of 15 October.

PRIORITIES

- Boost reception capacity and provide emergency assistance in receiving countries through support for States, civil society and local communities.
- Strengthen protection systems and prevent *refoulement* including through presence and capacity building.
- Increase strategic messaging and advocacy to and about people of concern.

EUROPE'S REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE- UPDATE #6

09 - 15 October 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite deteriorating weather conditions, sea arrivals in Greece and onward movement through the Western Balkan continued.
- Transfers and registration processes in several locations were hampered by higher number of arrivals and persons on the move as well as bad weather, leading to tensions in several places, particularly on Lesbos, Croatia and Serbia.
- Hungarian authorities completed the construction of the fence at the border with Croatia and in the transit zones of Beremend and Letenye.
- UNHCR continues to work with governments in different countries impacted by the emergency to improve reception conditions, including by expanding emergency shelter, supporting registration capacity, assisting persons with specific needs and providing information and translation services.
- Preparations for the winter are ongoing in reception facilities and transit sites. Deteriorating weather conditions highlight the urgent need to speed this up.
- On 9 October, a first group of 19 asylum-seekers was relocated from Italy to Sweden under the EU relocation scheme.
- The High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres and other UNHCR senior officials visited Lesbos and Athens from 9 to 12 October.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Persons arriving by sea in Greece originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (69%), Afghanistan (19%) and Iraqi (6%). During the reporting period, 108 persons were rescued and 11 persons died whilst attempting to make the sea journey. Due to several days of bad weather, reception conditions worsened. On Kos and Samos refugees and migrants had to sleep outside in the rain. With increasing arrivals on Lesbos, pressure grew on the already overstretched reception and registration facilities on the island. Violence erupted on 15 October at Moria registration site, resulting in the temporary suspension of registration.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, accompanied by the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, the Director of the Bureau for Europe and other UNHCR senior officials visited Lesbos and Athens from 9 to 12 October to assess the humanitarian response to the Mediterranean crisis and determine how UNHCR can further support those efforts. The next day, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations also visited the border between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Onward movements through the Western Balkans continued, with over 33,100 arrivals in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and some 36,000 entering Serbia during the reporting period. On 12 October, the Serbian Government and UNHCR agreed on a comprehensive plan to improve reception conditions by adapting and expanding emergency shelter and sheltered waiting areas in the One-Stop Centre in Preševo. On 10 October around 1,000 persons got stranded at Berkasovo border crossing with Croatia due to insufficient transportation capacity. UNHCR and partners provided humanitarian aid and medical assistance until the situation was resolved.

Almost 44,400 refugees and migrants entered Croatia from Serbia between 9 and 15 October. The peak of over 21,000 arrivals between 9 and 11 October led to delays in the transfer of refugees and migrants to the Opatovac Transit Centre, causing some tensions. Some border crossings were also reported in Tovarnik.

Hungarian authorities reported over 48,700 arrivals during the reporting period, including around 48,500 from Croatia and 179 from Serbia. UNHCR's access to different parts of the border with Croatia area was restricted during the reporting period, which was resolved on 12 October. Whilst authorities reported nobody applied for asylum in the transit zones of Roszke and Tompa, there are indications that a number of individuals approached the border points but were denied access as only persons with specific needs are admitted to initiate an asylum application. In Hungary, the construction of the Croatia border fence and transit zones at Beremend and Letenye, were completed.

Since 21 September only 28 new arrivals to Slovenia have been reported (as of 15 October). Slovenian authorities continue to prepare registration and reception facilities for a possible influx. The National Security Council expects 4,500-8,000 arrivals a day such scenario. Around 3,000 persons will be able to be processed and registered per day at the Ormoz reception centre, before being transferred to reception facilities.

Refugees and migrants continue to enter Austria from Hungary with more than 40,000 border crossings in the reporting period. Almost all arrivals were transferred to emergency shelters across the country to decongest the border area. The majority has moved on to Germany, however an average of 300 asylum claims have been lodged in Austria per day.

Over 1,800 refugees and migrants arrived by sea in Italy during the reporting period. In September an unusual 40% drop of sea arrivals was observed, compared to September 2014. The main nationalities include Eritreans (27%), Nigerians (14%), Somalis (8%), Sudanese (6%) and Syrians (5%). On 9 October, a first group of 19 asylum seekers was relocated from Italy to Sweden under the EU relocation scheme. The departure of the group officially started the relocation scheme, which foresees the relocation of 160,000 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece. The MoI is in the process of organizing the departure of other groups.

On 15 October, EU Heads of State and Government met as part of the European Council to discuss the migration and refugee emergency, including cooperation with third countries, management of external borders and returns. The Conclusions can be found [online](#). The Conclusions are oriented towards border control, prevention of movements and return. Disappointingly there is little protection focus and no reference to increasing legal avenues for refugees.

Achievements

Protection

Greece

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continued to enhance its presence in Greece. 40 protection staff are positioned on six islands and two areas on the mainland. UNHCR established a permanent presence in Molivos (North Lesvos). Through its partner METAction, UNHCR provides 34 interpreters to support the different processes.
- Information sessions on international protection and asylum are conducted on Lesvos, Kos, Samos, Leros, Chios, Rhodes, Evros and Eidomeni, targeting 100% of refugees and migrants (approx. 7,000 persons a day).
- Following UNHCR's advocacy efforts on Kos, an agreement with authorities was reached for an alternative to detention of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), through daily care and accommodation arrangements facilitated by UNHCR's partner Praksis.
- UNHCR facilitated trainings on psychological first aid with participants from NGOs, volunteers and municipalities on Chios, Samos and Athens. On Kos, a training was provided to volunteers and local organizations on humanitarian principles, UNHCR's role and responsibilities.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The assignment of Moria as the only registration centre on Lesvos generated serious challenges. Capacity needs to be enhanced in registration, crowd control systems, and the identification of persons with specific needs.

- Serious gaps remain in the identification and protection of UASC. There is a lack of appropriate shelters on almost all islands, resulting children to remain in police custody in substandard conditions before being transferred to open reception facilities in the mainland.
- There is a need to improve the identification and assistance to individuals with specific needs, including survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). UNHCR and other actors are supporting the authorities to address this issue. The establishment of private counseling rooms in Lesvos and Eidomeni are positive steps in this regard.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR's partner, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), provided legal advice to over 100 representatives of refugee groups at the Vinojug reception centre.
- NGO La Strada provided almost 700 women and 1,500 children with psychosocial support in UNICEF Child Friendly Spaces at the Vinojug reception centre.
- Over 190 persons with specific needs were assisted by MYLA and La Strada.
- UNHCR intervened with authorities to prevent the abuse of refugees and migrants by illegal vendors. As a result, the Ministry of Interior (Moi) restricted the access of illegal vendors to the site.
- ICRC started the implementation of family restoration activities in cooperation with the Red Cross. A mobile Internet connection and a phone are available for refugees and migrants to contact their family members.
- In close cooperation with UNHCR Greece, several families who were temporarily separated were reunited.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Trains continued to be dangerously overcrowded and some railway personnel are overcharging refugees and migrants. UNHCR is advocating with authorities at the highest level to address this.
- Assistance of persons with mobility deficiency requires further improvement.

Serbia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continued to identify and prioritize individuals with specific needs for fast track registration and assistance.
- In coordination with the Red Cross, family reunification service is now available at the Preševo Centre and at the Berkasovo/Bapska exit point with Croatia. At least 20 families were reunited by UNHCR, the Red Cross, the Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT), Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), DRC and Child Welfare Services.
- UNHCR's partner Asylum Info Centre provided a group of UASC located in a park in Belgrade with food, warm clothes and shoes. They referred them to the UNICEF's child friendly space and to the City Centre for Social Work.
- UNHCR and the Head of the Social Service in Preševo agreed to establish a team to enhance the support provided to UASC. UNHCR will provide training to Social Service staff.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Registration at the Preševo Centre faced delays due to technical difficulties with the server and power cuts. UNHCR is assessing the grid and seeks further support to secure additional power back-ups for the site.
- The capturing of accurate registration data, such children's age and protection need, can be improved. UNHCR continues to support the police in improving the quality and efficiency of registration.
- Cold and wet weather, and floods over the weekend of 10 and 11 October, led to frustration and tension amongst refugees in entry and exit waiting areas.

Hungary

Achievements and Impact

- After access restrictions during several days, UNHCR resumed monitoring at all border crossing points with Croatia and Serbia and is regularly present in transit zones (Roszke, Tompa, Beremend, and Letenye) on 12 October—providing information and support to persons with specific needs.
- UNHCR, the Red Cross, the Menedek Association, and volunteers are working to reunite families on the move.
- UNHCR and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) have made several monitoring visits to prison facilities, where some refugees and migrants are being held due to lack of capacity in asylum detention centres. Information was provided to over 100 persons regarding the national detention system and the possibility to apply for asylum.

- HHC is bringing the case of two asylum applicants to the European Court of Human Rights on the grounds that Serbia should not be considered a 'safe' third country.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Cold and rainy weather are creating additional challenges for persons crossing the green border at Zakany.
- The use of detention for people crossing the border irregularly remains a serious concern.
- There is a lack of interpreters at all border points.
- No mechanism or capacity to prioritize persons with specific needs is in place at the border with Croatia, with only UNHCR and a few local partners present at the main crossing points in Zakany and Beremend.
- UASC are among those with the most pressing needs. Several facilities provide accommodation and support to UASC, but further capacity is required including counseling, interpretation, social support and family reunification.

Croatia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR maintained its 24h presence at Bapska crossing point and Opatovac Transit Centre, to support authorities with the identification of over 200 persons with specific needs. UNHCR continued to provide information about the process at the Opatovac Transit Centre.
- Per day on average, UNHCR identified seven cases of separated families and referred them to the Red Cross for family reunification.
- The first coordination meeting on UASC chaired by the Assistant Minister of Social Policy and Youth Affairs was convened with participation of UNICEF, UNHCR and the Red Cross.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The number of staff and volunteers for the identification and assistance of people with specific remains insufficient in light of the needs. UNHCR, UNICEF, the Red Cross, Save the Children and Magna agreed to allocate two additional staff per organization for this purpose.
- No standard operating procedures on the identification of person with specific needs are in place. The MoI asked UNHCR to prepare a draft protocol, to be signed by the Ministry and UNHCR.
- While mechanisms are in place to examine the needs and best interests of UASC, their identification remains a challenge due to number of arrivals, their short stay during transit and a lack of documentation.

Italy

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR assisted the disembarkation of over 1,800 persons arriving in six different rescue operations in Sicily and Apulia. 100% of the arrivals benefitted from information sessions on international protection and asylum.
- Five UNHCR child protection experts continue to work with authorities to promote good practices on Best Interest Assessment and Determination and support the provision of information to UASC in reception facilities.
- UNHCR undertook 14 monitoring visits to reception facilities, to strengthen the capacity of authorities to identify protection needs and gaps.
- UNHCR and OHCHR are jointly facilitating pre-deployment trainings on human rights and international protection, for search and rescue personnel operating under the EUNAVFOR MED operation. So far, 35 British and French personnel have successfully participated in the trainings.
- EASO, with the support of four dedicated UNHCR staff, provided information sessions to candidates for relocation who are being transferred from Lampedusa to Sicily.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR advocates for structured information services for sea arrival entry points and areas.
- There is a lack of systematic referral mechanisms for people with specific needs, particularly for individuals suffering from trauma, victims of trafficking, SGBV and torture.
- UNHCR continues to advocate for standard operating procedures to enhance cooperation amongst different actors and the standardization of identification of persons who wish to apply for asylum following disembarkation.
- Basic services available in reception facilities should be standardized and improved, in particular legal counselling services and the identification and referral of people with specific needs.

- UASC of certain nationalities, particularly Eritreans, Syrians and Somalis, continue to consider Italy as a transit country, many avoid being identified putting them at greater risk and without access to specialized services.
- The start of the relocation scheme highlights the urgent need to adjust post-disembarkation and reception procedures based on the distinction between relocation candidates, asylum-seekers and those who do not wish to apply for asylum. Some tensions were reported in Lampedusa between groups not eligible for relocation.

Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support

Greece

Achievements and Impact

- Some improvements were reported regarding temporary accommodation arrangements. For example on Leros, conditions improved with the installation of additional toilets, showers, water tanks and lighting. Also, 54 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) and a rub hall were set up on Lesvos. UNHCR reached agreement with local authorities to improve reception capacity on the small islands of Kalymnos and Oinousses.
- Major improvements in garbage management were made in Eidomeni thanks to close monitoring, awareness campaigns and the provision of additional bins by the municipality.
- Over 1,400 sleeping mats, 4,000 packets of High Energy Biscuits (HEB), 1,800 blankets, 90 sleeping bags, 290 hygiene kits, 100 baby kits and 300 solar lamps were distributed on the islands.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Many locations still lack basic assistance systems. The existence of over 44 arrival points in Greece, challenges the effective provision of humanitarian assistance.
- UNHCR is concerned by the deteriorating reception conditions whilst arrivals continue, weather conditions worsen and limited shelter is available. Many people are sleeping rough on Kos, Samos, Lesvos and Chios.
- Food distributions on Samos and Chios are not sustainable as they are undertaken only on a temporary basis by the NGOs Apostoli and International Orthodox Christian Charities.
- In all locations, the coordination and management of distributions need further improvements, to ensure a better coverage and enhanced implementation. Capacity building, such as on-the-spot trainings, need to be reinforced.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Achievements and Impact

- In one of the three rub halls at the Vinojug reception centre, flooring and seating was completed and lighting increased. UNHCR and the police are developing evacuation and fire prevention plans for the centre.
- UNHCR distributed around 1,900 blankets and collected several hundreds of blankets left behind by refugees and migrants for washing, to be reused for newcomers.
- The Red Cross, and the NGOs Nun, Legis, Agape, ProCredit, Dorcas, Samaritan's Purse and Kaliri distributed over 23,600 food parcels/sandwiches, 100 hygiene kits, 11,300 liters of water, and 1,600 back packs at the Vinojug site.
- The Red Cross assisted almost 4,300 individuals with medication and provided over 600 medical interventions up to 14 October. Around 50 persons were referred to the Ministry of Health (MoH).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The cleaning of the Vinojug site remained unsatisfactory during the reporting period, visible in the dirty rub halls.
- The preparations of the site for the winter are underway and heaters were procured for the rub halls. UNHCR is working with the national electricity company and the authorities to address the limited electricity capacity.

Serbia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, the HCIT, World Vision, MSF, Red Cross, WAHA, Czech volunteers, the Red Cross and the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) continued to provide assistance and distribute food and NFIs.
- 3,000 raincoats, 420 blankets were distributed in Miratovac/ Preševo and 4,000 raincoats, 3,060 blankets, and 2,450 kg of HEB at Berkasovo exit point to Croatia.
- Two rub halls were set up at Miratovac/Preševo. The SCRM set up five tunnels tents at the Berkasovo border crossing point, which can accommodate up to 800 persons and provide shelter from the rain.
- Preparation for the winter and improvement of the Refugee Aid Points and the Preševo Centre are ongoing with the installation of rub halls, plastic sheeting shades and graveling of the muddy ground.

- In Belgrade, UNHCR doctors and Community Health Centres provided medical assistance to refugees staying in parks in the city centre.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Additional clothes and footwear are needed to endure wet and cold conditions, in particular for children.
- The winter preparations and improvements for shelter taking place in Preševu need to be finalized urgently.
- Stocks of winterization and emergency shelter items need to be augmented.
- The coordination in the distribution of relief items should be strengthened at local and central level.

Hungary

Achievements and Impact

- The Hungarian Red Cross, Act-alliance, the Sovereign Order of Malta, the Hungarian Interchurch Aid and volunteers continue to provide water, food and clothes at main border crossing points (Beremend, Zakany and Hegyeshalom).
- The Hungarian Army provided some basic medical care to new arrivals at Zakany.
- Migration Aid volunteers arranged transportation for some persons with physical mobility constraints between Hegyeshalom train station and the Austrian border crossing.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Assistance capacity at border crossings remains insufficient to cover all needs. The short transit time adds to the challenge in providing assistance and identifying protection needs.
- There is no regular first aid/medical capacity at the border points with Croatia.
- Food is still in short supply and most new arrivals only receive water and dry snacks during the transit, for a train journey that can last 10-12h due to delays.

Croatia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR distributed blankets and raincoats to children and persons with specific needs at Bapska border crossing.
- The Croatian Red Cross and volunteers provided food, water and UNHCR blankets at the border with Serbia.
- UNHCR distributed 9,000 raincoats and over 10,000 blankets. At the Opatovac Transit Centre, the Red Cross distributed water and food and, together with UNHCR, it provided children with clothes.
- Nine tents have been erected at Bapska border crossing. An additional tent was set up at the Opatovac Transit Centre providing shelter from the rain.
- The MoH assisted around 700 medical cases during the reporting period at Opatovac, Bapska and Tovarnik.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- With the worsening weather conditions, warm clothes and shoes are increasingly needed.
 - The tented accommodation make the Opatovac Transit Centre not suitable for the winter season. A new site, better equipped for winter conditions, has been identified in Slavonski Brod to replace Opatovac.
 - UNHCR raised concerns with authorities that the Red Cross is no longer being present at Bapska border crossing.
 - Distribution of food and clothing was disrupted due to overcrowding at Opatovac between 9 and 11 October and limited presence of volunteers during the night. Long queues were reported. To respond to increasing demands, the Red Cross has requested all NGOs to provide services 24h a day.
- Skin related diseases among persons on the move have increased. Several cases of hypothermia were also reported. The MoH will establish additional medical presence in Opatovac Transit Centre by adding three heated containers, but has declined to organize mobile teams to patrol the centre.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR operates closely with the European Commission and relevant EU Agencies, including FRONTEX and EASO.
- Of particular note is the impressive role of civil society and volunteers in the different countries, in supporting and assisting refugees and migrants.

- In Italy, UNHCR carries out its protection activities through direct implementation under the overall coordination of the Italian MoI. Key partners include IOM, Save the Children, and the Red Cross. For relocation related support, UNHCR operates in close cooperation with EASO.
- UNHCR's protection and emergency assistance in Greece are delivered through several partners including the Greek Refugee Council, Praksis, ICMC, METAction, Ecumenical Refugee Council, MoI, Administrative Reconstruction, Hellenic League for Human Rights and the Hellenic Theatre Drama & Education Network. UNHCR cooperates closely with volunteer groups, IOM, MSF, MDM, IRC, the Hellenic Red Cross, Apostoli/IOCC and others. In line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), UNHCR supports the Government's coordination efforts at central and local levels, facilitating general and sectoral coordination meetings on every island.
- In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in line with the RCM, UNHCR supports the MoI and its Crisis Management Team, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the two municipalities. UNHCR is closely working with Help the Refugees in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, Kaliri, MYLA, Nun, JRS, Operation Mercy, Dorcas, SoS Children's Village, Hilal, Samaritan's Purse, Caritas, Agape, People in Need, the Red Cross, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO.
- In Serbia, UNHCR and the Government agreed on enhancing coordination structures, reception conditions and emergency shelter plans.
- In Hungary, UNHCR closely cooperates with the HHC, the Menedek Association, the Cordelia Foundation and several groups of volunteers. Furthermore, UNHCR has been working closely with the new UN OPCAT mechanism at the Office of the Parliamentary Commission for Fundamental Rights.
- In Croatia, UNHCR works closely with the Government and the Croatian Red Cross, which has been mandated to coordinate the assistance provided for refugees. Other partners include UNICEF, the Centre for Peace Studies, the Croatian Law Centre, Save the Children, Magna, JRS, Samaritan's Purse, Caritas, the Centre for Peace Studies, the Union of Baptist Churches in Croatia, the Volunteer Centre Osijek, IHA, MGMTD, Remar and the Church of Holistic Gospel.
- In Slovenia, UNHCR is in the process of establishing a Refugee Coordination Mechanism; and has already established a Refugee Protection working group. Members are UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, PiC, Peace Institute, Amnesty International, Slovene Philanthropy, Institute of African Studies, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Migration Office.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

On 30 September, UNHCR presented its revised appeal of **USD 128 million** for the Special Mediterranean Initiative June 2015 – December 2016 (USD 53 million for June-December 2015; USD 75 million for January-December 2016).

The total financial requirements for the Europe component of this appeal amount to **USD 77.4 million** (USD 29.9 million for June-December 2015; USD 47.5 million for January-December 2016). The Special Mediterranean Initiative also incorporates targeted programmes in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa subregion.

As of 15 October, **USD 12.62 million** (24% of total 2015 requirements) has been received for the Special Mediterranean Initiative supplementary appeal from: Andorra; Germany; Japan; the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal; Slovenia, H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB; UPS Corporate; and private donors from Australia, Austria, Canada, China, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

In this changing operational context, UNHCR is appealing to donors to provide contributions that can be allocated as flexibly as possible.

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds, as well as for those who have contributed directly to the situation.

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2015:

The United States of America | Sweden | United Kingdom | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors in Spain | Denmark | Australia | Japan | Canada | Switzerland | France | Private donors in Italy | Private donors in Sweden | Finland



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Links:

- UNHCR, [Refugees themselves, Iraqis volunteer to help others reach safety in Germany](#), 12 October 2015.
- UNHCR, [UNHCR head thanks Greece, frontline islands, for improved response to continuing arrivals](#), 11 October 2015.
- UNHCR, [First group of asylum seekers relocated from Italy to Sweden](#), 9 October 2015.
- UNHCR, [UNHCR head Guterres urges massive EU response to help Greece attend to refugees](#), 9 October 2015.
- UNHCR, [Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response - Mediterranean](#) (webportal accessible via Google Chrome or Firefox only).