

# ITALY – SEA ARRIVALS

## UNHCR UPDATE #8

October 2016

### KEY FIGURES<sup>1</sup>

**27,384**

Persons arriving by sea in October 2016.

**159,427**

Persons arriving by sea in 2016 (as of 31 October).

**22,772**

Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) arrived by sea in 2016 (as of 31 October).

**97,446**

Asylum applications in 2016, including from sea and other arrivals (as of 31 October).

**46%**

Average EU protection rate of top nationalities arriving by sea in Italy between January and October 2016.

**171,938**

Persons accommodated in reception centres on 31 October 2016.

**1,489**

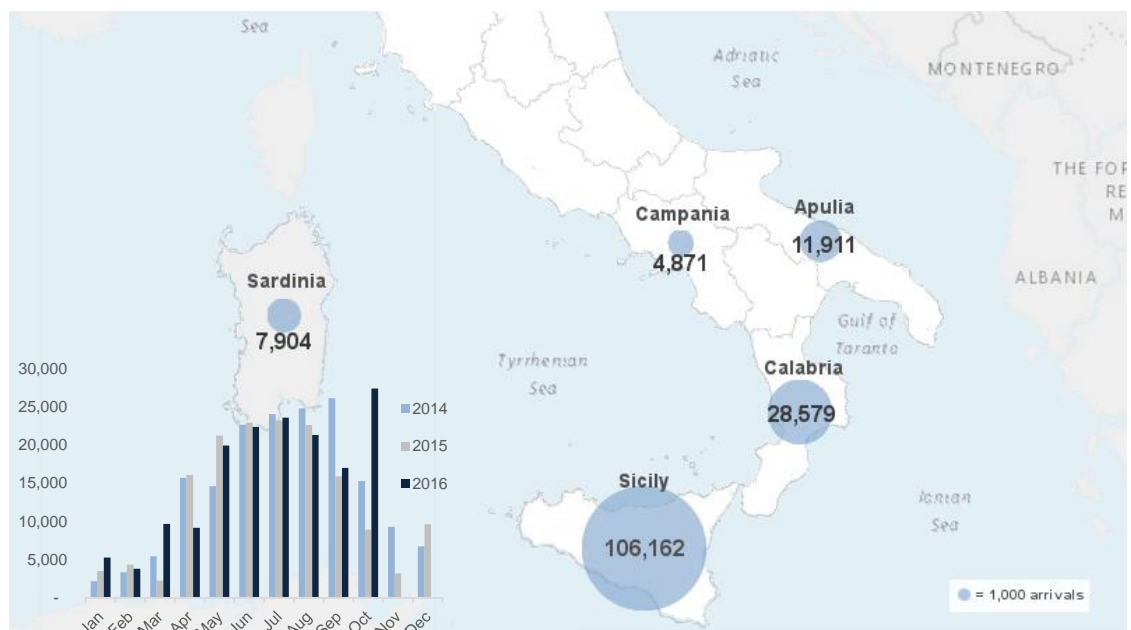
Asylum-seekers relocated from Italy under the EU relocation scheme (as of 31 October 2016).

**25**

UNHCR staff posted at key arrival points.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 27,384 refugees and migrants arrived to Italy by sea in October 2016. This number constitutes an increase compared to sea arrivals in September 2016 (16,975). It is also considerably higher than sea arrivals in the same period of 2015, when 8,196 reached the Italian shores. Main nationalities among sea arrivals are Nigerian, Eritrean, Ivorian, Guinean and Gambian.
- At the end of October 2016, the total number of sea arrivals stood at 159,427. Total sea arrivals registered a 13% increase compared to the first ten months of 2015 (140,987).
- Between 01 January and 31 October, 22,772 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) arrived to Italy by sea. This corresponds to 14% of all sea arrivals in the first nine months of the year, up from last year's 7%.
- At the end of October 2016, 171,938 asylum-seekers were accommodated in reception centres across Italy, 78% among them were accommodated in temporary facilities.
- In October 2016, 230 asylum-seekers were relocated to Croatia, Malta, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Portugal and Slovenia, under the EU relocation scheme. Since the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation, 1,489 persons (3.8% of the 39,600 target) have been relocated from Italy. **Sea Arrivals 2016 to Italy per region of disembarkation**



<sup>1</sup> Sources: UNHCR, Ministry of Interior, Eurostat, EC. Unless stated otherwise, figures reflect the period up to 30 September.

# SEA ARRIVALS TO ITALY

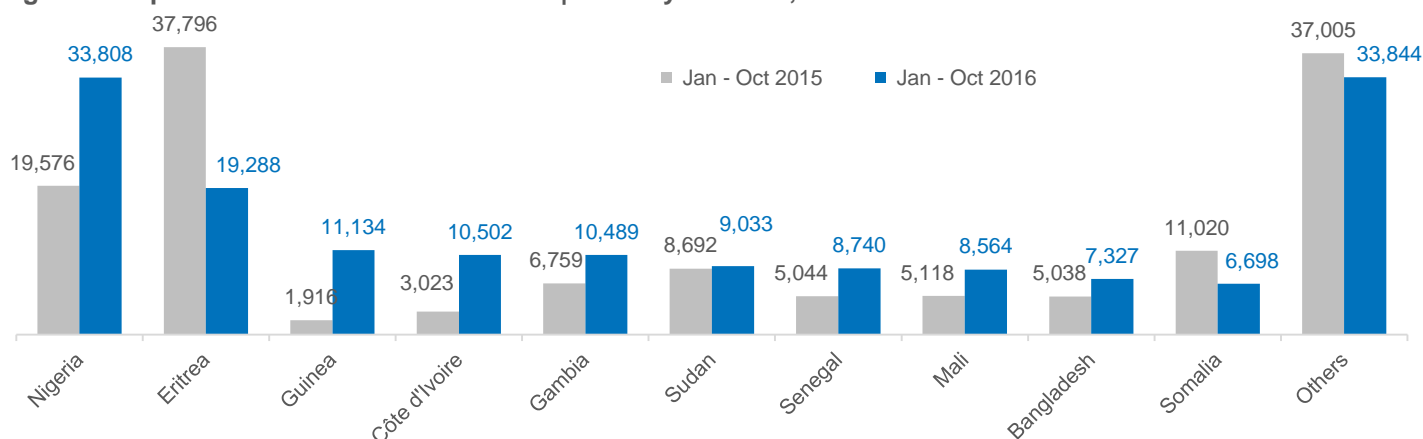
Figure 1. Sea arrivals | January – October, 2014, 2015 and 2016



In October 2016, 27,384 persons arrived to Italy by sea. While monthly figures recorded between January and September had been consistent with previous years, with sea arrivals rising from spring onwards, peaking in the summer months and slowly decreasing to year's end, October witnessed a considerable increase in sea arrivals (plus 71% compared to September arrivals and plus 207% compared to arrivals in October 2015). This is a new development: UNHCR is investigating factors that could have led to such surge of arrivals. Numbers recorded over September and October 2016 are on a par with the number of refugees and migrants arrived by sea over September and October 2014. However, sea arrivals in the first ten months of 2016 outnumbered total arrivals recorded in the whole of 2015 (153,842). New arrivals were disembarked in the main ports of southern Italy, approximately 28% of them were disembarked in the four operational hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani), while the others arrived in other sea ports.

UNHCR staff is present during all phases of disembarkation procedures, both at hotspots and at non-hotspot sites in various locations in southern Italy. UNHCR field teams (25 staff) render support to the authorities, delivering information on international protection and the EU relocation scheme, as well as identifying people with specific needs. Upon disembarkation, UNHCR staff provide new arrivals with leaflets on international protection and later conduct face-to-face informative sessions. Preliminary information is delivered immediately after new arrivals are pre-identified, while in-depth information is provided once persons have been registered.

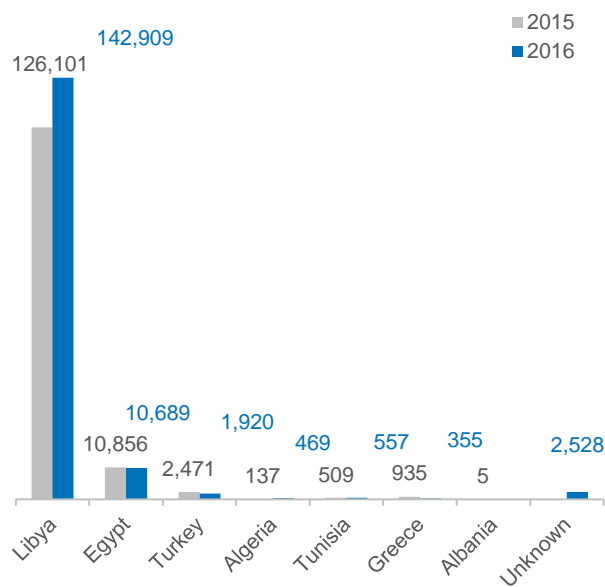
Figure 2. Top 10 nationalities of sea arrivals | January-October, 2015 and 2016



Between 01 January and 31 October 2016, **persons originating from over 60 different countries arrived to Italy** by sea. Nearly 80% of sea arrivals came from just ten countries: Nigeria (21%), Eritrea (12%), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, The Gambia (7% each), Sudan (6%), Senegal, Mali, Bangladesh (5% each) and Somalia (4%). Nigerian arrivals in January-October 2016 have increased by 73% compared to the first ten months of last year and they continue to represent the top nationality among sea arrivals to Italy this year. During the month of October, 6,635 Nigerians reached Italian shores, corresponding to 24% of total monthly sea arrivals. Eritreans continue to rank second most represented nationality of sea arrivals in 2016. However, their numbers have almost halved compared to the first ten months of 2015. Following a drop of Eritrean arrivals in September - with approximately 600 reaching Italian shores during the month, their numbers rose again in October, when over 3,600 were disembarked in Italy. Between 01 January and 31 October, arrivals of nationals from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, The Gambia, Senegal and Mali increased if compared to the same period of last year, while Somalis decreased by 39%. Out of 953 Syrians who arrived to Italy by sea since the beginning of the year (0.6% of the total), 169 reached Italian shores in the month of October. According to 2Q 2016 EUROSTAT, around 46% of all sea arrivals to Italy since the beginning of the year would be entitled to a form of protection if the average EU recognition rates were applied.

# SEA ARRIVALS TO ITALY

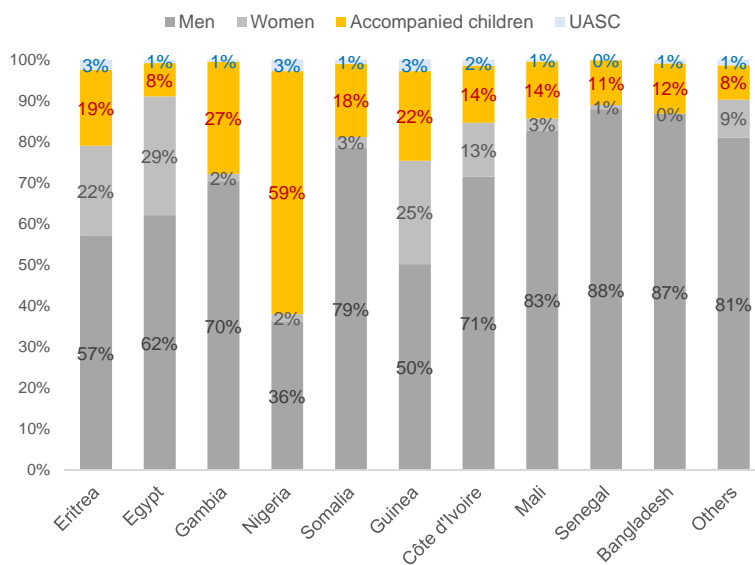
**Figure 3. Sea arrivals by country of departure | January – October, 2015 and 2016**



The vast **majority of sea arrivals continue to leave from Libya** (89.6%). Consistently with such trend, Libya remained the main country of departure in October. During the month, Sabratha continued to be reported as the most common departure point. Only approximately 6.7% of persons reaching Italian shores between January and October departed instead from Egypt. Most new arrivals were disembarked following SAR operations conducted at high sea by various actors, including the Italian Navy, the Italian Coast Guard, vessels by other countries and NGOs. During the month of October, rescue operations often involved rubber dinghies or wooden boats carrying a higher average number of persons (up to approximately 140). Furthermore, autonomous sea arrivals occurred throughout the month, with relatively smaller groups of persons reaching southern Italy having departed mainly from Turkey, but also from Greece, Tunisia and, to a lesser extent, Algeria. Persons were intercepted by the authorities off the Italian coast and transferred to port sites where they underwent disembarkation procedures. During the month of October, most autonomous sea arrivals from Turkey involved nationals of Iraq (mainly of Kurdish origins), but citizens of Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan and Syria also travelled using this route.

Numerous tragedies at sea occurred in October, with over 430 persons reported dead or missing. Increasing recourse to unseaworthy dinghies, being loaded with higher numbers of people, could impact on the death toll in the Mediterranean. This hit a record high in October, with nearly 4,000 lives lost at sea since the beginning of the year – more than the total for the whole of 2015. In October, a considerable number of deaths at sea were caused by either asphyxiation, inhalation of fuel and salty water or faulty dinghies.

**Figure 4. Top 10 nationalities of UASC sea arrivals: breakdown by age and gender | January - October 2016\***

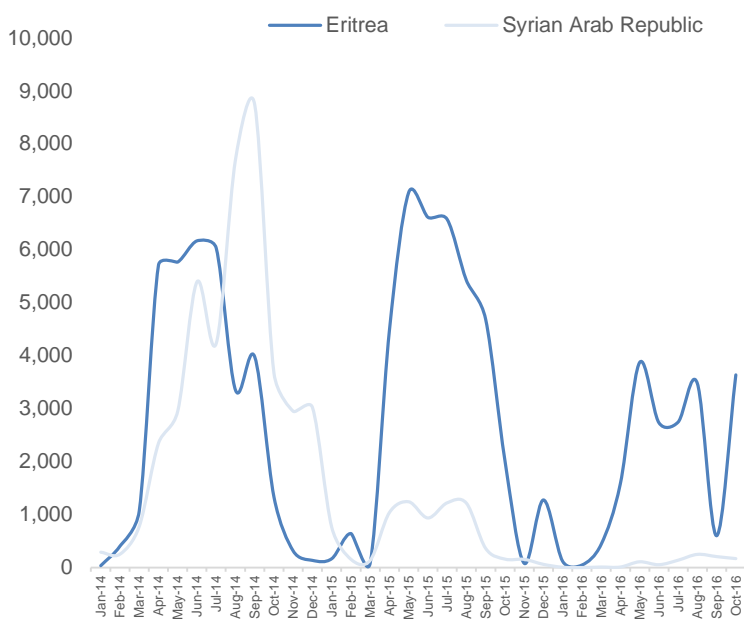


Like in previous years, men continue to represent the vast majority (71%) among sea arrivals, while adult women account for 14% of the total. Accompanied children are only 1.3% of the total. The decrease in the proportions of adult men (from 75% in January-October 2015 to 71% in the first ten months of 2016) and accompanied children (from 2.6% to 1.3%) is offset by the increasing arrivals of UASC. Unaccompanied children represent 14% of all persons arriving by sea since the beginning of this year, up from 7% in 2015. Between January and October 2016, 22,772 UASC were disembarked in Italy. Over 3,700 UASC reached Italian shores in the month of October alone. Gender and age profiles vary significantly among different national groups. Significantly more women have arrived this year from Nigeria, Somalia, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Eritrea (29%, 25%, 25%, 24% and 22% of arrivals from each country respectively). Other national groups mainly include men: women account for less than 3% of this year's arrivals from Guinea, Mali, The Gambia, Senegal and Bangladesh. In 2016, UASC originate most commonly from Eritrea, The Gambia and Nigeria. At the end of October, Gambian and Nigerian UASC outnumbered Egyptian UASC, now ranking fourth among top UASC nationalities. The total number of Eritrean UASC arrived so far this year is comparable to last year's, but they now account for 18% of all Eritreans disembarked since the beginning of 2016. Gambian UASC constitute 27% of all Gambian sea arrivals, while Nigerian UASC account for 8% of all Nigerians who are reached Italian shores so far this year.

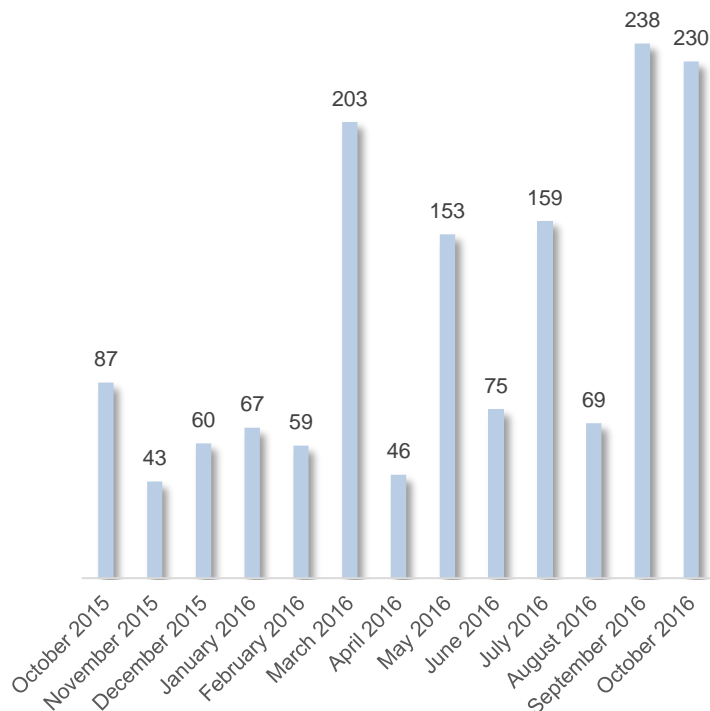
During post disembarkation procedures, UNHCR staff support authorities with the identification of persons with specific needs, particularly persons with medical conditions, pregnant women and unaccompanied children, victims of trauma and survivors of torture or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UNHCR continues to work to strengthen the authorities' capacity to identify these persons with specific needs. Two UNHCR child protection experts currently work with the authorities to promote good practices on best interest assessment and determination. UNHCR staff also support information provision for UASC at arrival points and in reception facilities.

# HOTSPOTS AND RELOCATION

**Figure 5. Monthly sea arrivals to Italy. Relocation nationalities January 2014 – October 2016**



**Figure 6. Persons relocated in Italy under the EU relocation scheme October 2015 – October 2016**

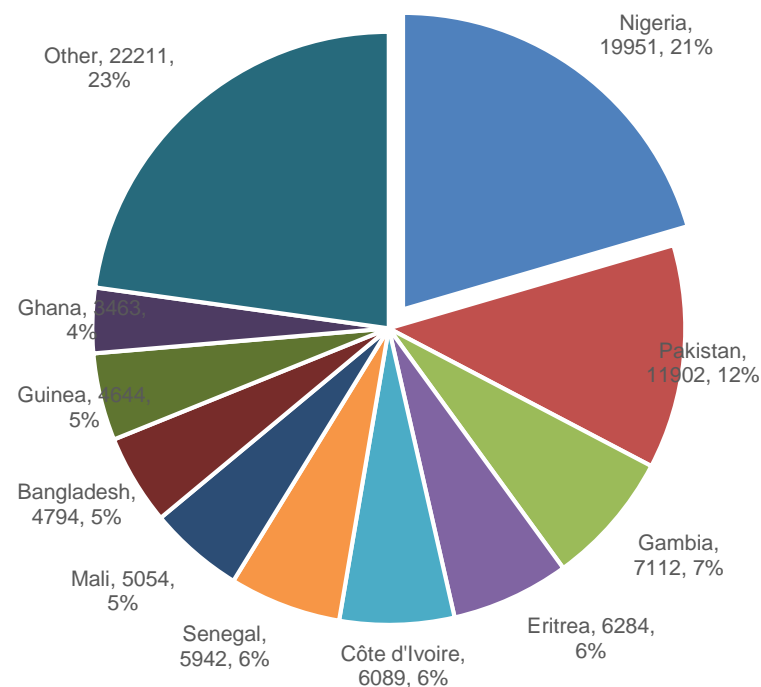


The hotspot approach foresees that new arrivals are identified and fingerprinted, with a view to strengthen the authorities’ capacity to identify all persons reaching Italian shores. Four hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani) are currently operational in Italy, with a total official capacity of over 1,400 places. Furthermore three regional hubs (Bari, Crotona and Villa Sikania) have been set up and host relocation candidates, with a total official capacity of over 2,200 places. Representatives of the European border agency Frontex, EASO (European Asylum Support Office), Europol and Eurojust are providing operational support to the Italian authorities in the hotspots. In 2016, UNHCR participated in an ad hoc Ministry of Interior’s working group supporting the Italian authorities in the drafting of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be applied by competent authorities in the hotspots with the aim to ensure that access to the territory and to the asylum procedure are granted in accordance with national and international standards. The SOPs were published in May 2016: UNHCR monitors their implementation in the hotspots and advocates for their application also in other disembarkation sites.

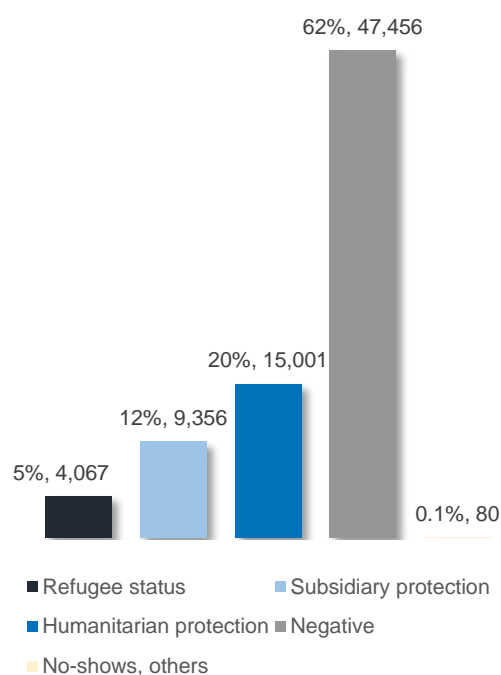
In close cooperation with EASO, UNHCR provides potential relocation candidates with counselling service and information. As of 22 September 2016, candidates eligible for relocation include citizens of Syria, Eritrea, Burundi, Mozambique, Bahrain, Bhutan, Qatar and Yemen. Nationals of the Central African Republic (CAR) no longer meet the 75% recognition rate threshold provided for by the September 2015 EU Council Decisions. Iraqi citizens were also eligible for relocation until 8 July 2016, but no longer meet the eligibility threshold. Based on the latest available EU data, the average recognition rate for CAR nationals has fallen to 69%, while 61% of Iraqis are now recognized international protection across the EU. During the month of October, 230 persons were relocated to Croatia, Malta, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Portugal and Slovenia. Between the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation and the end of October 2016, a total of 1,489 persons were relocated from Italy: this is still only 3.8% of the 39,600 target to be met by the end of September 2017. Since the adoption of the relocation scheme, Italy received 4,549 (as of 11 November 2016) pledges from participating European countries, while 24,260 potential candidates reached Italian shores in the same period. UNHCR is calling on States to increase pledges, including for unaccompanied and separated children, speed up the registration and transfers of candidates, and for more nationalities fleeing war and persecution to have access to the scheme. Effective relocation is key to increasing solidarity and responsibility sharing in Europe, ensuring the better management of population movements and helping to address irregular secondary movement and reliance on smuggler networks. This is particularly vital given the increasing number of people staying in Italy than in previous years, which is due to the implementation of the hotspot approach and increased controls at the borders to France, Switzerland and Austria. This has impacted on the capacity of Italy’s reception and asylum systems, and requires a strong gesture of solidarity from other Member States.

# ASYLUM PROCEDURES

**Figure 7. Asylum seekers by nationality | January – October 2016\***



**Figure 8. Outcome of RSD decisions in Italy | January – October 2016**



**So far in 2016, over 98,400 persons lodged an asylum application in Italy (compared to 83,970 applications in the whole of 2015).** Over 13,500 applications for international protection were submitted in the month of October alone. Among the main countries of origin of asylum-seekers are Nigeria, Pakistan, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Eritrea, Mali, Guinea, Bangladesh and Ghana. Top nationalities of asylum-seekers do not necessarily coincide with main sea arrival nationalities: Pakistani nationals constitute the second largest group among asylum-seekers currently in Italy but hardly any arrive by sea, as the vast majority of them enter Italy via land, most likely through the northern borders with Austria and Slovenia. Two factors might have caused the increase in asylum applications this year. Firstly, onward departures across Italy's northern borders became more difficult due to tighter controls by both Italy and neighbouring countries. Therefore, the majority of those arriving by sea now remain and register their applications in Italy. Secondly, the hotspot approach, which strengthens identification and fingerprinting, makes secondary movements to other European countries less likely. UNHCR monitors admission procedures at border crossing points, focusing in particular on people with specific needs, such as UASC.

UNHCR participates in first instance Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures, with staff members posted in the 47 operational decentralized Territorial Eligibility Commissions and providing advice on the use of eligibility criteria, procedural standards and country of origin information. Between 01 January and 31 October 2016, **the Territorial Commissions determined almost 76,000 asylum applications**, reflecting a considerable increase compared to last year, when 71,117 first instance decisions were taken in the whole of 2015. Over 7,600 international protection claims were determined in the month of October alone. So far in 2016, 5% were recognized as refugees, while 14% were granted subsidiary protection. Humanitarian protection was given to 20% of all applicants. This is based on national legislation and is granted when serious humanitarian grounds or constitutional and international obligations arise, such as those in Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. 57% of all asylum application were rejected. In the month of October, 7% of all applicants were recognized refugee status, while subsidiary protection was recognized to 13% of asylum-seekers and humanitarian protection was granted to 24% of all asylum claimants.

The quality monitoring project developed, in cooperation with UNHCR, by the National Commission on the Right of Asylum, continues in 2016, with a view to develop recommendations to strengthen the quality of RSD procedures in Italy. The National Commission also developed with the help of UNHCR a project on trafficking in the context of asylum and RSD, aiming to draft Standard Operating Procedures for the early identification and adequate protection of potential victims of trafficking. Together with the Ministry of Interior and the National Commission for the Right of Asylum, UNHCR continues to be involved in the working group on the reform of the asylum procedure, which was set up in October 2015.



# RECEPTION

Figure 9. Trends in reception | 2013 – 31 October 2016

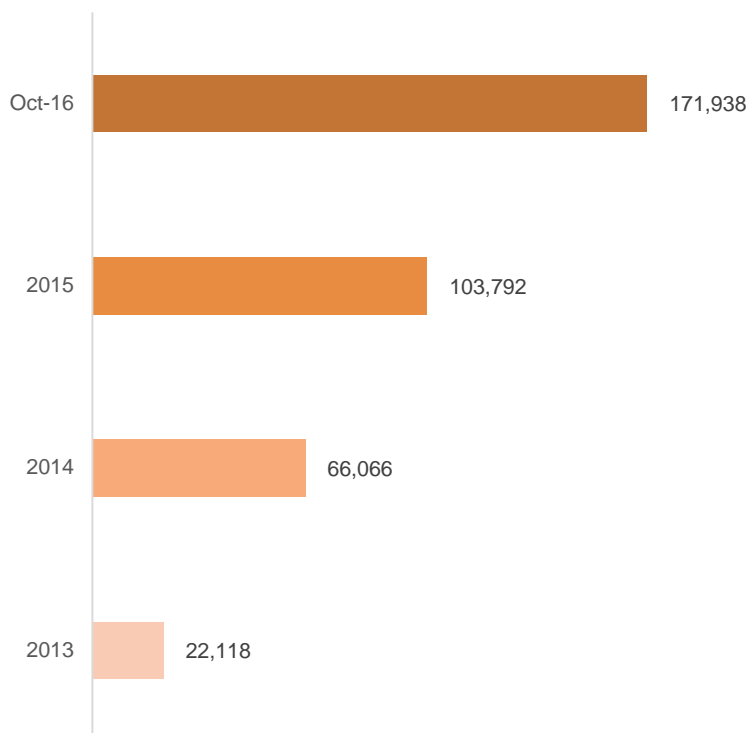
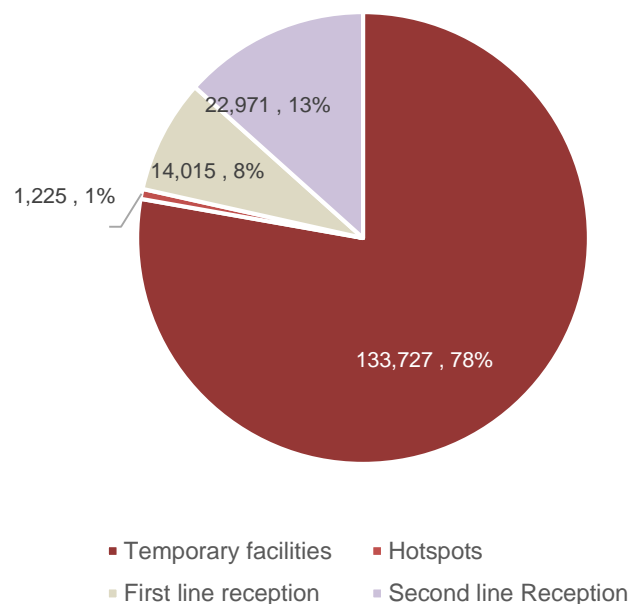


Figure 10. People accommodated in Italy by type of facility on 31 October 2016



On 31 October 2016, 171,938 persons were accommodated in reception centres across Italy.

Italian law provides for a 3-tier reception system, composed of: (1) first assistance facilities (so called CPISA) and hotspots; (2) first-line reception facilities, including first reception centres (so called CPA) and regional hubs; (3) second-line reception facilities (so called SPRAR centres, run by the National Association of Italian Municipalities). If no places are available in first-line or second-line reception centres, the law stipulates for persons to be accommodated in temporary facilities, also known as extraordinary reception centres, or CAS.

Persons remain in first assistance centres and hotspots only for the purposes of undergoing identification and fingerprinting procedures, before being transferred to first-line or second-line reception centres.

On 31 October 2016, 133,727 persons (78% of the total) were accommodated in temporary facilities, while 14,015 (8%) were in first line reception centres. Furthermore, 22,971 persons (13%) were in second line reception facilities (latest available data, as of 12 October 2016). Finally, 1,225 persons (1%) were in the four operational hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani). These figures reflect the situation on 31 October 2016 and are subject to constant change.

Statistical data reflect how **the vast majority of persons are currently accommodated in extraordinary reception centres**. The government is reportedly working on a plan to gradually move to a system favouring ordinary reception over extraordinary reception, providing financial incentives to municipalities willing to adhere to SPRAR.

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