

Italy

May 2021

More than 5,600 persons arrived in Italy by sea in May, an increase of more than 4,000 persons compared to April (+256%). UNHCR assisted almost 93 per cent of sea arrivals.

A significant **increase in the number of unaccompanied and separated children** reaching Italian shores was noted, raising concerns over the availability of adequate reception and quarantine facilities.

In collaboration with the National Council of Social Workers, **seven training modules on international protection** were launched for 45,000 social workers in May.

KEY INDICATORS (MAY 2021)

5,679

Total sea arrivals to Italy disembarked at different sites across the country (Source: Ministry of Interior)

5,276

Sea arrivals assisted and informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff following disembarkation (Source: UNHCR)

4,176

Inquiries received and followed-up through UNHCR partner **ARCI toll-free number** (Source: ARCI)

65

Individuals received **medical assistance and psychosocial counselling** from UNHCR partners (Source: MEDU and LHIVE-LILA)

Sea arrivals in 2021 by disembarkation site



Sea arrivals POPULATION OF CONCERN

14,692

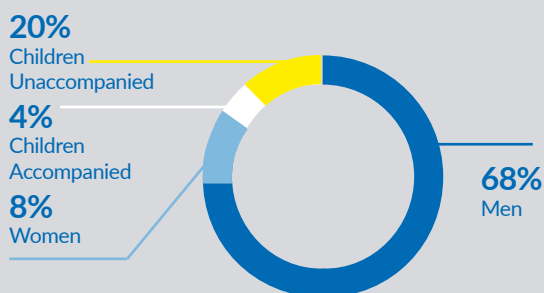
5,119

Jan-May 2021

Jan-May 2020

Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land arrivals and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals, as per official figures provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior.

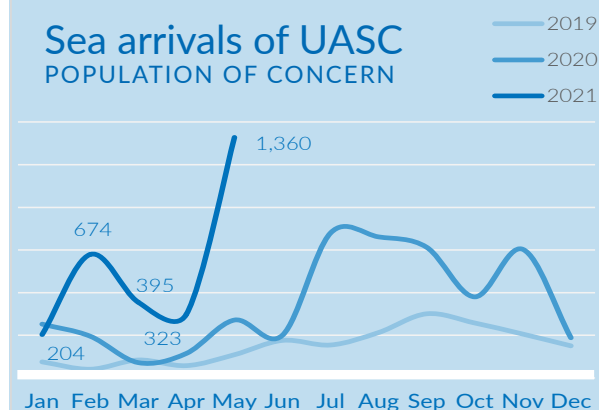
Sea arrivals by gender and age POPULATION OF CONCERN



Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100% exactly.

Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land arrivals and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals, as per official figures provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior. Gender breakdown for children is not available.

Sea arrivals of UASC POPULATION OF CONCERN



Source: Ministry of Interior. Please note that the chart refers to the latest available data.

- Access to territory (sea arrivals).** In May, **5,679 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea, a 256 per cent increase compared to (i) the 1,595 arrivals recorded in April**, and (ii) those recorded over the same month in recent years (1,654 sea arrivals recorded in May 2020 and 782 in May 2019). This represented the highest number of monthly arrivals of 2021, with a peak recorded during the second weekend of the month, when more than 2,000 persons arrived in Lampedusa in 21 disembarkations. Between January and May 2021, 14,692 refugees and migrants reached Italian shores, compared to slightly more than 5,000 in the same period last year and just above 1,500 in 2019. The majority of May 2021 sea arrivals departed from Libya (76%), followed by Tunisia (14%), Turkey (9%), Algeria (1%) and Greece (1%). A change in the profiles of sea arrivals was noticed in May, which saw a significant increase in the number of Bangladeshi and Eritrean nationals arriving (29% and 9% of the monthly total, compared to 9% and 4% in April respectively), and was accompanied by a decrease in the number of Tunisian nationals (11% of the monthly total, compared to 19% in April).¹ A worrying increase in the number of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) was recorded in May, with UASC accounting for 24 per cent of the total monthly arrivals. This included children below the age of 15, particularly from Egypt and Tunisia. Challenges in ensuring UASCs' timely transfer throughout the territory continue to be recorded, together with the limited availability of dedicated facilities for their quarantine and reception, particularly in the Apulia and Calabria regions. **UNHCR continues to advocate for the identification of adequate quarantine and reception facilities for unaccompanied and separated children, especially in light of the recorded increase in arrivals.** In May, a total of five NGOs vessels were operational in the Central Mediterranean, with MSF resuming search and rescue (SAR) activities at the end of the month through a Norwegian-flagged ship, the Geo Barents, with a certified capacity of up to 380 persons.



A UNHCR staff member assists UASC who had recently disembarked in Trapani. Photo @UNHCR/Alessio Mamo.

- Access to territory (land arrivals).** During the month of May, weekly interceptions of refugees and migrants crossing the Italy-Slovenia border ranged from approximately 45 persons apprehended during the second week of the month to almost four times as many the following week (more than 160 persons), even though the real number of border crossings is estimated to be much higher.² **The limited reception and quarantine capacity in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region, combined with a slow turnover in reception centres, remains a concern. On the Italy-France border, a weekly average of 200 people including children are still reported to be sleeping rough in Ventimiglia**, with a peak of some 250 persons observed around mid-month. On 14 May, the Head of the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, Prefect Michele Di Bari, met with the Prefect of Imperia and with the Mayor and other local authorities in Ventimiglia to discuss possible new reception arrangements and measures to strengthen police surveillance in the area for monitoring and status verification purposes. Discussions were ongoing by the end of the month.
- Support to the Government of Italy.** In the context of her official mission to Sicily, Apulia and Campania, the Representative to Italy, the Holy See and San Marino Chiara Cardoletti visited key areas of interest to UNHCR and met with Mayors and Prefects of Palermo, Bari and Naples and with the Prefect of Agrigento, as well as with NGOs and refugee-led organizations. The mission served as a way to

¹ For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the Italy page of the UNHCR data portal, available at [UNHCR - Mediterranean Situation](#).

² Please note that official data is unavailable.



reiterate UNHCR's readiness to support the government of Italy in its efforts to strengthen services and support the integration of refugees and other persons of concern. In May, UNHCR ordered 25 [Refugee Housing Units](#) requested by the Prefecture of Agrigento, which will be erected in Porto Empedocle in order to house new arrivals. UNHCR also seconded one staff member to the Ministry of Interior to support the newly established Working Group on Vulnerabilities, which focuses on identification, referral and response procedures for persons with specific needs among third-country nationals, with

a particular focus on sea arrivals. In May UNHCR supported the National Asylum Commission to **introduce "Experts on International Protection and Human Rights" as member of the Territorial Commissions for recognition of international protection**, gradually replacing UNHCR staff. This pilot project is part of the reform of the composition of the Territorial Commissions introduced in 2018, and is taking place in the Territorial Commissions of Bologna, Lecce, Livorno, Naples, Padua and Rome.

- **Child protection.** **In the first five months of 2021, 2,956 unaccompanied and separated children arrived in Italy by sea, almost half of whom (1,360) arrived in the month of May.** In line with general arrival trends, the majority of UASC who reached Italian shores in 2021 came from Bangladesh and Tunisia. As of the end of the month, more than 7,000 UASC were accommodated in dedicated facilities across the country: 97 per cent were boys and 65 per cent were aged 17.³ In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the National Council of Social Workers (Consiglio Nazionale Ordine Assistenti Sociali, CNOAS) on 27 May, UNHCR launched seven training modules aimed at building the technical and professional capacity of around 45,000 social workers across the country in the area of international protection. Topics such as the right of children to participate in decisions that affect them, the right to family unity under Dublin Regulation III, protection of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) minorities and gender-based violence against men and boys will be examined during the training activities.⁴ The fifth of ten planned training activities for socio-legal staff working in UASC reception facilities was carried out in May by UNHCR's partner Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR) and focused on the national reception and integration system (Sistema Accoglienza e Integrazione, SAI). Through the same project, **new volunteers started their guardianship training in support of the Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents in the areas of competence of the Tribunals of Catania and Messina.** UNHCR also participated in a [live chat](#) on guardianship organized by U-Report on the Move.
- **Community engagement.** The number of calls to the national [toll-free number](#) managed by ARCI and UNHCR increased by approximately 30 per cent during the month of May. Through this helpline, **asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection are assisted with the support of socio-linguistic mediation and provided services and information on a vast spectrum of issues** concerning international protection procedures, access to social services, housing and employment orientation, legal counselling, advocacy with Italian authorities and referral to dedicated services. In parallel, the website [JumaMap](#), which maps services available to refugees and



³ Ministry of Labour, *Report mensili MNSA*, May 2021, available at [Report MSNA mese Maggio 2021](#) (in Italian).

⁴ Further information about the launch of the training modules can be found at [UNHCR-CNOAS insieme per una FAD senza barriere. Lanciati i nuovi moduli formativi su rifugiati e richiedenti asilo](#) (in Italian).

asylum-seekers throughout the country, was updated in May to include the latest information on the COVID-19 vaccination campaign and swab tests.⁵ New [information material](#) on COVID-19 vaccination for persons living in conditions of marginality including in informal settlements was made available in ten different languages on the ASL Roma 2 website and produced, among others, by UNHCR's partner Medici per i Diritti Umani (MEDU).⁶

- **Integration.** The first of three webinars for enterprises and employment actors was organized in May in the framework of the [Welcome project](#) and it was attended by more than 200 participants, including companies, labour consultants, NGOs and reception and integration workers. The webinar series aims to provide an overview of international protection and successful inclusion of refugees in the national labour market, with a focus on practical aspects and on the benefits of including refugees in the company workforces.⁷ A few days earlier, on 11 May, a [workshop](#) on the same topic was jointly organized by ILO and UNHCR with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, and saw the participation of 12 Italian business and sectoral organizations including, among others, Confindustria, Confcommercio, CNA, Coldiretti and Alleanza Cooperative Italiane.⁸
- **Public information.** On 4 May, during the biweekly UN Press briefing held by the United Nations Information Services at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, UNHCR Italy's spokesperson gave a live briefing from the port of Trapani during the disembarkation of 450 persons from the NGO vessel Sea Watch.⁹ During May, UNHCR also gave a lecture on climate-caused displacement to 900 students during the [Hikma Summit of International Relations](#) and spoke during a [webinar](#) organized by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) to present a toolkit on communicating on migration issues.
- **Fundraising.** In May, UNHCR raised **1.7 million Euros from private donors** in Italy, totalling 9.2 million Euros since the beginning of the year. The major private donors in Italy contributing to UNHCR operations worldwide this month were Banca Progetto, Fondazione Deloitte and Mrs De Cesario.



Italy's support to UNHCR operations worldwide



On the occasion of her visit to the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, the Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Marina Sereni (left) reaffirmed Italy's support to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Photo: @UNHCR Jordan.

The Government of Italy is a key partner and donor to UNHCR operations around the world. Thanks to its generous financial support, UNHCR can protect and assist refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people in Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia. **Last year, Italy donated over 32 million Euros to fifteen UNHCR operations worldwide.** Its unearmarked contributions meant UNHCR could respond quickly to emergencies, support people in protracted or forgotten crises and maintain life-saving protection and assistance in underfunded conflicts.¹⁰

⁵ The two projects' implementation reports for 2020, which also contain further details on the types of interventions generally performed as well as on the services and needs requested, can be found [here](#) (Helpline) and [here](#) (JumaMap).

⁶ Further information and the material translated in different languages can be accessed at [ASL Roma 2 - UOC Tutela degli Immigrati e Stranieri](#) (in Italian).

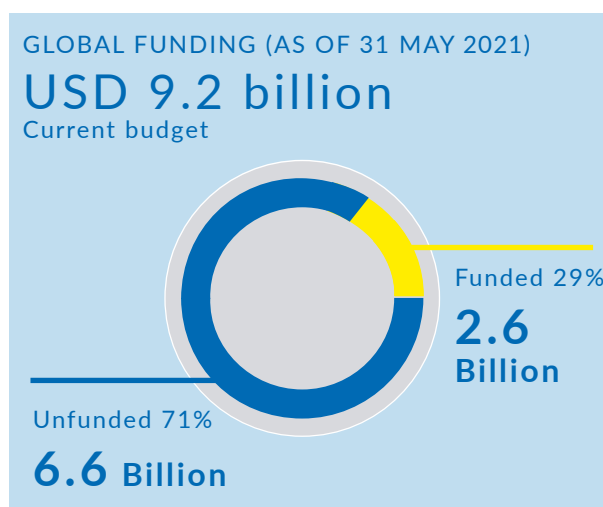
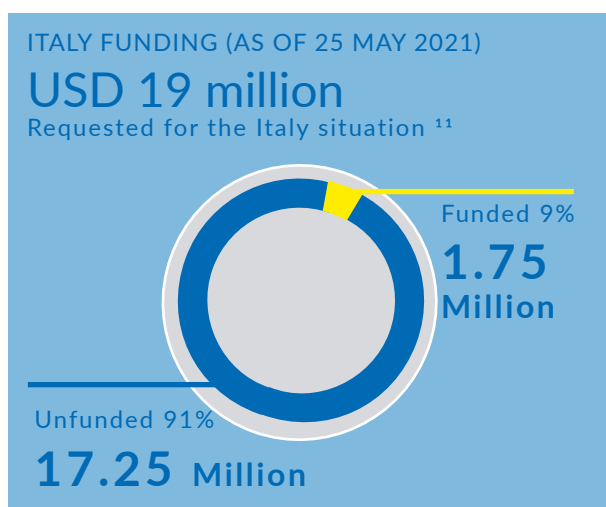
⁷ The full recording of the webinar and additional information on the two upcoming events can be found at [Inclusione di rifugiati in azienda: 3 webinar per saperne di più - UNHCR Welcome](#) (in Italian).

⁸ The press release of the event can be found at [Nota congiunta OIL-UNHCR sul seminario "Imprese e inclusione dei rifugiati nel mercato del lavoro italiano"](#) (in Italian).

⁹ The summary of the live briefing can be found at [UNHCR warns of mounting refugee and migrant deaths in the Central Mediterranean](#), while the full briefing can be viewed [here](#) (minute 14:38 to 23:06).

¹⁰ For more information on Italy's global contribution to UNHCR, see [Italy | Global Focus](#).

Financial information



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

United States of America 28.7 M | **Private donors of Australia** 3.7 M | **Canada** 2.9 M | **Private donors of Norway**

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Norway 80 M | **Sweden** 66.9 M | **Netherlands** 36.1 M | **Denmark** 34.6 M | **Private donors of Spain** 28.3 M | **Germany** 26 M | **France** 20 M | **Switzerland** 16.4 M | **Private donors of the Republic of Korea** 14.3 M | **Ireland** 12.5 M | **Belgium** 11.9 M

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LINKS

[UNHCR data portal](#) [Mediterranean situation](#) - [UNHCR Italy](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Global Focus](#)

¹¹ Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritised activities. The contributions earmarked for Italy shown above are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking.