

# Greece

**2,700 people arrived by sea and land** this month, and a total of **35,200 this year**. The winter conditions, the overcrowding of reception centres and the inability of services to respond to

the needs led to extremely poor hygiene, increased security and protection risks on the islands. The Government with UNHCR support accelerated efforts, **transferring 3,195 people** authorized

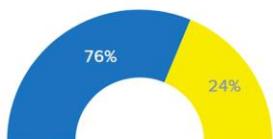
to the mainland state-run sites, temporarily used hotels, and UNHCR's rented housing. The latter, **provides 22,000 places** through municipalities and NGOs.

**49,927** refugees and migrants in Greece<sup>1</sup>  
**37,118** in the mainland  
**12,809** on the islands

**37,597** eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR this month

**40,867** people have so far benefited from UNHCR accommodation<sup>2</sup>

**20,959** people transferred from the islands to the mainland (UNHCR supported)<sup>3</sup>



**76%** of arrivals in 2017 are from Syria, Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan

<sup>1</sup>UNHCR estimates as of 31 December 2017 of those who arrived and remained since the 2015 – 2016 mass flow

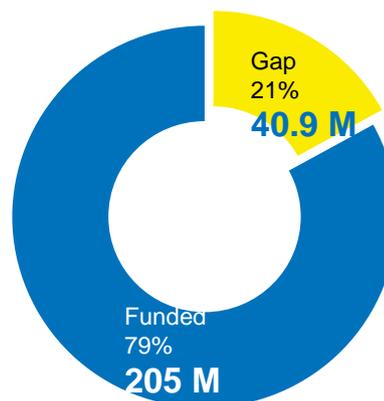
<sup>2</sup>Since the start of the programme in November 2015

<sup>3</sup>Between June 2016 and December 2017

FUNDING (AS OF 2 JANUARY 2018)

**USD 245.9 M**

requested for the Greece operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

399 National Staff

58 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

3 Mainland Offices in Attika, Thessaloniki, Ioannina

6 Island Offices in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, and Rhodes



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Refugees and asylum-seekers live in overcrowded conditions on the island of Lesbos, Greece

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities through sectoral Working Groups at the national and field levels.

## Main Activities

### ESTIA Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can now choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods. This month, 37,597 people received cash assistance in Greece from UNHCR, and the UNHCR-funded Greece Cash Alliance partners.
- By the end of December, UNHCR had created 21,435 places to house vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation helps provide people with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services and education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece, while the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 40,867 people have benefited from UNHCR's accommodation in Greece since November 2015.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities in several Municipalities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers in Greece, funded by the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

### Protection

- To alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the Aegean islands, UNHCR continued to work with the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) to transfer authorized asylum-seekers from the islands to urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete or to State-run sites in the mainland from where to continue their asylum applications.
- This month the MoMP with UNHCR's support intensified transfers in response to the increased arrivals, supporting 3,195 asylum-seekers from Lesbos (1,653), Chios (745), Samos (411), Kos (158), Leros (214), and other islands (14). A total of 20,959 people have been assisted with transfers from the islands to the mainland since June 2016, nearly half of whom (9,983) between mid-August 2017 and 31 December 2017 in response to the overcrowding on the islands.
- UNHCR continued to provide legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. By November 2017, the Greek Council for Refugees, Ecumenical Refugee Program and METAdrasi had provided legal assistance

in the form of counselling and representation to nearly 7,106 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in detention, sites and those in urban areas. The legal aid covers asylum procedures, family reunification, child protection, protection of SGBV survivors, other relevant administrative procedures and access to rights.

- METAdrasi and GCR provide legal assistance at the appeal stage of the asylum procedures in the framework of UNHCR's Memorandum of Cooperation with the MoMP. Over 5,440 appellants benefited from free legal assistance at second instance between 15 July 2016 and 30 November 2017, of whom 3,421 in 2017.
- UNHCR supports the Asylum Service by helping upon request caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. This month UNHCR assisted in 701 instances, for a total of 14,154 in 2017.

### **Child Protection**

- Only one third of the unaccompanied children in Greece can be accommodated in shelters, as the 3,350 unaccompanied children by far exceed the 1,000 available places (EKKA, 31 December 2017). As a result, children risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody.
- In response, UNHCR and partners are working with the authorities to develop diverse alternative care arrangements. This includes family-based foster care for younger children or unaccompanied children, and Supported Independent Living (SIL) for older adolescents where children will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- UNHCR also facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme. This helps provide very much needed space in shelters and also ensures support to the young adults during this transitional period which is often challenging and represents particular risks and concerns.
- UNHCR provides advice and technical support to the Government and expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children to shelters, and coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders in monitoring and developing Standard Operating Procedures to ensure minimum standards for child protection.
- Finally, UNHCR supports the MoMP, the General Secretariat for the Welfare of Asylum-seekers, the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, and the General Secretariat for Welfare through the National Centre of Social Solidarity (EKKA) on the transfer of eligible unaccompanied children from Greece to the UK within the framework of the 'Dubs Scheme'.

### **Sexual and Gender Based Violence**

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands and poor conditions in some mainland sites translate into poor shelter allocation. This leads to a lack of privacy and compromises safe access to WASH facilities, thus heightening the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). It therefore adds to the vulnerability of refugees who are already suffering from the sudden breakdown of family and community structures as a result of their forced displacement.
- UNHCR works on SGBV prevention and response by pro-actively identifying people at risk, referring them to appropriate services, and by providing legal information and counselling. UNHCR also conducts awareness raising sessions and campaigns.

- UNHCR works through national NGOs, the DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, GCR and Arsis to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens. UNHCR also works through the International Rescue Committee for the provision of services in Kara Tepe, Lesbos.
- UNHCR and partners have developed referral pathways for refugee-hosting sites and urban accommodation facilities so that survivors of SGBV receive the support they need.

### Education

- In Greece refugee and asylum-seeking children in urban accommodation can attend regular school classes. In December, afternoon reception classes also began for the children residing in sites. The latter aim to facilitate their transition into the public school system through Greek language classes.
- UNHCR supports non-formal education on the islands, where formal education is not yet available for most children.

### Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare, working closely with the Ministry of Health and other partners. A particular problem are the limited public mental health institutions. UNHCR works with partners to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- To that end, UNHCR began collaborating with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY, on a pilot project in Athens. The project will provide long-term support to 30 people in accommodation and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care. It also includes the mapping of mental health services and development of referral pathways for refugees and asylum-seekers with serious conditions, as well as the capacity building of relevant State authorities and NGOs.
- UNHCR, UNFPA and KEELPNO concluded this month the training of recruited KEELPNO staff participating in the PHILOS programme. The staff will provide primary healthcare and conduct vulnerability assessments in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, and Kos. The training focused on medical vulnerabilities, the relevant legal framework, sexual and reproductive health, and the clinical management of rape and SGBV amongst others.
- UNHCR funds primary and psychosocial support services in Lesbos and Chios. UNHCR also funds health services in Attika, where doctors such as paediatricians, psychologists and others provide medical services at the policlinic of the municipality of Athens.

### Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service in Greece have translated into an accelerated rate for the granting of status to those in need of international protection. As such, nearly three times more people, 9,340, received refugee status or subsidiary protection by the end of November 2017 than in the entire 2016 (2,700).
- However, the increased number of recognized refugees translates into a pressing need to support their transition from the assistance they received as asylum-seekers to the national programmes they are eligible for in Greece on the same terms and conditions

as Greek nationals. To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and relevant actors have agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recognized refugees can access cash assistance and accommodation, on a case-by-case basis.

### Relocation and Returns

- In December, 211 people relocated from Greece to other EU Member States (Source: Asylum Service). In total, 21,704 people have relocated from Greece.
- This month, 16 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,484 people have been returned to Turkey.

### Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation. UNHCR ensures this does not hinder people's access to the Asylum Service amongst others. In November, UNHCR provided transportation in Attika and Northern Greece to nearly 6,000 people.

### Peaceful Co-existence

- This month, "It could be me –It could be you", UNHCR's project with the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet-Gr) concluded its third year. The project will continue in 2018 to raise awareness on refugee issues and human rights amongst teachers and school children, educators, parents, youth and local community members. It does so through experiential learning, theatre and educational drama techniques. The participation of the educational community ensures the project's multiplying effects, thus promoting tolerance and respect in the broader community. In 2017, 7,900 students and 3,500 teachers participated in different activities.

### Partners

In December UNHCR worked through 34 partners in 9 sectors. UNHCR worked on Protection with Arsis, GCR, KSPM-ERP, METAdrasi, Praksis, Diotima, ICMC, Citizens UK, UNOPS and DRC; on Child Protection with Arsis, Iliaktida, METAdrasi, NCDP, NCR, DRC, Nostos and Praksis; On Cash with CRS, IFRC, IRC, Mercy Corps and Samaritan's Purse; On Accommodation with Arsis, Iliaktida, Intersos, Nostos, Praksis, Solidarity Now, CRS and Local Authorities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa and Larisa.; On NFI, shelter & WASH with Samaritan's Purse and IRC; On Site Management Support with IRC, Intersos, Samaritan's Purse, UNOPS and Reception and Identification Service; On Health with MDM; On Peaceful coexistence & Integration with Arsis, KEAN, Faros, Solidarity Now, Samaritan's Purse, CRS, Intersos and UNOPS; On Public awareness raising with TENet-Gr and UNOPS.

## External / Donors Relations

### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

United States of America (266 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Private Donors Spain (60 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | United Kingdom (45 M) | Norway (41 M) | Private Donors Republic of Korea (29 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Private Donors Italy (19 M) | Australia (19 M) | Private Donors USA (18 M) | Private Donors Japan (17 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Private Donors Sweden (15 M) | France (14 M) | Germany (12 M) | Italy (10 M)

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### Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (201.44 M) | Spain (1.9 M) | Republic of Korea (0.8 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M) | The Big Heart Foundation (0.1 M)

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