



EUROPE'S REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE #7

16 - 22 October 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- Greece witnessed over 62,000 refugees and migrants arriving by sea, the highest weekly arrival figure so far. Over half a million persons arrived in Greece this year, with more than 50% arriving since September and around 300,000 on the island of Lesbos alone. The situation on Lesbos remains critical.
- The closure of Hungary's green border with Croatia on 17 October, led to a redirection of the population movement from Croatia to Slovenia.
- People stranded in transit points and the increased numbers of people on the move, led to a rise of tensions, refugees and migrants spending the night in the rain and a significant number of separated families. Deteriorating weather conditions further impacted people waiting in transit sites and border crossing points.
- UNHCR continues to work with governments in different countries impacted by the emergency to improve reception conditions, including by expanding emergency shelter, supporting registration capacity, assisting persons with specific needs and providing information and translation services. UNHCR is ensuring protection presence on key border crossings by working in 24h shifts.
- Preparations for the winter are ongoing in reception facilities and transit sites.
- On 21 October, a second group of 66 asylum-seekers departed from Italy to Sweden and Finland, under the EU relocation scheme.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Over 62,000 refugees and migrants arrived by sea to Greece, the highest weekly arrival figure so far. Daily average arrivals are over 8,800. Arrivals originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (66%), Afghanistan (21%) and Iraq (6%). Over recent weeks, an increase in arrivals from Afghanistan and Iraq has been observed. It was reported that smugglers are offering discount rates for crossings in bad weather and packing more people onto boats. The number of refugees and migrants on the island continues to be significantly high, causing major concerns related to reception conditions and registration. Over 300,000 refugees and migrants arrived on Lesbos alone, where the situation remains tense and conditions continue to be of grave concern. Four shipwrecks occurred, over 150 persons were rescued, 9 persons died and 15 people went missing.

Onward movements through the Western Balkans continued, with average daily arrivals of 6,800 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and an average of 6,200 in Serbia during the reporting period. Total arrivals in the reporting period were around 47,700 and 43,600 respectively. On 18 October, a record number of over 10,000 arrivals was recorded in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Waiting times during this peak caused tensions, leading to a temporary suspension of registration. Unusually, approximately 460 arrivals were reported in Dimitrovgrad crossing into Serbia from Bulgarian.

KEY FIGURES

680,400

Refugees and migrants arriving by sea to Europe in 2015 as of 22 October.

3,150

Refugees and migrants estimated to have died / gone missing at sea in 2015.

537,700

Sea arrivals in Greece as of 22 October.

8,800

Average daily sea arrivals in Greece from 16-22 October.

139,800

Sea arrivals in Italy as of 22 October.

66

Asylum seekers departed from Italy under EU relocation scheme.

47,500

Arrivals in Slovenia following closure of Hungary/Croatia border on 16 October.

417

UNHCR staff deployed in emergency response.

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 people of concern.

The Hungarian Government closed the green border with Croatia at midnight on 16 October. As a result, Croatia delayed transfers from the border with Serbia to Opatovic transit centre. Over 3,000 persons, including many families with young children, had to spend the night at the Berkasovo/Bapska border in the rain without adequate shelter and with minimal assistance, causing several cases of hypothermia. The two newly established transit zones in Beremend and Letenye at the Hungary/Croatia border became functional following the closure of the border. However, no asylum-seekers or migrants have so far approached the transit zones. There have been some reports of restrictions to reach the Hungary/Croatia border. While the Hungary/Slovenia border remains open, Hungarian authorities have introduced border controls to prevent irregular movements.

Population movement redirected to Slovenia and 47,500 refugees and migrants have entered Slovenian territory since 17 October, of which very few applied for international protection in the country. Slovenian authorities, who had been prepared for a possible influx for some weeks, stressed that they could process 2,500 arrivals per day – limited to the reception capacity available at the border with Croatia. The total reception capacity in Slovenia is up to 7,500 places. Authorities transfer arrivals in groups of 150-200 people to the Austrian border. Given the slow movement, tensions erupted in Bresizce reception centre (close to the Croatian border) and people have started to move on their own to Austria from Sentilj reception centre (close to the Austrian border). As a consequence, organized transfers were further delayed by authorities.

Smaller numbers of refugees and migrants are entering Austria from Hungary with no arrivals since 18 October. Instead, some 20,600 persons entered Austria from Slovenia. Austria has given indications that it is limiting the number of arrivals per day, due to the overcrowded reception centres. An average of about 450 asylum claims have been lodged in Austria per day.

Over 139,300 refugees and migrants arrived by sea in Italy during the reporting period. The main nationalities include Eritreans (27%), Nigerians (14%), Somalis (8%), Sudanese (6%) and Syrians (5%). On 21 October, a second group of asylum seekers, 19 Syrians and 47 Eritreans departed respectively to Sweden and Finland, under the EU relocation scheme.

Achievements

Protection, Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support

Greece

Achievements and Impact

- Information sessions on international protection and asylum continue to be conducted on Lesvos, Kos, Samos, Leros, Chios, Rhodes, Evros and in Eidomeni – targeting a around 7,000 persons a day.
- UNHCR leads the coordination of humanitarian partners in Kara Tape on Lesvos, where registration for Syrians was resumed on 20 October.
- 80 people, including UNHCR staff, partners and volunteers benefitted from training on psychological first aid facilitated by UNHCR and the War Trauma Foundation.
- UNHCR continues to improve reception conditions through the installation of additional rub halls, Refugee Housing Units (RHU), winterization of shelter, site planning solutions, and enhancement of WASH.
- UNHCR provided around 2,300 sleeping mats, 13,000 High Energy Biscuits (HEB), 6,000 blankets, 80 baby kits, 300 solar lamps and 1,200 raincoats on the islands which were distributed with support of volunteers.
- UNHCR reached out to shipwreck survivors to provide legal support, accommodation, food, transportation and other assistance.
- EASO started to support the relocation process through the deployment of experts to Athens and the islands.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR is concerned by the deteriorating reception conditions whilst arrivals continue, weather conditions worsen and limited shelter is available. Many people are sleeping rough on Kos, Samos, Lesvos and Chios. The informal temporary shelter on Leros, is particularly overcrowded.
- In cooperation with authorities, capacity needs to be enhanced in registration and crowd control systems.

- There is a need to improve the identification and assistance to individuals with specific needs, including survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and persons with mobility deficiency. UNHCR and other actors are supporting the authorities to address this issue.
- Gaps remain in the protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). There is a lack of appropriate shelters on almost all islands, resulting in cases of children remaining in police custody in substandard conditions, before being transferred to open reception facilities in the mainland.
- Many locations still lack basic assistance systems. The existence of over 44 arrival points in Greece, challenges the effective provision of humanitarian assistance.
- In all locations, the coordination and management of distributions need further improvements, to ensure a better coverage and enhanced implementation.
- Lack of reception capacity in general undermines the relocation programme.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR's partner MYLA, provided legal advice to almost 200 representatives of refugee groups at Vinojug reception centre (close to Greek border) and assisted over 100 persons with specific needs with registration.
- Almost 400 persons with specific needs were assisted by La Strada.
- La Strada hosted around 2,700 women and 4,300 children in UNICEF Child Friendly Spaces at the Vinojug centre.
- 100 police officers benefited from training on international protection facilitated by UNHCR.
- UNHCR distributed over 700 blankets and collected several hundreds of blankets left behind by refugees and migrants for washing, to be reused for newcomers. Around 100 raincoats were also distributed by UNHCR.
- UNHCR, the Red Cross, Nun, Legis, Agape, ProCredit, Dorcas, Samaritan's Purse and Kaliri distributed around 25,000 food parcels, 300 hygiene kits, 12,000 liters of water and 1,800 back packs at the Vinojug site.
- The Red Cross assisted around 4,500 individuals with medication and provided around 800 medical interventions. Almost 50 persons were referred to the Ministry of Health (MoH).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Trains continue to be dangerously overcrowded.
- Assistance of persons with mobility deficiency requires further improvement.
- The cleaning of the Vinojug site remained unsatisfactory during the reporting period, visible in the rub halls.

Serbia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR assisted over 1,000 persons with specific needs and referred 200 medical cases to health services.
- Over 30 families were reunited by UNHCR, the Red Cross, HCIT, BCHR, DRC and Child Welfare Services.
- UNHCR protection team in Belgrade provided legal and protection assistance on family reunification, asylum procedures in Serbia and obtaining registration certificates from the police.
- Further measures were taken to improve reception conditions in Preševo, including the installation of three rub halls outside the reception centre as a waiting area.
- UNHCR distributed 5,000 raincoats, 3,000 blankets, 1,500kg HEB and 200 plastic sheets in Berkasovo (at Croatian border).
- UNHCR, the HCIT, World Vision, MSF, Red Cross, WAHA, Czech volunteers, the Red Cross and the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) continued to provide assistance and distribute food and NFIs.
- In Belgrade, UNHCR doctors and Community Health Centres continued to provide medical assistance to refugees staying in parks in the city centre.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The capturing of accurate registration data, such children's age and protection needs, can be improved. UNHCR continues to support the police in improving the quality and efficiency of registration.
- There is an urgent need for emergency shelter, enhanced cleaning services and sanitary facilities at Bapska/Berkasovo border crossing with Croatia, where thousands of persons spend the night in the open.
- The winter preparations and improvements for shelter taking place in Preševo need to be finalized urgently.
- Stocks of winterization and emergency shelter items need to be augmented.

- Additional clothes and footwear are needed to endure wet and cold conditions, in particular for children.
- The coordination in the distribution of relief items should be strengthened at local and central level

Hungary

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and its partner Menedek is monitoring all border crossing points with Croatia and Serbia and is regularly present in four transit zones (Roszke, Tompa, Beremend, and Letenye).
- UNHCR and HHC have monitored prison facilities, where over 230 persons of concern and migrants are being held. Some 660 others are being held in asylum detention centres. Information was provided regarding the national detention system and the possibility to apply for asylum, however most do not wish to apply for asylum.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The automatic use of detention for people crossing the border irregularly remains a serious concern. Persons in detention do not have access to sufficient medical care and adequate accommodation. UNHCR is in discussion with the Hungarian Government to improve their detention conditions.
- Authorities have launched criminal procedures against 825 persons, who irregularly crossed the Hungary/Serbia border, and the majority was issued an expulsion order to Serbia. Due to the slow readmission process, hundreds have been in detention for more than 50 days. UNHCR and HHC approached authorities to ensure they are not return to their countries of origin if Serbia refuses to readmit them.
- UASC are among those with the most pressing needs. Two facilities provide accommodation and support to UASC, but further capacity is required including on counseling, interpretation, social support and family reunification.

Croatia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR established mobile teams at the border crossings with Slovenia to monitor, provide assistance, identify and refer persons in need of medical assistance.
- UNHCR maintained its 24h presence at Bapska crossing point and Opatovac transit centre (close to the Serbia border) and supported authorities with the identification of 270 persons with specific needs. Assistance was provided throughout the night and day, to the over 3,000 refugees and migrants stranded at Bapska/Berkasovo.
- UNHCR worked actively in preventing family separation at transit points, assisting the Red Cross in reuniting families on the spot and referring separated families to the Red Cross for tracing.
- A new site to replace Opatovac transit centre is expected to be ready within two weeks in Slavonski Brod. It will have a capacity of 10,000 persons and will be better equipped for winter conditions. UNHCR will provide 300 RHUs and two rub halls.
- UNHCR distributed 6,000 blankets as well as plastic sheets, raincoats, HEB, snacks and water. At Opatovac, the Red Cross distributed water and food.
- The MoH and partners assisted around 1,200 medical cases at Opatovac, Bapska and Tovarnik.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The number of staff and volunteers for the identification and assistance of people with specific needs remains insufficient in light of the needs. A more standardized approach on this is needed, amongst the different stakeholders.
- The amount of families who have been separated, is exceeding the existing the reunification capacity at Opatovac.
- While mechanisms are in place to examine the needs and best interests of UASC, their identification remains a challenge due to number of arrivals, their short stay during transit and a lack of documentation.
- With the worsening weather conditions, thermal blankets, warm clothes and shoes are increasingly needed.
- The limited transportation capacity from Bapska to Opatovac, leads to many persons making the 17km long journey by foot.
- Several cases of hypothermia were reported. The planned increase in medical facilities in Opatovac was suspended due to the opening of the new transit centre, where an existing structure will be used as clinic.

Slovenia

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR has established a presence at all major border crossing points, registration and reception centres. UNHCR assists authorities with the identification of persons with specific needs, interpretation and information provision.
- UNHCR has set up an internal whatsapp group in which pictures of separated families are being shared in order to facilitate their reunification with support of the Red Cross.
- Since refugees and migrants started to cross the border between Croatia and Slovenia on 17 October, UNHCR distributed 1,850 raincoats, 3,500 blankets, 20 plastic sheets, 1,000 sleeping bags, 1,000 pillows, 1,000 stretcher beds and water.
- Caritas, the Red Cross and ADRA provided water, food, clothes, blankets and hygiene items to new arrivals.
- UNHCR is building a stockpile to cater to the critical relief item needs of 10,000 persons and is discussing with the authorities to install a number of RHUs.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is a lack of interpreters at the border with Austria, with UNHCR being the only actor providing translation.
- Systematic referral mechanisms for people with specific needs are limited.
- Conditions at reception facilities at the border with Croatia need improvement. The tents and rub halls functioning as registration areas are not equipped for winter conditions.

Italy

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR assisted the disembarkation of almost 1,500 persons arriving in seven different landings following their rescue at sea. 98% of arrivals benefitted from information sessions on procedures, including international protection and asylum.
- Five UNHCR child protection experts continue to work with authorities to promote good practices on Best Interest Assessment and Determination and support the provision of information to UASC in reception facilities.
- UNHCR undertook 10 monitoring visits to reception facilities, to strengthen the capacity of authorities to identify protection needs and gaps.
- EASO continues to support the relocation process through the deployment of experts to the "hotspot" of Lampedusa and other parts in Italy, providing information, counseling and support to the authorities with registration and processing of relocation applications. UNHCR supports authorities and EASO in information provision to candidates.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Difficulties continue in the provision of information on the possibility to apply for asylum upon arrival.
- There is a lack of systematic referral mechanisms for people with specific needs, particularly for individuals suffering from trauma, victims of trafficking, SGBV and torture.
- UNHCR continues to advocate for standard operating procedures to enhance cooperation amongst different actors and the standardization of identification of persons who wish to apply for asylum following disembarkation.
- Basic services available in reception facilities should be standardized and improved, in particular legal counselling services and the identification and referral of people with specific needs.
- UASC of certain nationalities, particularly Eritreans, Syrians and Somalis, continue to consider Italy as a transit country, many avoid being identified putting them at greater risk and without access to specialized services.
- The start of the relocation scheme, supported by the hotspot approach, highlights the need to strengthen coordination mechanisms and develop standard operating procedures in hotspots, particularly regarding information provision on relocation.

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. 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:

ADRA Adventist Development and Relief Agency | [Agape](#) | AI Amnesty International | Amity | [Apostoli/IOCC](#) | 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 \(Croatia\)](#) | Danish Refugee Council | [Dorcas](#) | Ecumenical Refugee Council | [Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Red Cross](#) | Greek Refugee Council | [Hellenic League for Human Rights](#) | Hellenic Red Cross | [Hellenic Theatre Drama & Education Network](#) | Help the Refugees in Macedonia | [HERA Health education and Research Organisation](#) | HHC Hungarian Helsinki Committee | [Hilal](#) | HCIT Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance | [ICMC International Catholic Migration Commission](#) | IHA International Health Action | [Indigo](#) | INTERSOS | [IOM International Organization for Migration](#) | IRC International Rescue Committee | [Italian Red Cross](#) | JRS Jesuit Refugee Service | [Kaliri](#) | La Strada (Open Gate) | [Legis](#) | Magna | [MdM Médecins du Monde](#) | Menedek Association | [METAction](#) | MGMD Mirovna Grupa Mladih Dunav | [Microfins](#) | MSF Medecins Sans Frontieres | [MYLA Macedonian Young Lawyers Association](#) | Nun | [Operation Mercy](#) | Peace Institute (Slovenia) | [PiN People in Need](#) | PiC Pravno-informacijski Center Nevladnih Organizacij | [Praksis](#) | Praxis | Remar | [Samaritan's Purse](#) | Save the Children | [Sigma Plus](#) | Slovene Philanthropy | [SOS Children's Village](#) | UNDP United Nations Development Programme | [UNFPA United Nations Population Fund](#) | UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund | [Union of Baptist Churches in Croatia](#) | Vizija | [Volunteer Centre Osijek](#) | WHO World Health Organization

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

On 30 September, UNHCR presented its revised appeal for the Special Mediterranean Initiative (SMI) June 2015 – December 2016. The SMI outlines the Office's response to the refugee crisis in Europe and also incorporates targeted programmes in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa sub-region. In response to the fast-evolving situation, UNHCR is continuing to update its requirements for the Europe component of the SMI, which currently stands at **USD 36 million** for 2015.

As of 22 October, **USD 14.46 million** has been received for the SMI from: Andorra; Denmark; Germany; Japan; the Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB; TRYGG Foundation; UPS Corporate; and private donors. This represents 24% of the total requirements for the SMI in 2015 (USD 59.4 million).

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:

Australia | [Canada](#) | Denmark | [Finland](#) | France | [Japan](#) | Netherlands | [Norway](#) | Private donors in Italy | [Private donors in Spain](#) | Private donors in Sweden | [Sweden](#) | Switzerland | [The United States of America](#) | United Kingdom

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Links:

UNHCR, [UNHCR concerned at reports of sexual violence against refugee women and children](#), 23 October 2015.
 UNHCR, [Fearing rough seas, refugees chance Bulgaria land route](#), 23 October 2015.
 UNHCR, [Refugees face long cold and wet night at crowded Balkan border crossings](#), 21 October 2015.
 UNHCR, [Number of sea arrivals in Greece hits half million mark](#), 20 October 2015.
 UNHCR, [Germany: Confronting challenges at end of the road](#), 20 October 2015.
 UNHCR, [Seven people die off Lesbos as tensions flare at crowded reception facility](#), 16 October 2015.
 UNHCR, [Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response - Mediterranean](#) (webportal accessible via Google Chrome or Firefox only).

Europe Refugee Emergency

UNHCR presence and crossing points

as of 23 Oct 2015

