

Greece

This month 600 people arrived by land and 1,600 by sea. Reduced sea arrivals combined with the ongoing transfers of the Government and UNHCR to the mainland helped reduce the

number of refugees and migrants on the islands to 11,270 people thus allowing conditions in the overcrowded reception centres to slightly improve. However, more needs to be done as protection

risks remain high particularly for women and children. In the mainland and Crete, **UNHCR provides 22,000 places** in rented housing through municipalities and NGOs.

50,370 refugees and migrants in Greece¹

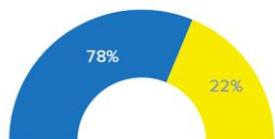
39,100 in the mainland

11,270 on the islands

39,230 eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR this month

42,800 people have so far benefited from UNHCR accommodation²

23,090 people transferred from the islands to the mainland (UNHCR supported)³



78% of arrivals in 2018 are from Syria, Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan

¹UNHCR estimates as of 31 January 2018 of those who arrived and remained since the 2015 – 2016 mass flow

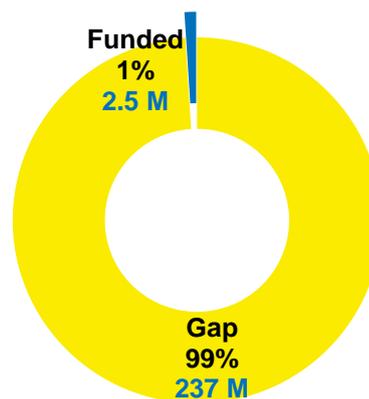
²Since the start of the programme in November 2015

³Between June 2016 and January 2018

FUNDING (AS OF 13 FEBRUARY 2018)

USD 239.3 M

requested for the Greece operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

407 National Staff

55 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

3 Mainland Offices in Attika, Thessaloniki, Ioannina

6 Island Offices in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, and Rhodes



A young asylum-seeker from Afghanistan collects mandarins in a farm in Crete. While traveling to Europe he was separated from his wife and son. He now lives with his mother in Chania, thanks to UNHCR's accommodation programme which accommodates some 700 refugees on the island of Crete.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who leads the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities through sectoral Working Groups at the national and field levels.

Main Activities

Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods. This month, 39,233 people received cash assistance from UNHCR, and a total of 58,725 people since April 2017.
- By the end of January, UNHCR had created 22,039 places to house asylum-seekers in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation provides people with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services and education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece. The host population also benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 42,802 people have benefited from UNHCR's accommodation in Greece since November 2015.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities in several Municipalities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers in Greece, funded by the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (**ESTIA**) of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Protection

- To alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the Aegean islands, UNHCR continued to support the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) transfer authorized asylum-seekers to State-run sites or urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete to pursue their asylum applications.
- This month UNHCR supported the MoMP transfer 2,131 asylum-seekers from Lesbos (1,177), Chios (418), Samos (411), Kos (93), Leros (16), and other islands (16). A total of 23,090 people have been assisted with transfers from the islands to the mainland since June 2016.
- UNHCR continued to provide legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. By January 2018, the Greek Council for Refugees, Ecumenical Refugee Program and METAdrasi had provided legal assistance in the form of counselling and representation to nearly 11,450 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in sites, urban areas as well as in detention. The legal aid covers asylum procedures, family reunification, child protection, protection of SGBV survivors, other relevant administrative procedures and access to rights.

- METAdrasi and GCR provide legal assistance at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure in the framework of UNHCR's Memorandum of Cooperation with the MoMP. Over 5,600 appellants benefited from free legal assistance at second instance between 15 July 2016 and December 2017, of whom 3,600 in 2017.
- UNHCR supports the Asylum Service by helping upon request caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. This month UNHCR assisted in 1,100 instances.

Child Protection

- Only one third of the unaccompanied children in Greece can be accommodated in shelters, as the 3,270 unaccompanied children by far exceed the 1,100 available places (Source: National Centre of Social Solidarity (EKKA), 31 January 2018). As a result, children risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody.
- In response, UNHCR and partners are working with the authorities to develop diverse alternative care arrangements. This includes family-based foster care for younger children, and Supported Independent Living (SIL) for older adolescents where they will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- UNHCR also facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme. This helps free much needed space in shelters and also ensures support to the young adults during this transitional period which is often challenging and represents particular risks and concerns.
- UNHCR provides advice and technical support to the Government and expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children to shelters, and coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders in monitoring and developing Standard Operating Procedures to ensure minimum standards for child protection.
- Finally, UNHCR supports the MoMP, the General Secretariat for the Welfare of Asylum-seekers, the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, and the General Secretariat for Welfare through the (EKKA) on the transfer of eligible unaccompanied children from Greece to the UK within the framework of the 'Dubs Scheme'. So far, seven children have departed in the framework of the Scheme.
- UNHCR facilitated through partner METAdrasi the transfer of 237 unaccompanied children from the islands' RICs and detention centres to the mainland this month.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands and poor conditions in some mainland sites translate into poor shelter allocation. This leads to a lack of privacy and compromises safe access to WASH facilities, thus heightening the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). It therefore adds to the vulnerability of refugees who are already suffering from the sudden breakdown of family and community structures as a result of their forced displacement.
- UNHCR works on SGBV prevention and response by pro-actively identifying people at risk and SGBV survivors, referring them to appropriate services, and by providing legal information and counselling. UNHCR also conducts on training national and non-Governmental actors, and by raising awareness.

- UNHCR works through national NGOs, the DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, GCR and Arsis to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens and Thessaloniki.
- UNHCR and partners have developed referral pathways for refugee-hosting sites and urban accommodation facilities so that survivors of SGBV receive the support they need.

Education

- Refugee and asylum-seeking children in urban accommodation can attend regular school classes while children in sites attend reception classes that aim to facilitate their entry in the public school system, including through Greek language classes.
- UNHCR supports non-formal education on the islands, where formal education is not yet available for most children.

Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare, working closely with the Ministry of Health and other partners. A particular problem are the limited public mental health institutions. To that end, UNHCR works with partners to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR began collaborating with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY, on a pilot project in Athens. The project will provide long-term support to 30 people in accommodation and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care. It also includes the mapping of mental health services and development of referral pathways for refugees and asylum-seekers with serious conditions, as well as the capacity building of relevant State authorities and NGOs.
- UNHCR funds primary and psychosocial support services in Lesbos and Chios, and mental health services in Attika where psychiatrists and psychologists provide services at the policlinic of the municipality of Athens.

Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service in Greece have translated into an accelerated rate for the granting of status to those in need of international protection. In 2017, 10,364 people received refugee status or subsidiary protection. This means that in 2017, 20 per cent more people received international protection than in the entire period between June 2013 and December 2016 (8,732).
- The increased number of recognized refugees translates into a pressing need to support their transition from the assistance they received as asylum-seekers to the national programmes they are eligible for in Greece on the same terms and conditions as Greek nationals.
- To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and relevant actors have agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recognized refugees can access cash assistance and accommodation, on a case-by-case basis. In January 2018, some 3,000 beneficiaries of international protection were provided accommodation in apartments through UNHCR's Scheme, and 6,000 received cash assistance.

Relocation and Returns

- The relocation programme from Greece to other EU Member States concluded with some 21,731 people having departed from Greece (Source: Asylum Service).
- This month, 47 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,531 people have been returned to Turkey

Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation. UNHCR ensures this does not hinder people's access to the Asylum Service or other services and provided transportation to over 5,600 people around Greece in January.

Peaceful Co-existence

- UNHCR's project with the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet-Gr), "[It could be me –It could be you](#)" continues for the fourth year. The project raises awareness on refugee issues and human rights amongst teachers and school children, educators, parents, youth and local community members through experiential learning, theatre and educational drama techniques. The participation of the educational community ensures the project's multiplying effects, thus promoting tolerance and respect in the broader community. In 2017, 7,900 students and 3,500 teachers participated.

Partners

In January UNHCR worked through 31 partners in 9 sectors. UNHCR worked on Protection with Arsis, Greek Council for Refugees, Ecumenical Refugee Program, METAdrasi, Praksis, Diotima, International Catholic Migration Commission, National Confederation of Disabled People, and UNOPS; On Child Protection with Arsis, METAdrasi, Network for Children's Rights, and Praksis; On Cash with Catholic Relief Service, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps; On Accommodation with Arsis, Iliaktida, Intersos, Nostos, Praksis, Solidarity Now, CRS and Local Authorities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa and Larissa; On Site Management Support with International Rescue Committee; On Capacity Building with Reception and Identification Service; On Health with Doctors of the World; On Peaceful coexistence & Integration with Arsis, KEAN-Cell of Alternative Youth Activities, Faros, Solidarity Now and Intersos; On Public awareness raising with Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet).

Donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds

Sweden (98 M) | Norway (43 M) | Netherlands (39 M) | United Kingdom (32 M) | Denmark (25 M) | Australia (19 M) | Switzerland (15 M)

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (2.5 M)

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LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation - UNHCR Greece - Twitter - Facebook - 'Face Forward... into my Home' Exhibition](#)