Weekly Report

Key Figures

Mediterranean
28,378 arrivals by sea in 2017*

813 dead/missing in 2017*

Trends of Sea Arrivals

From 01 January 2017, 20,580 persons arrived by sea, including 3,369 to Greece (as of 21 March), 19,549 to Italy (as of 21 March) and 1,000 to Spain (as of 31 January). As of 19 March, 537 people have died or gone missing while trying to reach Europe by sea, compared with 5,022 in the whole of 2016.

From 13 to 19 March 558 persons arrived by sea to Greece. The number of daily sea arrivals fluctuated between 0 (15 March) and 193 (17 March). Chios recorded the majority of sea arrivals (334), followed by Lesvos (156) and Samos (55). Compared with the previous week the average number of daily arrivals increased from 27 to 80. The increase of arrivals has coincided with improved weather conditions, which had been particularly bad during the previous weeks. From 06 to 12 March there were 186 estimated arrivals by sea to Greece. Chios recorded the majority of estimated sea arrivals (80), followed by Lesvos and Samos (67).

From 13 to 19 March, 388 persons (including 30 Unaccompanied and Separated Children-UASC) were estimated to have arrived to southern Italy by sea. New arrivals departed from Libya and mainly originate from sub-Saharan African countries. Most were (325) disembarked in Augusta on 16 March after having been rescued in a search and rescue (SAR) operations. Furthermore, a number of autonomous sea arrivals occurred during the week, including small groups of Tunisian and Algerian nationals who reached Sicily and Sardinia, respectively, while 21 Iranian, Somali and Sri Lankan nationals reached Sicily having departed from Turkey. Finally, 27 Iraqi and Afghan nationals were intercepted on board of a vessel departed from Mersin, Turkey, and subsequently disembarked at the Trieste port in northern Italy. From 06 to 12 March, 84 persons (including four UASC) disembarked in Augusta.

The Spanish Minister of Interior reported that so far in 2017, 1,554 persons have arrived to the Andalusian coast using 62 small “patera” boats (a boat with a shallow draft, used by immigrants to cross the Straits of Gibraltar from Morocco to southern Spain). Sea arrivals on the Andalusian coast have increased by 150 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Key Developments

Situation in Greece

UNHCR, through its partner the Ecumenical Refugee Program (ERP), will support the Greek Asylum Service with the transfer of 1,000 asylum-seekers from Greece to other EU Member States by covering the cost of their air tickets. The support is made for outgoing transfers under
key figures

Greece

388 Total Weekly Arrivals to Greek Islands 13 - 19 March 2017

55 Daily Average Arrivals to Greek Islands 13 - 19 March 2017

Italy

558 Total Weekly Arrivals to Italy 13 - 19 March 2017

80 Daily Average Arrivals to Italy 13 - 19 March 2017

the Dublin Regulation for family reunion and protection of UASC, transfers that should be expedited, as an exceptional measure as otherwise the decisions would have expired.

As of 12 March 2017, 1,252 people have been transferred out of Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) Moria to improved accommodation on Lesvos and the mainland. Since September 2016, 1,016 people have been transferred to the mainland. UNHCR continues to reduce accommodation in hotels and increase accommodation in apartments as part of the Accommodation Scheme. The number of hotels will further reduce in April 2017. At the same time, UNHCR is increasing its capacity in terms of accommodation in apartments and buildings.

On the islands, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) remains a critical issue due to the lack of basic standards in the RICs. Inconsistent planning and management contributed to the insecurity in the sites. The situation is most grave in the RICs in Lesvos (RIC Moria) and Samos (RIC Vathy). On the mainland, a training on SGBV (core principles, key approaches and response) was organised by UNHCR in the three Elliniko sites. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on SGBV were discussed in the framework of the SGBV working group (at central level) where the partners were requested to provide their comments in order to finalize the document.

Daily and Weekly Average Arrivals to Greece
7 March 2016 to 19 March 2017

55 Daily Average Weekly Arrivals 13 - 19 March 2017

27 Daily Average Monthly Arrivals As of 19 March 2017

Daily and Weekly Average Arrivals to Italy
7 March 2016 to 19 March 2017

80 Daily Average Weekly Arrivals 13 - 19 March 2017

55 Daily Average Monthly Arrivals As of 19 March 2017
UNHCR continues to be concerned about the insufficient treatment of persons with mental or psychological conditions, particularly at the entry points on the islands. Persons that need urgent mental health support are not properly referred and treated. There remain large gaps in the areas of medical and psychosocial follow-up, accommodation or hospitalization, protective custody, and referrals to the mainland for further treatment. Serious cases continue to fall outside of the established referral networks as almost none of the relevant medical actors take responsibility to ensure that their protection needs (on the island and to the mainland) are addressed in a continuous and appropriate manner.

The construction of the Pre-removal Detention Centre in Vathy was announced by the Deputy Minister of Migration Policy, Yiannis Balafas, following the Joint EC-Greece Action Plan on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement according to which it was agreed that the Greek authorities with EU support will create sufficient detention capacity on the islands as soon as possible. In line with this, there is now a partially operational Pre-removal Detention Centre on Kos and the plan for the construction of the Pre-removal Detention Centre in Vathy.

Situation in Serbia

On 19 March, 7,861 (compared to 7,764 as of 12 March) asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants were counted in Serbia, of which 6,768 (86 per cent) were accommodated in 17 government shelters. Based on available data, 43 per cent were children, 16 per cent women and 41 per cent men; 54 per cent originate from Afghanistan, 18 per cent from Iraq, 8 per cent from Syria, 12 per cent from Pakistan and 8 per cent from other countries.

On 10 March, 112 unregistered refugees and migrants (83 men, one couple and 27 unaccompanied and separated boys) who were squatting in a few locations in/near Subotica were transported by the authorities to the Presevo Reception Centre (RC). Most are from Pakistan, a few from Syria and Afghanistan, and have already spent several months in Serbia unregistered. UNHCR and partners supported their admission to the RC, including health screening/treatment and provision of non-food items (NFIs).

Only five asylum-seekers camped at Horgos and three at Kelebija border sites, awaiting admission into Hungarian “transit zones”. Fewer number of reports of push-backs from Hungary were received this week (36 compared to 78 last week), with some alleging mistreatment by Hungarian authorities. At the same time, the number of reported push-backs from Croatia rose from 32 last week to 57.

Unfortunately, the accident reported on 02 February in Sid, when four men were critically injured after accidentally triggering an explosion on a train transporting fuel, had a tragic ending, as the life of one victim, despite immediate hospitalization and intensive care, could not be saved. The three other men applied for assisted voluntary return home to Algeria.

UNHCR and partners encountered and referred over 30 Afghan boys, who newly arrived from Bulgaria, to Centres for Social Work. Currently up to 900 UASC are in Serbia, with 718 accommodated in government centres, including 120 in Presevo, 33 in Bujanovac, 337 in Obrenovac and 228 in all other governmental centres.

UNHCR continued supporting the rapid refurbishment capacities in the Obrenovac centre near Belgrade, now accommodating 1,037 men and boys (compared to 1,023 on 12 March). A separate building in the centre was dedicated to accommodating only unaccompanied and separated boys.

Key Documents from the Web portal
Situation in Hungary
From 13 to 19 March, 43 asylum-seekers (compared to 48 from 06 to 12 March) entered Hungary through the two transit zones. In addition, the Hungarian police reported four (14 the week before) apprehensions for irregular entry, while 78 (128 the week before) people were prevented from crossing the green border and another 62 people (147 the week before) were intercepted inside Hungary and collectively expelled to the Serbia side of the fence.

The daily admission rate remained at around five people per day per transit zone with no admissions over the weekends and public holidays. In the reporting period, 43 asylum-seekers were admitted: 23 into Röszke and 20 into Tompa (23 Afghans, 18 Iraqis, and 2 Syrians).

UNHCR, NGOs, Government authorities and local aid groups from both Serbia and Hungary continue to provide assistance and support to people waiting in makeshift tents in the areas outside the transit zones. The construction work in the areas adjacent to the transit zones to build a second fence and expand the capacity of the transit zones is progressing at a fast pace.

On 14 March UNHCR conducted a monitoring visit to Békéscsaba asylum detention where detainees started a hunger strike on 13 March to protest against the detention of asylum-seekers. UNHCR held a meeting with the management of the facility and then a group discussion with eight representatives of the main nationalities together with the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC).

Asylum-seekers raised concern over the lack of information on the concrete steps of Dublin procedures and asylum bail, the slow procedures related to realization of Dublin transfers and verification of ID documents, and the lack of support and activities available in the facility.

The hunger strike ended after a meeting with the centre management.

Situation in Bulgaria
As of 17 March 2017, 3,116 persons were registered at State Agency for Refugees (SAR) centres (of whom, 223 with granted international protection and 442 opted to live in private accommodations on their own expenses) which is a slight decrease compared to 10 March 2017 when there were 3,185 PoCs (of whom, 144 with granted international protection and 463 living at external addresses). Despite that the number of irregular entries has drastically decreased compared to the same period in 2016 (from 1,283 as of 17 March 2016 to 199 for the same period in 2017), the number of applicants registered in SAR centres has increased - 3,116 people as of 17 March 2017, compared to only 758 on 14 March 2016.

Update on Relocation
As of 20 March, the European Commission (EC) states that 14,447 asylum-seekers have been relocated within the EU, with 10,012 persons relocated from Greece (13.5 per cent of the initial 66,400 target) and 4,435 from Italy (10 per cent of the initial 39,600 target).

From 13 to 19 March, 88 asylum-seekers were relocated from Greece: to Spain (27), Slovenia (19), Malta (15), Latvia (14) and Estonia (13). There were 1,000 new pledges: from Germany (500), France (400) and Netherlands (100). In total, 10,853 relocation candidates will have left or are scheduled to leave by end of March 2017 from Greece for another EU Member State, including 10 Dublin cases. Regarding relocations from Italy for the period 13-19 March, there were to Belgium (34), to Germany (231), to Latvia (1).

From 06 to 12 March, 260 asylum-seekers were relocated from Italy: to Germany (184), The Netherlands (53) and Portugal (23). No UASC have been relocated from Italy yet. Some 46 asylum-seekers were relocated from Greece: to Norway (22) and Portugal (24). In the same reporting period, there were 135 new pledges: Romania (80), Lithuania (40) and Malta (15).

European Union Developments
On 06 March, among other issues, the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs discussed migration and the situation in the Western Balkans as part of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting. The discussions were meant to prepare the 09-10 March European Council. On migration, the High Representative presented the main elements of the progress made under the Partnership Framework approach and with the five priority countries, namely Mali, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria and Ethiopia. The Maltese Presidency reported on the ongoing work on the imple-
mentation of the *Valletta Declaration*. On the Western Balkans, Ministers notably reconfirmed the EU’s engagement in and focus on the region, including through political and economic links. Ministers also adopted a revised version of the *EU Guidelines* for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, relevant as part of the EU’s external human rights policy.

On 09-10 March, the EU Heads of State and Government met for a European Council meeting. They re-appointed Donald Tusk as President of the European Council for a second term (June 2017-November 2019). They also discussed migration, including cooperation with Libya and other countries in North Africa. In particular, in the meeting’s conclusions, EU Leaders reiterated their support to the *Valletta Declaration* and indicated they “stands behind the actions undertaken by individual Member States to support the Libyan authorities as well as their North African and southern neighbours in their efforts to address the challenges of illegal migration”.

UNHCR and IOM were mentioned as important partners in that respect. EU Leaders also focused on readmission and return, inviting the Council to rapidly examine the Commission’s *Renewed Action Plan on Return* and accompanying Recommendation, and to pursue work on EU readmission arrangements with non-EU countries. Finally, EU Leaders called for further efforts to pursue work on the reform of the Common European Asylum System, with the view to achieving consensus during the Maltese Presidency. EU Leaders also discussed the situation in the Western Balkans, and “reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the European perspective of the Western Balkans”.

On 16 March, Eurostat published the *asylum figures* for 2016. They were more than 1.2 million first time applicants in 2016. Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis represented the main nationalities of first time applicants. 60 per cent of the first time applicants applied in Germany. For the related report and infographics.

On 16 March, the EC launched an education programme for refugees in Turkey. The programme, called the “Conditional Cash Transfer for Education”, is funded under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey. It will provide bi-monthly cash-transfers as of May 2017 to vulnerable refugee families whose children regularly attend school in Turkey. The project, worth EUR 34 million, will be implemented in partnership with UNICEF and the Turkish Red Crescent, in support of the Turkish Government.

On 17 March, the EC published a factsheet ahead of anniversary of the EU-Turkey Statement.
Timeline Overview

**20 March 2016**
- Start of the EU-Turkey Statement.

**03 April 2016**
- Turkey amended labour legislation to grant those holding subsidiary protection work permits.

**04 April 2016**
- First returns take place under the EU-Turkey Statement: 207 people returned to Turkey from Greece.

**06 April 2016**
- The European Commission (EC) published Communication on reforms to Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

**08 April 2016**
- UNHCR and partners revise funding needs for Greece & Balkans with updated RMRP.

**09 November 2016**
- The EC released their Seventh Report on Relocation and Resettlement.

**09 December 2016**
- The EC released its Fourth Report on the Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement.

**14 December 2016**
- The EC released Second Implementation of the Partnership Framework.

**20 March 2016**

**03 April 2016**

**04 April 2016**

**06 April 2016**

**20 September 2016**
- The number of refugees and migrants reaching European shores this year passed the 200,000 mark.

**23 August 2016**
- The Greek Asylum Service announced results of the pre-registration exercise, following its completion on 25 July.

**10 June 2016**
- UNHCR and partners revise funding needs for Greece & Balkans with updated RMRP.

**15 July 2016**
- UNHCR is concerned about new Hungarian restrictive law, increased reports of violence, and a deterioration of the situation at border with Serbia.

**17 June 2016**
- The EC: Released Fourth Report on Relocation and Resettlement.
- Adopted a recommendation on the specific urgent measures to be taken by Greece in the view of the resumption of transfers to the country under the Dublin III Regulation.

**13 July 2016**
- The EC released:
  - Its Proposals to recast the Qualification Directive and amend the Reception Conditions Directive
  - Its proposal on an EU Resettlement Framework
  - Its Fifth Report on relocation and resettlement.

**20 September 2016**
- Leader’s Summit on Refugees was held in New York bringing together countries and international organisations, and announced pledges to increase efforts in support of refugees.

**28 September 2016**
- The EC released:
  - Sixth Report on relocation and resettlement.
  - Third Recommendation in view of the resumption of Dublin transfers to Greece.
  - Third Report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement.

**25 October 2016**
- Closure of Calais.

**14 December 2016**
- The European Commission (EC) published Communication on reforms to Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

**23 December 2016**
- Mediterranean Sea: 100 people reported dead yesterday, bringing year total to 5,000.

**15 December 2016**
- The European Council meets – Migration was one of the main topics on the European Council’s agenda.

**01 January 2017**
- Malta takes over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, migration will be one of its priorities during its term. UNHCR has issued recommendations to the Maltese and Estonian (July-December 2017) presidencies.

**25 January 2017**
- The EC releases a communication on the Central Mediterranean route.
- The EC recommends prolongation of temporary border controls.