



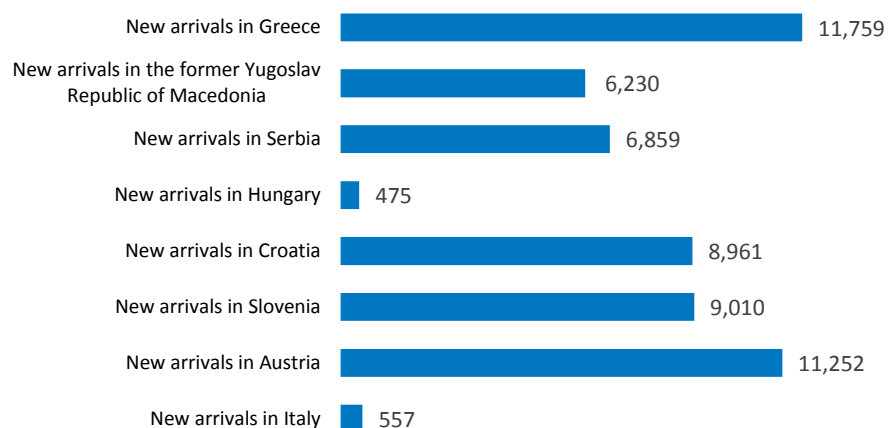
EUROPE'S REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE #23

12-18 February 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- At a press briefing in Geneva, UNHCR [stressed](#) that solutions to the European emergency were not only possible, but had already been agreed upon by States and now urgently need to be implemented. Stabilization is essential and something for which there is also strong public demand.
- UNHCR [calls](#) for more to be done to reinforce reception capacities at the points of entry to Europe, to allow for the humane and effective accommodation, assistance, registration and security screening of people arriving every day. UNHCR's Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe, Mr. Vincent Cochetel, stated that UNHCR hoped that European Union (EU) Member States would implement at a faster pace all EU-wide measures agreed upon in 2015, including the implementation of hotspots, the relocation process for 160,000 people already in Greece and Italy, and the EU-Turkey Joint-Action Plan.
- At the [Munich Security Conference](#) on 12-14 February, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, stressed that the strains of displacement are felt by refugees - not just by Europe. He added that 'if Europe organizes itself, it can cope'.

New arrivals from 12-18 February 2016¹



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

KEY FIGURES

95,104

Refugees and migrants arriving by sea to Europe in 2016.

403

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

1,680

Average daily sea arrivals in Greece from 12 to 18 February 2016.

384,461

UNHCR thermal blankets distributed since the start of the crisis.

53,434

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.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

More than 400 people have lost their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea in 2016. However, despite the dangers, over 2,000 people per day continue to risk their lives and their children's lives attempting to reach Europe. The majority of those arriving in January 2016 were women and children.

In **Greece**, following a period of rough seas and fewer numbers of arrivals, when weather conditions improved, arrival figures rose to over 4,600 and 4,800 people on 17-18 February respectively, marking the highest arrival rate since 9 January. As announced by the Greek Minister of Defence, Mr. Panos Kammenos, in a press conference on 16 February, four out of the five hotspots are ready to host refugees. The Minister of Defence officially inaugurated the hotspots on Lesbos, Chios and Leros islands, and stated that the one on Samos will be fully operational on 23 February and works in the one on Kos will be completed shortly. On the mainland, the establishment of two camps in Schisto (Piraeus) and Diavata (Thessaloniki) is being finalized. The border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was open for most of the reporting period and crossing proceeded regularly. Few people were in Eidomeni sites mainly due to road blocks by a farmer strike, which caused buses from Athens to use alternative and longer routes to the border.

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, as of 12 February, the Crisis Management Centre (CMC) and the Macedonian Railways came to an agreement that refugees/migrants being returned to Gevgelija and wishing to go back on to Greece will be transported by train, free of charge. The Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) staff will identify refugees/migrants that are willing to return, provide the CMC with the individuals' credentials, and the CMC will contact the railway company. Upon confirmation from the railway office, the CMC will board the refugees/migrants on the next available train traveling directly to Gevgelija.

Due to adverse weather conditions on the Aegean Sea, arrivals from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to **Serbia** substantially decreased from the previous week (daily average of 910 refugees/migrants) while arrivals from Bulgaria slightly increased (daily average of 69 individuals). In the South, further enhancement of the accommodation capacities was made. The weather remained fairly mild and UNHCR and its partners assisted asylum seekers in all sites without any major problems.

In **Hungary**, 475 new arrivals were apprehended by the police after irregular entry with 119 apprehended on 15 February alone. On 12 February, the UNHCR Regional Representative for Central Europe, Ms. Montserrat Feixas Vihé, visited the Hungarian border with Serbia at Röszke and observed the intensified police patrolling along the fence and some of the spots where it had been damaged and repaired.

On 15 February, further to the Visegrád Group (V4) Summit, the Hungarian Government's Spokesperson, Mr. Zoltán Kovács, stated that if Greece is not able to protect Europe's borders, another fence must be erected along Greece's borders with Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In **Croatia**, on 18 February, the police chiefs from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria met in Zagreb and adopted a joint statement, introducing joint registration of refugees crossing from Greece into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Croatian chief of police, Mr. Vlado Dominic, stated that following a good profiling and registration process at the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Greek border, there would be no more linear returns of migrants. However, should there be any returns, police chiefs will agree the way migrants would be sent back, reiterating that only those coming from war-stricken areas would be allowed to enter.

On 15 February, Austrian authorities informed the Slovenian police that unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) not requesting asylum in Austria or expressing interest to request asylum in Germany will be returned from Austria to **Slovenia**, irrespective of being attached to a non-relative family.

The Slovenian government has tabled a proposal in the Parliament to give the army limited policy powers to patrol the border in line with legislative changes passed last October. The Minister of Defence, Mr. Andreja Katič, stated that the country intends to follow Austria's lead in reducing the daily arrivals in an effort to strengthen limits on migrant arrivals.

Austria announced the introduction of daily and hourly refugee and migrant quotas based on border control measures Germany has established at its borders, and will examine proposals for crowd-control measures. In reaction to these

measures, the Croatian and Slovenian authorities indicated taking similar action. Austrian authorities will also further increase border control measures at the Italian, Slovenian, Hungarian crossings. Additionally, the Croatian authorities have sent Border and Riot Police forces to monitor the Serbian border area. Police chiefs from Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia met on 18 February in Zagreb to discuss the current situation and possible further collaborative solutions in the migrant crisis.

In **Italy** there were three sea arrivals (two in Pozzallo and one in Lampedusa) with 557 people. The newly arrived reported to have departed from Libya. The main countries of origin are Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

As of 16 February 2016, 288 individuals were relocated out of Italy to eight Member States and 295 out of Greece, totaling 583 persons relocated so far to 14 Member States. In terms of places pledged, 20 Member States and Lichtenstein have offered relocation places.



Long queue for luggage scan, Miratovac (Serbia), ©UNHCR, February 2016.

Protection, Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support

Greece

- Increased trend of arrivals has been noted on Chios, as well as on the military island of Farmakonissi (over 600 people on 17 February) and in the Southern Dodecanese island of Kastelorizo, which has only 200 inhabitants and received some 500 arrivals on 17-18 February. UNHCR teams went to Farmakonissi and Kastelorizo to support the authorities and the local community in providing protection and assistance to the new arrivals, who were in large part children.
- As requested by the Greek authorities, UNHCR provided 300 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) and two warehouses for the camp in Diavata (Thessaloniki), as well as technical assistance for the site plan which is being implemented by the Army. Furthermore, UNHCR will supply two additional warehouses and 500 bunk beds, for a total capacity of 2,200 people. For the camp in Shisto (Piraeus), UNHCR has provided a rubhall.
- UNHCR and NGO partners are coordinating with the Greek Army and the First Reception Service (an independent agency under the Deputy Minister of Interior) to overcome challenges in the operationalization of the hotspots in the islands.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- The reception capacity for refugees in the Vinojug centre is being increased. A total of 10 UNHCR-IKEA RHUs and 10 containers with beds and heating units are available for 100 persons.
- On 12 February, UNHCR facilitated a cross-border visit of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian authorities to Presevo and Miratovac refugee reception and registration centres in Serbia. The primary objective of the mission was to share experiences/practice, with a particular focus on the registration procedure.
- Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), present in the Vinojug reception centre since October 2015, has installed new Wi-Fi access points to boost the existing connection allowing a higher density of people (up to 2,000 individuals) to be connected simultaneously to the internet.

Serbia

- On 16 February, the Minister of Interior, Mr. Stefanovic, the Minister of Labour, Mr. Vulin, the Norwegian Ambassador, Mr. Bjørnstad, and UNHCR visited South Serbia. The delegation inaugurated two family pavilions with a capacity of 350 refugees/migrants, one children's corner, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) coffee shop for refugees/migrants and a new ambulance at the Presevo reception centre that were rehabilitated by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), with UNHCR and Norwegian funds.
- At the Sid train station, in over 504 instances, individuals were prevented from boarding trains because the Croatian authorities/interpreters doubted they were from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq or due to lack of documents. They were all counselled on available options, including the right to seek asylum in Serbia and Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR). On 18 February, a demonstration of 30 refugees/migrants who had been "pushed-back" from Croatia, blocked tracks and train traffic.

Hungary

- UNHCR conducted a monitoring visit to Békéscsaba Asylum Detention Centre on 15 and 16 February 2016. The visit brought positive outcome to the Persons of Concern (PoCs) at the facility which now accommodates its maximal capacity of 185 PoCs. Information sharing sessions on issues of interest to the asylum-seekers have been conducted followed by 59 individual counselling interviews and the referral of cases in need of medical assistance, psycho-social counselling, age assessment and legal aid. UNHCR assisted one of the asylum-seekers who reported physical abuse by a guard to lodge an official complaint to initiate the investigation process. UNHCR shared its observation with the head of the facility and highlighted the need to ensure a safe and peaceful environment free of verbal or physical abuse and called for better cooperation with UNHCR.
- In a visit at the Hodmezovasarhely's home accommodating unaccompanied children, UNHCR delivered clothing donations collected through a local aid group to address the needs of the children.

Croatia

- UNHCR visited Jezevo detention centre for monitoring purposes. The centre currently accommodates 116 irregular migrants mainly of Moroccan, Pakistani and Algerian origins. UNHCR confirmed that all the individuals have access to the national asylum procedures.
- The MoI informed UNHCR that 154 individuals were returned from Slovenia. Only three individuals were admitted to Jezevo centre to ensure reunification with their group members who had been accommodated there. The rest were sent to the Winter Reception and Transit Centre in Slavonski Brod to be returned to Serbia under the agreement between the two Governments.

Slovenia

- UNHCR was informed of the new admission procedures being implemented in Dobova as of 12 February. The police in Dobova have given instructions that only people from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are to be accepted/admitted, other nationalities will be immediately returned to Croatia from Dobova. As part of these new admission procedures, 108 people were returned to Croatia. In addition, 17 individuals (Iranians, Afghans and some Iraqis and Syrians) have been isolated to be returned to Croatia.
- 90 per cent of arrivals approached UNHCR to change their personal data (such as nationality and date of birth) on the documentation issued in Croatia, as the information provided there was incorrect.
- The accommodation centre in Lendeva (on the Slovenian/Hungarian border) is operational since 14 February, after being closed for a month for facilities to be upgraded.

Italy

- UNHCR visited the reception facilities in Rome accommodating relocation candidates, who are concerned about their situation - as media are reporting about the possibility that Member States may cap their quotas. Long waiting time in the reception facilities creates additional insecurity among the relocation candidates. UNHCR is providing information on the relocation scheme and its advantages.
- At port of disembarkation and in the hotspots, UNHCR observed the increasing caseload of third country nationals claiming to be Eritreans and registered by competent authorities as Ethiopians.
- Difficulties in accessing international protection procedures continue to occur and are regularly monitored by UNHCR, in particular at Lampedusa. A number of new arrivals wishing to apply for international protection are served with pre-removal orders and transferred to identification and expulsion centres (CIE).

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 Medecins Sans Frontieres](#) | [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 Organizacij](#) | [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 homes](#) | [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 22 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](#) | [Australia](#) | [Norway](#) | [Denmark](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [Germany](#)

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Links:

UNHCR, [Some 80,000 refugees arrive in Europe in first six weeks of 2016](#)

UNHCR, [Taking the plunge: Swimming lessons help integration in Norway](#)

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

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 18 February 2016



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. * References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Sources: UNHCR Author: UNHCR - HQ Geneva Feedback: mapping@unhcr.org Filename: eus_smi_presence_used_crossing