

KEY FIGURES

80,754

Refugees and migrants arriving by sea to Europe in 2016.

403

Refugees and migrants estimated to have died / gone missing at sea in 2016.

1,189

Average daily sea arrivals in Greece from 5 – 11 February 2016.

382,284

UNHCR thermal blankets distributed since the start of the crisis.

52,265

UNHCR sleeping mats distributed since the start of the crisis.

USD 235.8M: Total 2016

requirements for UNHCR's activities in the context of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe.

USD 107.5M: Funding

received for UNHCR's activities in Europe in 2016.

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 persons of concern.

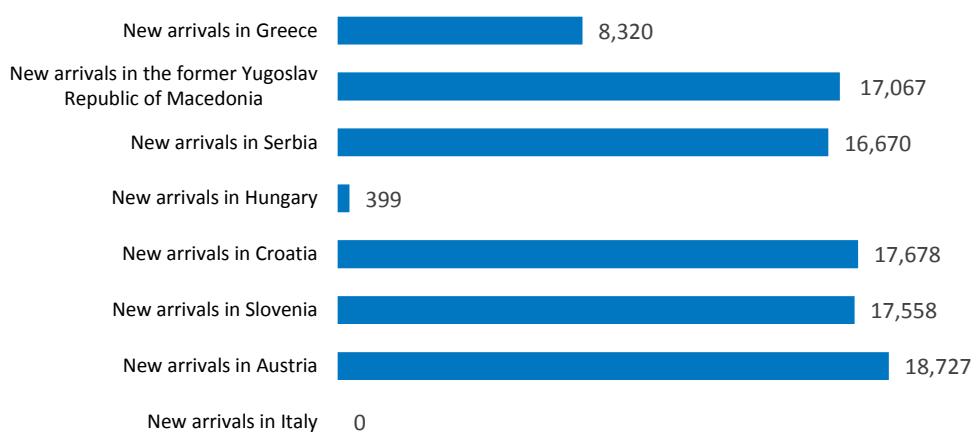
EUROPE'S REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE #22

5-11 February 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ahead of the Visegrad Group Summit on 15 February in Prague, [UNHCR](#) urged leaders in Central Europe to show greater solidarity with desperate refugees who seek sanctuary in the continent as war, conflict and extremism force millions out of their homes.
- In an informal [meeting](#) of European Union and Foreign Affairs Ministers on 5-6 February in Amsterdam, the Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Mr. Miro Kovac, stated that Croatia supports the idea of stepping up controls on the Greek-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian border if Greece is unable to control its border with Turkey, but that decision would require the consent of all EU member states. He also added that Croatia wished to remain a transit country and, if host countries such as Germany and Austria closed their borders to refugees, Croatia would as well.
- The Turkish spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tanju Bilgiç, [announced](#) new visa regulations for Iraqi nationals. Previously, Iraqi citizens were able to enter Turkey by obtaining e-visas (sticker type visas) valid for 30 days, at the Turkish borders. However, as stated on 6 February, Iraqi nationals are required to apply for a visa through diplomatic representations of Turkey abroad.

New arrivals from 5-11 February 2016¹



¹ UNHCR Hungary has no comprehensive information on the total number of new arrivals but only those apprehended by the police.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

In **Greece**, the ferry strike continued until 6 February and the number of sea arrivals remained low amidst poor weather conditions. The preparation of hotspots progressed smoothly except on Kos where there was a clash between the anti-hotspot protestors and the Riot Police resulting in casualties. On the mainland, due to a farmers' strike blocking the road, thousands of people could not proceed to Eidomeni and were prevented from traveling to the border crossing between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Consequently, the temporary accommodation sites in Athens became overstretched with 2,000 people and over 1,000 spent the night at the port. There was tension in Diavata, close to Thessaloniki, where the locals tried to stop the works at the former military base, which will serve as a second camp for refugees and migrants, together with another camp in Piraeus, as announced by the Greek Minister of Defence, Mr. Panos Kammenos. The local protestors brought down the fence but the Riot Police intervened immediately.

On 5 February, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian authorities started building a second metal fence on the border with Greece to prevent irregular border crossings. Some 161 people were returned to the Greek border for possessing forged documents, no documents, or for being of nationalities other than Afghan, Iraqi or Syrian; none opted to apply for asylum in the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**.

During the reporting period, taxi drivers threatened to block the railway on and off as refugees were only being transported by train to the northern border. Special police forces were lined up along the train tracks before the entrance to the Vinojug reception centre to prevent taxi drivers from blocking the railway line again. Authorities reiterated that the only means of transportation for refugees will be by train. To demonstrate their disagreement with the decision, taxi and private bus drivers blocked the regular border crossing with Greece at Bogorodica (near Gevgelija) and stated they will stage protests until their demands are met.

On average 2,330 refugees arrived in **Serbia** every day. All facilities at Presevo and Sid were fully utilized to assist them. Over 300 were staying nightly in the reception centre in Presevo including in Refugee Housing Units (RHUs). In Sid, the numbers of arrivals from Presevo by train increased and asylum seekers were able to access all services while waiting to depart to Croatia.

In **Hungary**, from 5 to 11 February, 399 new arrivals were apprehended by the police after irregular entry. The authorities increased the number of police officers patrolling the 175km fence along the Serbian border where it has been reported that the fence was damaged in several places.

On 9 February, the Croatian Minister of Interior, Mr. Vlaho Orepić, announced that 20 police officers and equipment were deployed to support the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with refugee profiling and border control. This is in line with an agreement on mutual assistance between police forces in countries intersected by the Balkan migrant route. As a result, people would no longer be registered in **Croatia** as registration will be conducted in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

According to the Croatian Police Directorate, the Slavonski Brod facility for refugees will remain open while the number of staff will be increased or reduced depending on needs. The Slovenian Ministry of Interior (Mol) denied reports of an inter-state agreement on organizing direct transportation by train for refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Austria and refuted allegations about plans to close the current accommodation in Slovenia.

On 6 February, the opposition party New Slovenia (NSi) shared its proposals to amend the International Protection Act (asylum legislation). The proposals included introducing a quota (5,000) for the number of asylum seekers **Slovenia** would admit, making it easier to strip beneficiaries of international protection status accorded, and excluding brothers, sisters, the parents of a person older than 18 or the parents of a married minor from the possibility of family reunification. Additionally, the police and civil protection introduced a system of separating new arrivals according to their language.

In the next days, refugees arriving from Slovenia will be transferred to **Austria** only through the Sentilj–Spielfeld border-crossing where the new screening and registration centre is now fully operational. At Karawanken, authorities do not have screening facilities (for persons and bags) or sufficient infrastructure to register persons. The new screening centre

in Spielfeld was tested initially with 500 then 1,000 persons per day. Now with the test phase finished, all arrivals will be channeled through Spielfeld. Planning continues to set up similar border management structures in the Provinces of Carinthia (Karawanken tunnel) and Tyrol (Brenner). Discussions to establish daily limits at the border are ongoing.

In [Italy](#), no sea arrivals or transfer under the relocation scheme took place in the reporting period. Nine persons will be relocated to Germany on 15 February.

As of 10 February 2016, 497 persons relocated so far to 12 Member States (279 individuals were relocated out of Italy and 218 out of Greece). In terms of places pledged, 17 Member States and Lichtenstein have offered relocation places.



A refugee received a new UNHCR sleeping bag in Vinojug reception centre, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
©UNHCR/I. Ciobanu, January 2016.

Protection, Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support

Greece

- On 5 February, UNHCR in coordination with the Ministry of Migration provided 2,000 mats, 2,000 blankets and two winterised rubhalls as a temporary shelter solution for the high number of people at the temporary accommodation facilities in Athens.
- On the mainland, UNHCR agreed with the authorities to establish an emergency site at EKO gas station in Polykastro to provide shelter and assistance to people waiting to reach Idomeni. The cold temperatures necessitate an immediate shelter and protection response as the arrivals continue to be largely families with small children and women. UNHCR erected 50 family tents and two rubhalls as temporary shelter for the people waiting at the gas station. About a hundred people per hour continued crossing the border, allowing temporary accommodation sites in Athens to decongest.
- On the islands of Chios and Samos, preparations are ongoing to relocate the temporary registration facilities to the hotspot sites; while on Leros, the remaining installation work is to be finalised shortly.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- Upon arrival in the Vinojug reception centre, refugees were tired and some stated they had to wait several days inside buses at the gas station EKO (Polykastro) in Greece in very difficult conditions with limited access to services. Following the establishment of an emergency site at EKO gas station, the situation improved.
- The work on a new distribution point for clothing/NFIs is ongoing. The first and second floor steel structure was completed. Preparations for the kitchen are progressing. Two (out of ten) UNHCR RHUs are now fully equipped and prepared for overnight stays with three bunk beds (in total six persons) and heating in each RHU.

Serbia

- Some 475 arrivals of the 58,939 registered by the MoI in January 2016 expressed intention to seek asylum in Serbia while others were issued with a transit registration paper, as they intended to seek asylum in Austria or Germany. Men made up 44 per cent of the refugee population, children 36 per cent and women 20 per cent. The majority of transit registration papers were issued to asylum seekers from Syria (47 per cent), Afghanistan (31 per cent) and Iraq (20 per cent). In January, three asylum seekers were granted subsidiary protection.
- At the Sid train station, individuals were prevented from boarding trains because the Croatian authorities/interpreters doubted they came from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq in over 600 instances. UNHCR has been counseling them on the asylum procedures in Serbia. Most of them prefer to try to make their way to Europe.
- On 8 February, UNHCR convened a coordination meeting with civil society organizations and partners. The meeting highlighted the situation of stranded refugees/migrants, including unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs) that are currently present in Belgrade and their access to shelter and services.

Hungary

- During a monitoring mission from 8 to 10 February, UNHCR held group discussions with the Persons of Concern (PoCs) at the asylum detention and the aliens police detention in Nyírbátor, where 98 asylum-seekers and 109 irregular migrants are detained respectively. The discussions provided information about the asylum procedures in Hungary. Vulnerable cases that require referrals to medical and legal assistance were identified and referred accordingly.
- At the aliens police facility in Nyírbátor a number of the detainees awaiting expulsion complained about the lengthy process and requested UNHCR's support. UNHCR will follow up on these cases and intervene with the concerned authorities, embassies and IOM, based on UNHCR's good offices to accelerate their return.
- There were over 1,000 arrivals found guilty for irregular crossing of the border during the reporting period. The Szeged Court sentenced 665 migrants for expulsion from Hungary for one year, 361 for two years, three for three years, one for five years; 17 cases were suspended.

Croatia

- A coordination meeting between UNHCR, the Croatian Red Cross and other NGOs on the ground continues to be held on a daily basis in the Winter Reception and Transit Centre.
- Four interpreters (one Farsi and three Arabic speakers) joined UNHCR Field Unit in Slavonski Brod to support the team in carrying out its activities.
- Arrivals and departures of the train were regular, with three trains arriving from Serbia and three trains leaving for Slovenia.

Slovenia

- UNHCR raised with its partners concerns about the increasing number of UASCs and highlighted the importance of strengthened cooperation with the police to facilitate the process of communication and interaction with the UASCs. The police welcomed UNHCR concerns and agreed to provide more support.
- In Dobova, UNHCR attended the bi-weekly meeting along with the police, the army, and NGOs. The Chief of the Police in Brezice stated that the army now controls the entry to and exit from Livarna reception facility; and, soon all active NGOs and UN Agencies at the facility will receive special identification cards. Without them, entry to the facility will not be allowed. All organizations must provide staff information (names, date of birth) to the police.
- To improve the systems of registration, protection and assistance to the PoCs, UNHCR agreed to establish a daily coordination meeting with the police, the Civil Protection and other agencies working in Dobova reception centre.

Italy

- UNHCR field teams provided information on access to the asylum procedure and to the relocation programme in second line reception facilities. UNHCR roving teams visited reception centres, met with institutional stakeholders in Milan, and visited the transit camp managed by the Italian Red Cross in Rome in order to provide information to potential relocation candidates hosted there.
- A Working Group established by the MoI intensified its efforts to finalize the Standard Operating Procedures to be applied by competent authorities in the hotspots. The MoI is also leading the drafting and publication of a leaflet on relocation to be distributed to all MoI branch offices and to be used to provide to potentially eligible asylum

seekers basic and clear information about key points related to the functioning of the relocation programme in Italy (e.g. eligible nationalities, registration/fingerprinting, identification of the country of relocation, timeframe).

Working in partnership

In line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), UNHCR supports the Government's coordination efforts at central and local level in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. In Hungary, UNHCR chairs a coordination forum including UN agencies, IGOs, NGO partners and non-state institutions. This includes the support to crisis management teams, the facilitation of general and sectoral coordination meetings. Besides cooperation with Governments, UNHCR also operates closely with the European Commission and relevant EU Agencies, including Frontex and EASO. Other partners include:

[A21](#) | Action Aid | [ADRA Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | Agape | [AI Amnesty International](#) | Amity | [Apostoli/IOCC ASB](#) | BCHR Belgrade Centre for Human Rights | [Caritas](#) | Church of Holistic Gospel | [Cordelia Foundation](#) | CRS Catholic Relief Services | [Croatian Law Centre](#) | Croatian Red Cross | [Centre for Peace Studies \(Croatia\)](#) | Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Macedonia | [DRC Danish Refugee Council](#) | Dorcas | [Evangelic church of Greece](#) | Ecumenical Refugee Council Euro Human | [Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Red Cross](#) | GIZ Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit | [Grain of Goodness](#) | Greek Refugee Council | Habitat for Humanity | [Hellenic League for Human Rights](#) | Hellenic Red Cross | [Hellenic Theatre Drama & Education Network](#) | Help the Refugees in Macedonia | [HERA Health education and Research Organization](#) | HHC Hungarian Helsinki Committee | [Hilal](#) | HCIT Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance | [Human Appeal](#) | ICMC International Catholic Migration Commission | [IHA International Health Action](#) | Indigo | Information Legal Center –Croatia | [INTERSOS](#) | Institute Circle | IOM International Organization for Migration | [IRC International Rescue Committee](#) | Israaid | [Italian Red Cross](#) | JRS Jesuit Refugee Service | [Kaliri](#) | KSPM-ERP Church of Greece | La Strada (Open Gate) | [Legis](#) | Magna | [MdM Médecins du Monde](#) | Medin | [Menedek Association](#) | Mercy Corps | [Merhamet](#) | METAction | [MGMD Mirovna Grupa Mladih Dunav](#) | Microfins | [MSF Médecins Sans Frontières](#) | MYLA Macedonian Young Lawyers Association | [NRC Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | Nun | [Operation Mercy](#) | Oxfam | [Peace Institute \(Slovenia\)](#) | PiN People in Need | [PiC Pravno-informacijski Center Nevladnih Organizacija](#) | Praksis | [Praxis](#) | ProAsyl | [Remar](#) | Salvation Army | [Samaritan's Purse](#) | Save the Children | Secours Islamique France | [Shelter Box](#) | Sigma Plus | [Slovene Philanthropy](#) | SOS Children's Village | [Terre des hommes](#) | UNDP United Nations Development Programme | [UNFPA United Nations Population Fund](#) | UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund | [Union of Baptist Churches in Croatia](#) | UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services | Vizija | [Vlaznia Kumanovo, Volunteer Centre Osijek](#) | WAHA Women and Health Alliance International | [WHO World Health Organization](#)

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In the framework of the [inter-agency Regional and Refugee Migrant Response Plan \(RMRP\) for Europe](#), released on 26 January, UNHCR appeals for **USD 235.8 million** in additional support for European affected countries in the eastern Mediterranean and western Balkans route for 2016.

This appeal supersedes UNHCR's 2016 requirements for Europe region presented in the [Special Mediterranean Initiative \(SMI\)](#) and in the Winterization Appeal.

A revised version of the Special Mediterranean Initiative, outlining the Office's response to the refugee crisis not only in Europe, as included in the RMRP, but also in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa sub-region, is soon to be released. Pending the release of this new appeal, requirements for Africa and North Africa sub-regions indicated in the SMI appeal remains valid.

As of 9 February, **USD 108.5 million** has been received for the SMI in 2016, including USD 107.5 million earmarked to Europe region.

Contributions have been received from: Canada; European Union; United States of America; Avaaz.Org, ERICSSON AB and Fondation BNP Paribas, UNIQLO and other private donors.

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

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2015:

[Sweden](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [Norway](#) | [Australia](#) | [Denmark](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [Germany](#)

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Links:

UNHCR, [UNHCR concerned about the conditions of refugees and migrants in Calais and Dunkerque, in particular children](#)

UNHCR, [Europe: UNHCR concerned over increasing restrictive measures, urges effective comprehensive European response](#)

UNHCR, [UNHCR Statement on the Situation in Turkey](#)

UNHCR, [UNHCR urges Central European leaders to show solidarity with refugees ahead of the V4 Summit](#)

UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php> (webportal accessible via Google Chrome or Firefox only).

Europe Refugees/Migrants Emergency

UNHCR Presence and Key Border Crossings

as of 11 February 2016

