



Regional Humanitarian Situation Report # 9

unicef 

15 March 2016: REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CRISIS IN EUROPE

Highlights

- Since the beginning of 2016, almost 153,200 people have crossed the Mediterranean to seek safety and protection in Europe. Of them, 143,205 arrived through the Eastern Mediterranean, on Greek shores.
- In February 2016, women and children made up 63 per cent of refugees and migrants crossing from Greece into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, children were 41 per cent.
- New border restrictions, implemented along the Western Balkans route have led to dire situations at border points, especially in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, leaving thousands of children stranded, distressed and at risk of poor health and exposed to abuse.
- In February 2016, 36,373 children were able to rest and play in UNICEF-supported child-friendly spaces and child and family support hubs and received psycho-social support in nine locations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.
- In February, 2,114 babies and infants, and 2,098 mothers and pregnant women benefitted from infant and young child feeding counselling and emotional and psychosocial support in 6 UNICEF-supported mother-and-baby spaces.
- In February, 24,840 children received warm clothes and shoes to be protected from the cold winter weather.
- Uncertainty due to fast evolving political situation, as well as border restrictions, are the major operational challenges faced by UNICEF and partners, limiting the provision of services.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Between 1 January and 6 March 2016, 153,158 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe by sea, more than 90 per cent of whom on Greek shores. Despite the slight decrease in sea crossings from Turkey to Greece, the number of arrivals in February 2016 is eight times the number of people registered during the same period last year.

The total number of refugees and migrants transiting through the Western Balkans has dropped significantly since the beginning of the year, not exceeding 400-500 people per day during the first week of March (compared to 1,200 daily arrivals in February and 1,700 in January). Yet the proportion of women and children continued

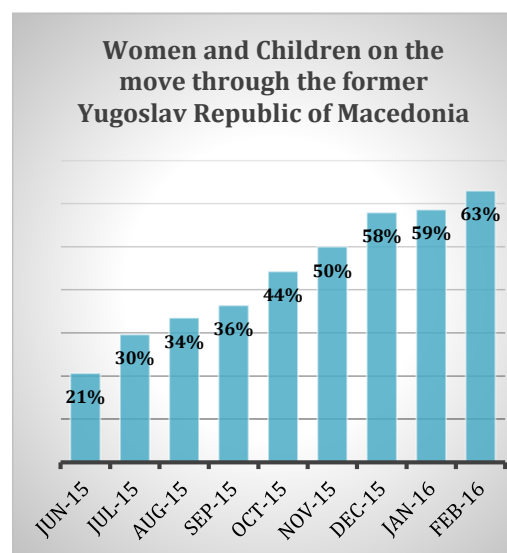
SITUATION IN NUMBERS

153,158

of arrivals in Europe by sea in 2016
(UNHCR, 13 March 2016)

143,205

of arrivals by sea through Greece in 2016
(UNHCR, 13 March 2016)

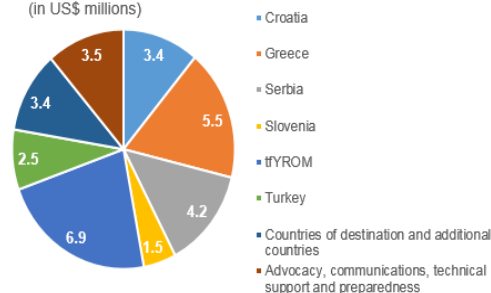


Source: Ministry of Interior, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

UNICEF Appeal 2016

US\$ 30,822,000

UNICEF Appeal 2016
(in US\$ millions)



Funded Carry-forward Funding Gap



to increase, and has now reached 63 per cent of all refugees and migrants on the move along the Western Balkans route in February and March. Although trains from Croatia to Slovenia were gradually reduced to once every two days, with never more than 350 individuals on board, UNICEF has observed significantly higher numbers of extremely vulnerable people, i.e. with disabilities, elderly and very young children.



On 20 February 2016, a young child holds a toy as she seeks shelter with other Afghan refugees from very cold, wet weather conditions at the Tabanovce reception centre for refugees in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after being refused entry into Serbia. Hundreds of Afghan refugees, including children and women, are stuck in freezing conditions in Tabanovce in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as procedural changes at border crossing points in the Balkan region create confusion and chaos. UNICEF-branded bags are distributed routinely in Tabanovce to women with small children who need to carry children's items.

New registration policies in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria during the second half of February led to deterioration of already difficult and stressful conditions, in which children and their families travel. Stricter border control (such as daily limits for asylum applications or temporary border closures), the introduction of single travel documents and denial of access to non-Syrian and non-Iraqi nationals further worsened the situation at border points, especially at Idomeni, Greece, leaving thousands of children stranded, distressed, sleeping in the open and with no access to basic services. Unsure whether they can go forward or be forced back, stranded children are at greater risk of family separation, trafficking and abuse. The situation of children stranded and identified for return in other countries, such as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, is particularly worrying and alarming, as they have little access to services and information, and there is little clarity about how their cases will be processed.

Humanitarian Strategy and Coordination

In line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF is responding to the crisis in Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia, Slovenia and Germany through a combination of advocacy, technical assistance to Governments, capacity building and service delivery responses. UNICEF is working to extend support to children and women in Greece, Austria and Italy.

In view of the fast evolving situation on the ground, contingency plans for stranded populations in the Western Balkans, and especially Greece, are now being developed in those countries (Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo /UNSCR 1244/ and Slovenia). Preparedness efforts are also being scaled up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Montenegro. The contingency planning and preparedness efforts are factoring in the possible appearance of alternative migration routes in the West Balkans.

UNICEF is actively engaged in regular Government and UN country team coordination mechanisms on the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe, and is mobilising European political stakeholders to improve assistance and protection for refugee and migrant children and their families, both as part of the immediate humanitarian response and through longer term support to national child protection systems. UNICEF continues to be the lead of child protection coordination mechanisms in Croatia and Serbia. In Croatia, UNICEF is also the lead for inter-agency coordination related to infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the reception centre in Slavonski Brod. At the regional level, UNICEF is closely coordinating its response with UNHCR and IOM through formal and informal meetings within the scope of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan. UNICEF is also part of the regional inter-agency Information Management Working Group for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response



Child Protection

Child-friendly activities are currently ongoing in nine locations: Gevgelija and Tabanovce in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Miratovac, Preševo, Adaševci and Šid in Serbia; Slavonski Brod in Croatia; and Dobova and Shentilj in Slovenia. In addition, UNICEF in Turkey opened two Child Protection Support Centres (CPSCs) in Izmir and

Ankara, and a Child Protection Hub in Kayseri provides child-centred services, including psycho-social support (PSS), case management and legal counselling for children at risk, nutrition services, and awareness raising.

In February 2016, 36,373 children were able to rest and play in safe environment and receive psychological first aid in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Among them, 147 children with disabilities and 93 unaccompanied and separated children benefitted from child-friendly and other specialised services.

The Children and Family Support Hubs (CFSH), aiming to improve the predictability, availability and quality of services along the migration route in South-Eastern Europe, were officially launched on 26 February together with UNHCR. Since February, implementation of the CFSH has scaled up all along the Western Balkans migration route to ensure the full package of services is available under the common sign of “Blue Dots” (restoring family links, family reunification, information and advice desk, child-friendly spaces, dedicated mother-and-baby/toddler spaces, complemented by counselling, referral services, medical and psychological first aid, safe areas to sleep and specific non-food items for persons with specific needs). CFSH, building on current CFSs have already been set-up in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, and are being expanded in Slovenia.

Following strong advocacy efforts, the CFS in sector 3 of the centre in Slavonski Brod, where refugee and migrant children returned from Slovenia are being re-admitted, was finally reopened on 28 February. UNICEF is making every effort to also gain access and be able to provide child-focused services in Principovac accommodation centre (Serbia) and Vrhniki accommodation centre (Slovenia), where families and children identified for return are being placed.

In Bulgaria, UNICEF reached an agreement with the State Agency for the Refugees for the provision of psycho-social support to refugee children and women by UNICEF Child Advocacy Center in Sofia and the access to regular and structured recreational and non-formal learning activities with children in reception and registration centers for refugees.

Although UNICEF will not open the planned CFS in Dimitrovgrad after the closure of the crossing point at the Serbian/Bulgarian border, it will assess the situation of children and families, who continue to cross this border through unofficial ways, exposing them to increased protection risks.

To strengthen the provision of services along the route, UNICEF supports the deployment of additional social workers in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. These additional staff, together with the UNICEF-supported outreach social workers are expected to help reach out to more vulnerable children on the move, who may otherwise not attend a UNICEF CFS. UNICEF in Turkey has supported outreach teams to conduct needs assessments in over 1,500 households across the provinces of Ankara, Izmir and Istanbul and identify vulnerable and at-risk children. A total of 1,346 vulnerable children were identified as in need of specialized support, of whom 448 children with chronic diseases; 311 boys engaged in child labour; 54 children with disabilities; 55 cases of child marriage; 80 UASC; and 10 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

While analysing the situation in Serbia, the Child Protection sub-Working Group identified a gap in gender-based violence interventions and tailored support for children with disabilities. Similar gaps have been identified in other countries on the Western Balkans route as well, and UNICEF is assessing options to address these issues.

Protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) continues to be challenging, particularly when it comes to adolescent boys, who often register as adults. The provision of adequate assistance to UASC therefore continues to be a priority for UNICEF. In all countries, where children are on the move, UNICEF supports procedures and mechanisms that allow for the effective determination of the best interests of the child, and access to foster and other alternative care solutions for refugee and migrant children, who have become separated from their families during their journey. In addition, under UNICEF leadership, the Child Protection sub-working group in Serbia is currently finalizing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and vulnerability and risk assessment indicators to harmonize procedures and referral pathways for UASC and contribute to strengthening the child protection system in Serbia. In Slovenia, UNICEF developed a protocol for UASC, which is now being discussed with the Government and partners. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNICEF supported a UNHCR-led training on 25-26 February on the best interest determination of UASC, expected to be replicated jointly in both, Gevgelija and Tabanovce. In Croatia, UNICEF continues to support daily structured educational and recreational activities for UASC in Croatian care institutions, as well as facilitate the identification of appropriate and safe solutions for their onward movement and reunification with family members. In Bulgaria, UNICEF negotiated and secured the establishment of a specialized centre for UASC and families in Sofia.

In collaboration with the Child Protection Hub for South East Europe/Terre des hommes, UNICEF has supported capacity building of more than 250 professional and para-professional frontline workers from 50 organizations working with refugees and migrants in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia. Regular and ToT trainings on Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) were delivered with the engagement of a co-trainer from the Middle East, and covered the topics of cultural sensitivity, understanding the impact of being “on the move”, best interests determination of UASC and other at risk children, safeguarding and first psychological aid. Trainings also aimed at increasing the role of state social work in the emergency response and strengthening inter-agency collaboration. Trainings will be replicated to meet remaining capacity-building needs in the field. In Turkey, UNICEF also conducted a

basic training for 36 frontline workers on psychological first aid, child-friendly interviewing techniques, identification and referral of vulnerable children, etc.

To increase knowledge on CPIe in neighboring countries at the radar, several participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Slovenia were also engaged in the trainings. Participation from Slovenia continued with planning of extension of capacity building initiative in this country and beyond.

To sensitize border police in child-friendly approaches to crowd control minimize risks of increased psychosocial distress for children in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNICEF developed capacity-building activities for border police in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Health and Nutrition

Specialized mother-and-baby spaces (MBS) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia– 6 in total– continue supporting best Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices for children on the move 24/7.

In February, 2,114 babies and infants accessed health and nutrition services in mother-and-baby spaces in South-Eastern Europe, and 2,098 mothers benefitted from IYCF counselling, including breastfeeding and nutrition related support. According to disaggregated data from Croatia, 65 per cent of children assisted in February were infants below 2 years of age. Seventy-three per cent of all children were Syrian, followed by Afghans (14 per cent) and Iraqis (13 per cent).

Following the example of Serbia, where UNICEF finalised the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on IYCF in emergencies, on 26 February UNICEF in Croatia distributed printed materials on IYCF protocols and guidelines to partners, which will be complemented by training on IYCF for Croatian Red Cross volunteers.



finally resting, after a month long journey, in a UNICEF-supported child-friendly space in the Miratovac Refugee Aid Point in Serbia.
UNICEF Serbia/Emil Vas



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

UNICEF continues to support WASH infrastructure, procure hygiene items and promote good hygiene practices among refugee and migrant children and their families. In February 2016, some 9,550 babies and young children received diapers and other hygiene items in UNICEF MBSS. In addition, to respond to the immediate needs of people on the move in Western Turkey, UNICEF, together with its local partner, distributed 408 family hygiene kits and 200 baby hygiene kits to the Kırklareli Removal Center in Eastern Thrace, benefitting 1,424 children.

UNICEF together with the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has increased the number of toilets at the Vojjug transit centre (Gevgelija) near the Greek border by 60 per cent, and the number of toilets for people with disabilities fivefold. Two additional sanitation blocks– one inside and one outside the transit centre– opened on 3 March. UNICEF also supported the hygiene needs of the expanding stranded population at the Tabanovce transit centre, through the provision of washing materials and installation of electric water heaters. Approximately 1,000 people, including 650 women and children, benefited from the temporary showers



Winterization

In February 2016, UNICEF continued to support the provision of heated shelter capacity and distribution of winter items. During the second month of the year, 24,840 children received winter clothes and shoes in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia.



Education

In Germany, UNICEF has initiated work on establishing two pilot CFS which will, among other things, model child development and learning-through-play activities for young children. As part of the integrated response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Germany, there is a plan to scale up similar CFS with ECD activities in at least 100 temporary accommodation centres.

In addition, UNICEF has made available a resource package of educational and recreational materials (on paper, TV, online) in languages of origin of refugee and migrant children in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia. The materials can be used in CFS, schools or other spaces for learning and recreation.

In Bulgaria, UNICEF is currently supporting the Government in developing a secondary legislation, to facilitate and regulate the access of refugee children to education. In addition, UNICEF is advocating for the provision of additional support and allocation of resources for children included in the Bulgarian education system.

Other Developments

In Germany, UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry of Family and other partners to define detailed plans for the scope and geographic focus of UNICEF's technical support. Initial intervention will focus on capacity building and mentoring to strengthen the protection of children and women; training and support for the establishment of CFS; and support with materials and training to offer structured learning and play programmes for young children. On request from the German Government, UNICEF developed guidance on child protection and gender-sensitive minimum standards for new centres for refugees or renovation of existing structures at commune level, funded by a KfW (German Development Bank) financing programme. UNICEF also provided a FAQ on mainstreaming child protection standards in designing, planning and management of accommodation centres that will help the German authorities to better understand how to enhance the protection of children and women in the accommodations centres.

UNICEF is finalizing a common work plan with the Greek Government to make available support services for refugee and migrant children and families, strengthen the identification, registration and protective care for UASC, sustain national and international solidarity and support for refugee and migrant children, and strengthen the capacities to plan, manage and deliver child protection and family support services.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME RESULTS - as of 4 March 2016

Note: Across countries on the route services are provided in several locations for children on the move, as a result a child may be reported as being reached in multiple locations along the way

the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia					
PERFORMANCE MONITORING INDICATORS	2016 TARGETS	Cumulative Results Since Jan. 2016		Change since last Update	
CHILD PROTECTION					
# of children (boys and girls) received psychosocial support in family support hubs, child-friendly spaces and mother-baby corners	100,000	29,870 (including 206 children with disabilities)		15,570 (incl. 110 children with disabilities)	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		14,502	15,368	7,622	7,948
# of frontline workers trained on child protection standards/child protection in emergencies	150	46		46	
HEALTH & NUTRITION					
# of children provided referrals from child-friendly spaces and mother-baby corners to health and medical services	Not applicable	1,175		497	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		589	586	247	250
# of women provided referrals from child-friendly spaces and mother-baby corners to health and medical services	Not applicable	833		325	
WASH and NFIs					
# of children received NFIs to protect them from weather conditions and assisted with other Non-Food Items	54,000	18,874		9,977	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		8,884	9,990	4,713	5,264

Serbia					
PERFORMANCE MONITORING INDICATORS	2016 TARGETS	Cumulative Results Since Jan. 2016		Change since last Update	
CHILD PROTECTION					
# of children (boys and girls) received psychosocial support in family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corner	100,000	20,185 (incl. 61 children with disabilities)		11,538 (incl. 32 children with disabilities)	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		10,346	9,839	6,104	5,434
# of frontline workers trained on child protection standards/child protection in emergencies	200	40		0	

HEALTH & NUTRITION				
# of infants (under 2) accessed mother and baby centre nutrition services	21,800	2,120	1,393	
			Boys	Girls
			1,025	368
# of women benefited from infant and young child feeding counselling and awareness sessions at family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corners	10,800	1,963	1,276	
# of children provided referrals from child-friendly spaces and mother-baby corners to health and medical services	Not applicable	465	262	
# of women provided referrals from child-friendly spaces and mother-baby corners to health and medical services	Not applicable	147	67	
WASH and NFIs				
# of children received NFIs to protect them from weather conditions and assisted with other Non-Food Items	54,000	12,233	7,692	
# of babies received baby hygiene items through CFS, MBCs and other distributions	16,200	2,054	888	

Croatia			
PERFORMANCE MONITORING INDICATORS	2016 TARGETS	Cumulative Results Since Jan. 2016	Change since last Update
CHILD PROTECTION			
# of children (boys and girls) received psychosocial support in family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corner	100,000	16,655 (including 12 children with disabilities)	7,967 (including 5 children with disabilities)
# of frontline workers trained on child protection standards/child protection in emergencies	150	32	32
HEALTH & NUTRITION			
# of infants (under 2) accessed mother and baby centre nutrition services	15,000	1,044	721
# of women benefited from infant and young child feeding counselling and awareness sessions at family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corners	9,000	1,550	822
WASH and NFIs			
# of children received NFIs to protect them from weather conditions and assisted with other Non-Food Items	54,000	12,518	5,747
# of babies received baby hygiene items through CFS, MBCs and other distributions	14,000	3,446	1,555
<p><i>*CP1 In the current set-up, child-friendly spaces operate within the sectors in the WRTC. These sectors however are only open and operate in case authorities managing the WRTC require refugees and migrants to remain on-site longer than the average time needed for registration and movement onward to Slovenia. As a result, the non-mobile Child Friendly Spaces operate only on days when the sectors are open for the time that they remain open, which happened only for four days in February. Additionally, on 28 February following strong advocacy efforts, the CFS in Sector 3 was opened for re-admitted refugees and migrants children returned from Slovenia.</i></p> <p><i>** The number of CwD refers only to number of children attended in the MBCF</i></p>			

Slovenia					
PERFORMANCE MONITORING INDICATORS	2016 TARGETS	Cumulative Result Since Jan. 2016		Change since last Update	
CHILD PROTECTION					
# of children (boys and girls) received psychosocial support in family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corner	100,000	2,569		1,298	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		1,393	1,176	701	597

Turkey

PERFORMANCE MONITORING INDICATORS	2016 TARGETS	Cumulative Result Since Jan. 2016	Change since last Update
CHILD PROTECTION			
# of frontline workers trained on child protection standards/child protection in emergencies	60	36	36
# of at-risk children identified through screening by outreach teams and child protection support centres	2,000	1,546	1,346
NFIs			
# of children receiving non-food items	20,000	2,015	1,424
<i>*This table represents key results of UNICEF Turkey's support specifically to children on the move through Western Turkey. For complete results of UNICEF's response to the refugee crisis in Turkey this should be read in conjunction with the monthly Syria Crisis situation report.</i>			



Communications and Advocacy

In all countries, affected by the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe, UNICEF is advocating for the protection of the rights of refugee and migrant children, their access to services and aligning asylum procedures with the best interests of the child.

In February, UNICEF led communication efforts, together with other UN Agencies, UNHCR and IOM, around the growing numbers of child deaths at sea and the dire situation unfolding at border points along the Balkan land route, from which children suffer the most. In response to decisions made during the EU/Turkey Summit on 7 March, aiming to find a political solution to the crisis at European level, UNICEF called for the respect of the fundamental humanitarian principle of 'do no harm' by authorities across Europe, the Balkans and Turkey in every step of the implementation of decisions when it comes to the care of refugee and migrant children. Children's rights to claim international protection should be guaranteed, and they should not be returned against the principle of non-refoulement to countries where they risk detention, forced recruitment, trafficking or exploitation.



"Can I get a dress?", eight-year old Nuraan from Syria asked us in fluent English at the UNICEF point for distribution of clothes in the Winter Reception Transit Center in Slavonski Brod, Croatia. She has been on the road with her family for one month. While it was still possible for her to attend school in Syria, she was an excellent student. "My favourite subjects are English and Fine arts. I just want to be back to school in Germany", Nuraan told UNICEF team. Photo by VKljajo/UNICEF

To advocate for children's rights and promote tolerance in Slovenian public space, UNICEF National Committee in Slovenia took part in several media reports, including TV SLO 1: Tednik: „Forgotten“ children, and Kanal A, Svet news show: Children refugees. In Germany, the UNICEF National Committee is currently advocating with the Prime Ministers of the Federal States to align asylum legislation and the implementation of measures for refugee and migrant children with the CRC. The German National Committee wrote to the Federal and Federal States Governments raising concerns about the latest legislative reform, which includes a two-year halt for family reunification for part of the estimated 70,000 UASC currently in the country. In addition, other parts of the Federal Government and a range of civil society actors (welfare organizations, faith-based organizations, NGOs, etc.) are being sensitized on the lack of access to services and justice for refugee children, as well as the importance of social inclusion and integration.

Funding Update

Funding Requirements (as defined in Humanitarian Action for Children 2016)				
	Requirements	Funds received*	Funding gap	
			\$	%
Croatia	3,420,000	-	3,420,000	100%
Serbia	4,165,000	750,000	3,415,000	82%

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	6,925,000	798,600	6,126,400	88%
Turkey	2,500,000	-	2,500,000	100%
Countries of Destination and Other Countries (incl. Greece, Slovenia, Germany)	10,324,000	-	10,324,000	100%
Regional and Global	3,488,000	1,345,747	2,142,253	61%
Sub-Total	30,822,000	2,894,347	27,927,653	91%
Carry-forward from 2015		4,999,425		
Grand Total	30,822,000	7,893,772	22,928,228.00	74%
* Total funding available includes total funds received against current appeal plus carry forward				
Funding information is as of 15 March 2015				

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Who to contact for further information:

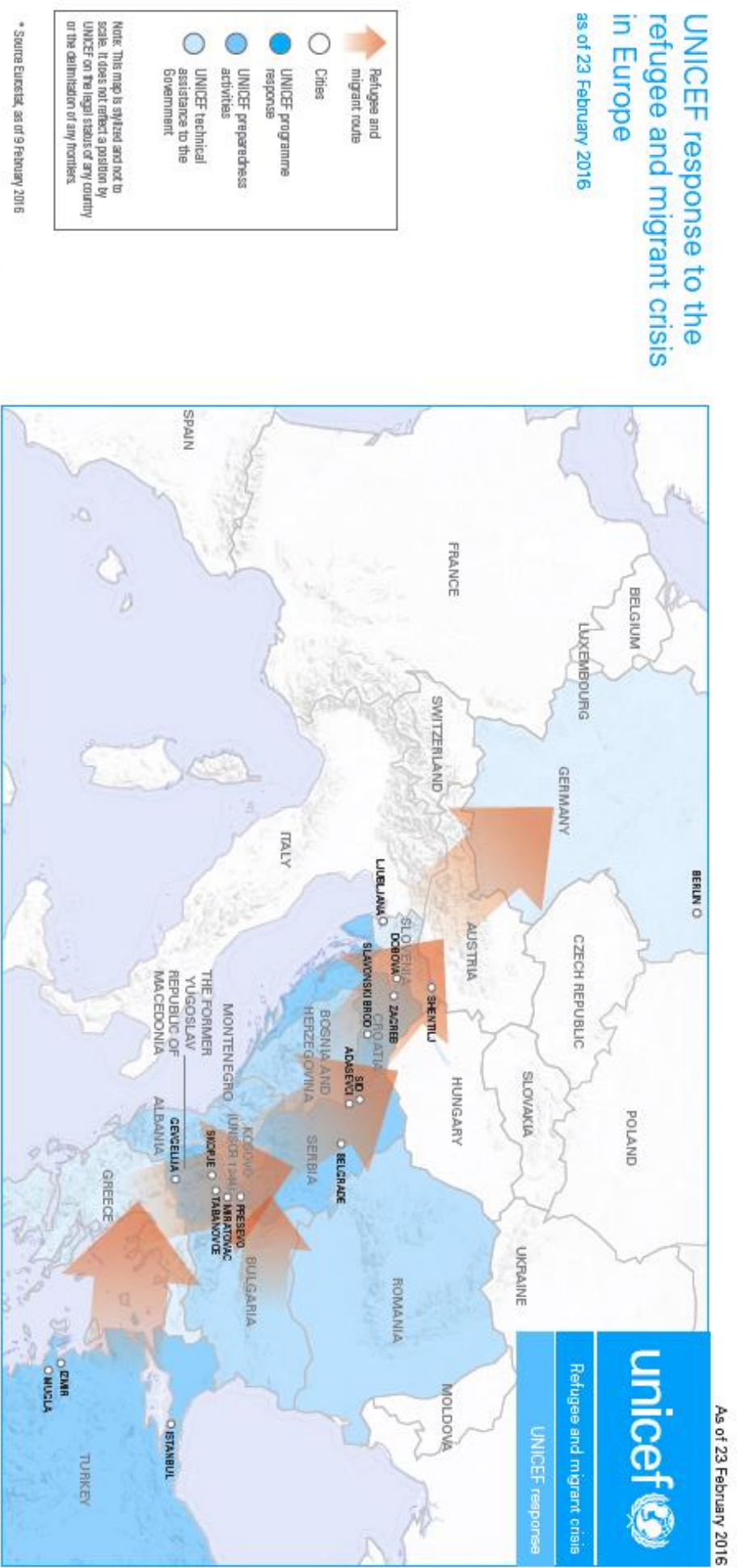
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UNICEF response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe

as of 23 February 2016



* Source: Eurostat, 35 of 9 February 2016

Note: This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or the delimitation of any frontiers.

