



EUROPE'S REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE #18

8 – 14 January 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

KEY FIGURES

21,958

Refugees and migrants arriving by sea to Europe in 2016.

55

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

2,050

Average daily sea arrivals in Greece from 8 to 14 January 2016.

354,068

UNHCR thermal blankets distributed since the start of the crisis.

41,801

UNHCR sleeping mats distributed since the start of the crisis.

USD 83.2M: Total 2015

requirements for the Special Mediterranean Initiative, including winterization activities in Europe.

USD 85M: Funding received

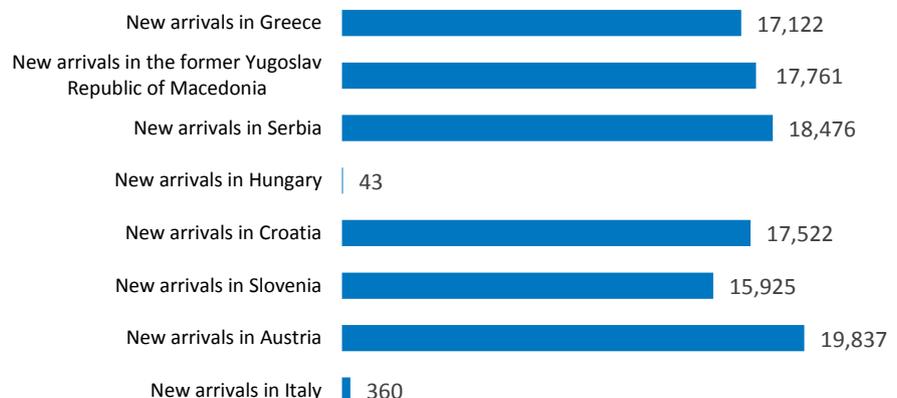
including for winterization activities covering until February 2016.

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 people of concern.

- The European Union (EU) is concerned that the number of arrivals from Turkey to Greece remains 'too high,' according to media reports. The European Commission (EC) Vice President, Mr. Frans Timmermans, visited Turkey on 11 January and held meetings with the Turkish Ministers for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, and Justice in Ankara. He stressed that Ankara and Brussels had to cooperate to implement the EU-Turkey action plan. Towards that end, the Turkish Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, announced plans to offer Syrian refugees work permits to discourage the onward movement of refugees and migrants currently in Turkey.
- On 10 January, the police motor boat "Trsat" sailed out from Mali Losinj (Croatia) towards Greece where it took part in the Frontex operation (Poseidon Rapid Intervention) aimed at reducing pressure at the external EU border and preventing cross-border crime. Frontex launched Poseidon Rapid Intervention on 28 December, replacing the Joint Operation Poseidon Sea with a larger number of officers and technical equipment to support Greece in handling the unprecedented number of refugees and migrants arriving on its islands. Poseidon Rapid Intervention, which is taking place in the same operational area, will also put a greater emphasis on security checks.
- On 8 January, the EC issued a [press release](#) on the progress on commitments made during the Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting. The press release states that Greece provided the EC with information regarding preparations for the introduction of an identification system which would prevent the use of forged documents. In addition, it notes that there are 325 Frontex officers, 11 Frontex vessels and 65 EURODAC machines present on the Greek islands.

New arrivals from 8 to 14 January 2016¹



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

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Restrictions based on nationality continue to be implemented along the Balkans route. Some 172 people were returned from the Vinojug reception centre in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the Greek border for possessing forged documents, no documents, or for being nationals of countries other than Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria. In Greece, 1,550 people were returned from Eidomeni to Athens (as of 14 January). Some 120 individuals were not allowed to enter Serbia and over 300 individuals were prevented from embarking the train in Sid by the Croatian police due to lack of Serbian registration papers and for presumed nationality other than the three allowed. Some 220 persons, mainly from Morocco, were returned from Austria to Slovenia during the reporting period, for providing inaccurate personal information.

In **Greece**, representatives of the Central Union of Greece's Municipalities and the Alternate Minister for Migration Policy set up a permanent committee to ensure better coordination between central and local authorities on migration and refugees issues, including the hotspots. The Mayor of Kos submitted a proposal to the Prime Minister's office regarding the management of migration flows on the island. Reiterating the Municipality's disagreement of the establishment of a hotspot on the island, the Mayor proposed the transfer of the registration service and of the Hellenic police staff to a site, outside the urban areas. On Leros, Moroccans and Algerians protested their prolonged stay and threatened to set the Lakki site on fire and go on hunger strike. As of 14 January, there are approximately 106 North Africans in total on the island according to the police, including 35 in detention. On Lesbos, there are 200 unregistered people from North Africa. They are mainly staying in two informal sites, namely an olive grove near Moria and Tsamakia site located in Mytilene, on the shore next to the port, and operated by volunteers, with 20 tents. A small number of people from North Africa remain in Moria.

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the media reported that six Slovenian police officers with two police dogs were sent to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian-Greek border to work with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian Border Police. They are assisting with registration material and logistic equipment and vehicles to help manage the refugee crisis. Moreover, Dnevnik, a local news source, reported that Croatian and Serbian police officers are patrolling the border with Greece and that the Czech Republic is expected to deploy officers in February. Negotiations are also underway with Austria, Poland and Slovakia to potentially deploy more officers.

In **Serbia**, the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) advised that they will be organizing the train schedule from Presevo to Sid, based on the numbers of asylum seekers willing to take the train. The SCRM also advised that unregistered individuals and those who were not allowed to board trains by the Croatian Police in Sid will no longer be accommodated at the Sid Refugee Aid Point (RAP), but advised to apply for asylum in Serbia through available procedure and/or return to the point of entry into Serbia instead.

According to media reports, Norway plans to return 860 asylum-seekers to **Hungary**, though Hungary is unlikely to accept them. UNHCR in close coordination with the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Implementing Partner) will provide the asylum-seekers transferred under the Dublin Regulation with legal aid to ensure fair access to asylum process. Conversely, the Belgian Administrative Courts decided not to send back asylum-seekers to Hungary due to breaches that violate Article 3 of the European Court of Human Rights and the risk of the inappropriate application of the safe third country principle and of refoulement to Serbia.

In **Croatia**, in a press conference on 9 January, the Minister of Interior in the care-taker government, Mr. Ranko Ostojic, stated that Croatia and Slovenia started exchanging refugee data and expects a data exchange system to be established between all countries on the refugee route. More should be known on 15 January, when the Ministers of Interior of those countries are to meet. He also reiterated that Croatia would not enter refugee data into the EURODAC system so as not to become a return hotspot for all refugees who were not granted asylum in the rest of the EU.

The Government of **Slovenia** decided that it will not assume the responsibility under the Dublin Regulation to accept migrants who have been issued a permission to stay in Slovenia under the Aliens Act. A [press release](#) issued after the Government session said the permission to stay would not count as a residency permit in the sense of the Dublin Regulation.

In **Austria**, the Federal Chancellor, Mr. Werner Faymann (Social Democratic Party), asked the Ministry of Interior (Moi), the Ministry of Defense, and the Constitutional Service in the Federal Chancellery to develop a plan for a better segregation of economic migrants and refugees at Austria's borders.

On 8 January, the Social Democratic Party introduced a seven-point plan on asylum procedures. Asylum applications should only be lodged in EU hotspots located either at the EU's external borders or along the refugee and migrant transit route. Efforts should be made to harmonize asylum standards across EU countries and refugees should no longer be allowed to choose the country of destination. In addition, asylum procedures should be further accelerated in Austria and the provision of non-cash benefits assessed.

In **Italy**, no transfers took place under the EU relocation scheme. On 11 January, 35 persons, from Somalia, were detected in the Province of Lecce, in Apulia. The dead body of a Somali woman was also retrieved on the shore, whilst around 8 persons are still reported missing at sea. The group recounted to have left from Greece and to have been beaten by the smugglers and kicked out of the dinghy.



Asylum seekers waiting for registration inside the fully winterized rub hall, Preševo (Serbia) ©UNHCR January 2016.

Protection, Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support

Greece

- Overall coordination between the police and humanitarian actors at the border area with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia improved slightly. The police moved persons directly to the border but some vulnerable cases were allowed to remain longer at the site in Eidomeni until a solution is found by UNHCR and partners, in close collaboration with the police.
- Informal return cases continued to be recorded. According to the testimonies collected, the latest trend appears to be that people are travelling from Thessaloniki directly to Hotel Hara by taxi or bus. MSF have set up shifts at both locations with a medical team on site.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- Deportations to Greece continued in the reporting period. During regular border monitoring missions, 172 people were deported from the Vinojug reception centre to Greece. UNHCR also witnessed groups of people not being admitted directly at the borderline. Moreover, the police apprehended and rounded up a number of people in different areas of the country and subsequently sent them back to Greece.

- UNHCR, together with UNICEF and the Red Cross, initiated discussions with the Government/Ministry of Labour and Social Policy about improving the coordination of existing services for children and families in the transit centres for refugees, through the establishment of Child and Family Support Hubs (CFSH). The partners recognised the added value of the initiative and began streamlining the activities related to child, gender, and family protection, to frame it within the CFSH set-up.
- Movements of undocumented individuals in and out the Tabanovce transit centre continued. Groups of mostly young Moroccan males were frequently seen entering and exiting the site towards the border with Serbia. Some of them stayed in the transit centre for several days and most cited Germany as their intended final destination.

Serbia

- After a period of freezing temperatures, the weather turned milder. UNHCR and its partners continued providing protection and assistance 24/7 in all sites without major difficulties.
- An increased number of individuals were refused boarding on trains in Sid by the Croatian Police, and some were sent back from Croatia to Serbia. UNHCR has been counseling them on the asylum procedures in Serbia. Most of them prefer to try to make their way to Europe; a few expressed a wish to go back to their country of origin.
- In the Presevo reception centre, 28 units of UNHCR-funded latrines and showers have been completed and put to use, marking a great improvement in the quality of WASH facilities for asylum seekers.

Hungary

- The total number of persons of concern in detention is 734. They are held in OIN asylum detention facilities and Alien Police detention for irregular crossing, pending deportation/expulsion to Serbia. Medical assistance provided at asylum detention facilities remains very basic.
- The Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Nils Muižnieks, has issued a report to the European Court of Human Rights in relation to two complaints against Austria concerning the transfer of asylum-seekers from Austria to Hungary. The Commissioner has stated that many asylum-seekers who are returned to Hungary under the Dublin III Regulation are subsequently kept in asylum detention centres without access to effective remedies against such detention. He has further stated that asylum-seekers do not, as a rule, have their asylum applications examined on the merits because of Hungarian legislation which considers Serbia as a safe third country. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Péter Szijjártó, has reacted claiming that Hungarian laws on refugees are fully in line with international regulations. Mr. Szijjártó also emphasized the Government's view that those who pass through safe countries are not refugees but economic migrants.

Croatia

- Food, water, clothes, hygienic items and UNHCR blankets were distributed among refugees and migrants prior boarding the train. The system of trains arriving from Sid to Winter Reception and Transit Centre (WRTC) Slavonski Brod border with Serbia continues to work according to schedule with minor delays due to weather conditions.
- Twenty refugees and migrants, allegedly of Pakistani origin, jumped out of the train before it arrived at the Slavonski Brod central train station. It is assumed these actions were to preempt being registered in Croatia as they are not one of the nationalities allowed to enter (namely Syrian, Iraqi or Afghan). The individuals were found by the police, taken to the WRTC and will be transferred to Jezevo detention centre for foreigners for further processing.
- UNHCR and its working partner, the Information Legal Centre, disseminated information on asylum procedures and integration in Croatia. According to the Minister of Interior in the care-taker government, Mr. Ranko Ostojic, 31 persons are in the process of re-admission to Serbia. They do not meet the conditions introduced on 16 November, when Slovenia notified Croatia that it was accepting only refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. Croatia is applying the same conditions and has notified Serbia and Macedonia. Since the new rules were enforced, 1,110 persons were prevented from entering Croatia.

Slovenia

- During the reporting period, 220 people were returned by Austria, due to providing inaccurate information. The majority of them were Moroccan. They were re-registered in Dobova. All were allowed to continue to Austria.

Italy

- In Italy, after weeks of stay in the hotspot of Lampedusa, groups of Eritreans have decided to undergo identification procedures, including fingerprinting, probably also thanks to ongoing information and mediation efforts.
- UNHCR carried out information activities on relocation also in transit camps in Rome, in order to monitor and report relocation cases to the MoI.
- After many reports of denied access to the asylum procedure, including of persons who expressed their intention upon arrival, the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration of the MoI issued a communication inviting local prefectures to report about any further cases. The communication spells out the legal basis of the duty of Member States to provide information on the possibility to apply for protection to new arrivals and ensure access to the asylum procedure.

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](#) | [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](#) | [INTERSOS](#) | [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](#) | [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](#) | [Vlazia Kumanovo, Volunteer Centre Osijek](#) | [WAHA Women and Health Alliance International](#) | [WHO World Health Organization](#)

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR's [Winterization Plan for the Refugee Crisis in Europe](#), released on 5 November, appeals for **USD 96.15 million** in additional support for Greece and affected countries in the Balkans for the winter months (November 2015 – February 2016). This is in addition to UNHCR's revised appeal for the [Special Mediterranean Initiative](#) (SMI) of **USD 128 million** for June 2015 – December 2016, which 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 response to the crisis in Europe. Currently, UNHCR's total 2015 requirements in Europe for the response to the refugee crisis, including winterization activities, stands at USD 58.76 million.

As of 31 December, **USD 85 million** has been received for the SMI in 2015, including winterization activities which are to be implemented by the end of February 2016.

Contributions have been received from: Andorra; Canada; Denmark; European Union; Germany; Italy; Japan; the Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Republic of Korea; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; United Kingdom; United States of America; WFP; AB Trav and Galopp; Atlas Copco AB; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Ericsson AB; Federation Internationale de Football; Goodman Sachs Gives; Gota Media Group; H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB; Human Rights Watch; Ikea Foundation; Industria de Diseño Textil; Lindex AB; Nando Peretti Foundation; Nordea Bank AB; Pernod Ricard Co; Radiohjälpen; Shroepfer and Hoffmann Foundation; Stadium Sweden AB; Stockholm Globe Arenas; Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget; The Church of Latter-day Saint; Tele2 AB; TRYGG Foundation; UPS Corporate; 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:

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

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Links:

UNHCR, [How UNHCR helps to change young lives on Lesbos](#)

UNHCR, [Greece: From refugee life vest to sleeping aid](#)

UNHCR; [Hungary urged to refrain from policies and practices that promote intolerance and hatred](#)

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



Europe Refugee Emergency

UNHCR Presence and Key Border Crossings

as of 14 January 2016



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