

Weekly Report



Key Figures

Mediterranean
352,822

arrivals by sea in 2016*

4,742

dead/missing in 2016*

Trends of Sea Arrivals

Between 05 and 11 December, 698 refugees and migrants crossed the sea from Turkey to the Greek islands – an increase from the 144 who crossed the previous week. Thus far, 172,607 persons have arrived to Greece by sea in 2016 in comparison to 856,723 who crossed during the same period in 2015. As of 04 December, the main countries of origin of those who arrived in Greece remain the Syrian Arab Republic (47%), Afghanistan (24%) and Iraq (15%). Children comprised 37% of arrivals with men making up 42% and women 21%.

In addition, 1,859 persons (including approximately 217 unaccompanied and separated children) arrived in Italy by sea - a slight decrease from the 2,151 who arrived the previous week. Between 01 January and 11 December 2016, 175,244 persons arrived by sea, compared to 144,205 persons who arrived in 2015 by the end of November and the total number of arrivals in 2015 which was 153,842. While arrival trends in 2016 remained consistent with those of 2015 up until the end of September, arrivals since then have generally been higher. UNHCR is monitoring potential factors contributing to the increase, including relatively favourable weather conditions and a decrease in price by smugglers. Some of the primary countries of origin of those arriving in Italy include Nigeria (21%), Eritrea (12%), Guinea (7%), Côte d'Ivoire (7%), Gambia (6%), Senegal (6%), Mali (5%), Sudan (5%), Somalia (4%) and Bangladesh (4%).

Key Developments

Situation in Greece

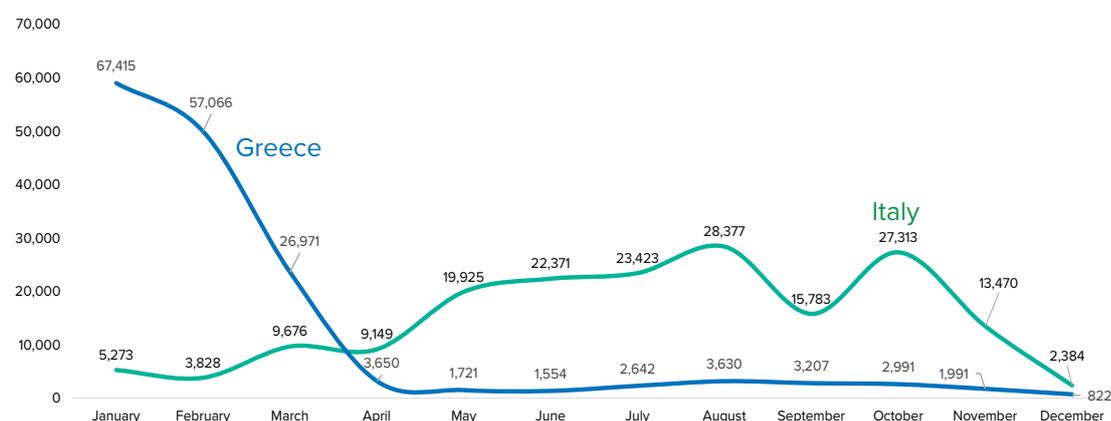
This week saw an increase in sea arrivals with an average of almost 100 persons arriving each day compared to 21 per day the previous week. Lesvos recorded the majority of estimated sea arrivals (207), followed by Chios (202). Meanwhile in Evros, on the land border with Turkey, UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation where

border crossings continue to be reported. UNHCR is concerned about potential push-backs by Greek authorities to Turkey particularly near the border area and the reported delays in the transfers of new arrivals to the Registration and Identification Centre (RIC) of Fylakio, resulting in prolonged detention, including of vulnerable groups.

Winter has brought very cold conditions to many parts of Greece where asylum-seekers and migrants are accommodated in some 45 sites in addition to UNHCR's accommodation scheme. During the week, UNHCR winterization interventions saw significant progress in support of the government's efforts to equip sites and provide adequate accommodation for residents. By the end of the week, 22 out of 54 sites have been provided with heaters or upgraded with proper electricity, 13 sites had been closed – or the population has been moved to better accommodation, improved heating and electricity systems have been installed and winter clothing and blankets have been distributed by UNHCR and partners. As of 06 December, UNHCR has delivered 664 prefab housing units to sites across the country. There are six sites of particular concern which are not winterized (warehouse sites in northern Greece), UNHCR has encouraged the authorities to do so and continues to offer support to either equip or transfer individuals to alternative sites.

The accommodation capacity in support of the Greek government through the relocation scheme funded by the European Union established a total of 572 places during the week, reaching 20,206 places thus surpassing its goal of securing 20,000 places. The project has benefitted a total of 21,538 persons of concern so far. The programme, which started in January provides housing to candidates for the EU Emergency Relocation Mechanism and to asylum-seekers with specific needs. Most of the places are in temporary apartments (58%)

Average Arrivals to Greece and Italy per Month January to 11 December 2016



* data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 14 December 2016

Key Figures

Greece

698

Total Weekly Arrivals to Greek Islands

05 December - 11 December

100

Daily Average Arrivals to Greek Islands

05 December - 11 December

Italy

1,859

Total Weekly Arrivals to Italy

05 December - 11 December

266

Daily Average Arrivals to Italy

05 November - 11 December

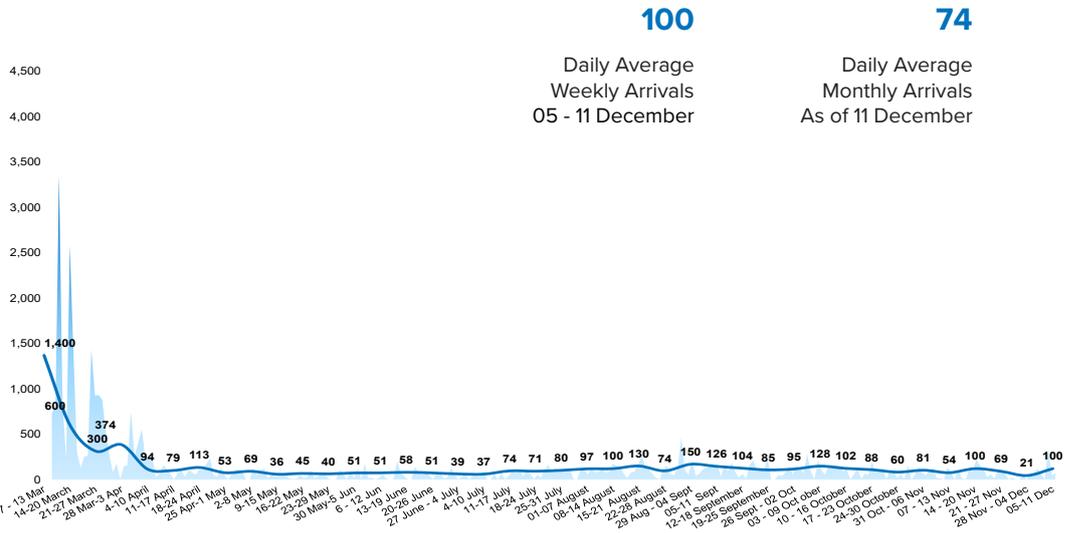
followed by hotels at special rates (25%). Other places are secured with host families. 19,240 places are on mainland Greece and 935 on the islands.

On the mainland, there has been a significant drop in the population size in sites as a result of the transfers to UNHCR's accommodation programme, where people have access to improved housing. One of the sites which benefited from the programme was Cherso, where the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) facilitated the transfer of 196 individuals to Koutsohero in Larissa. Those in this group, all of Kurdish origin, were transferred to UNHCR accommodation in Lamia and Porto

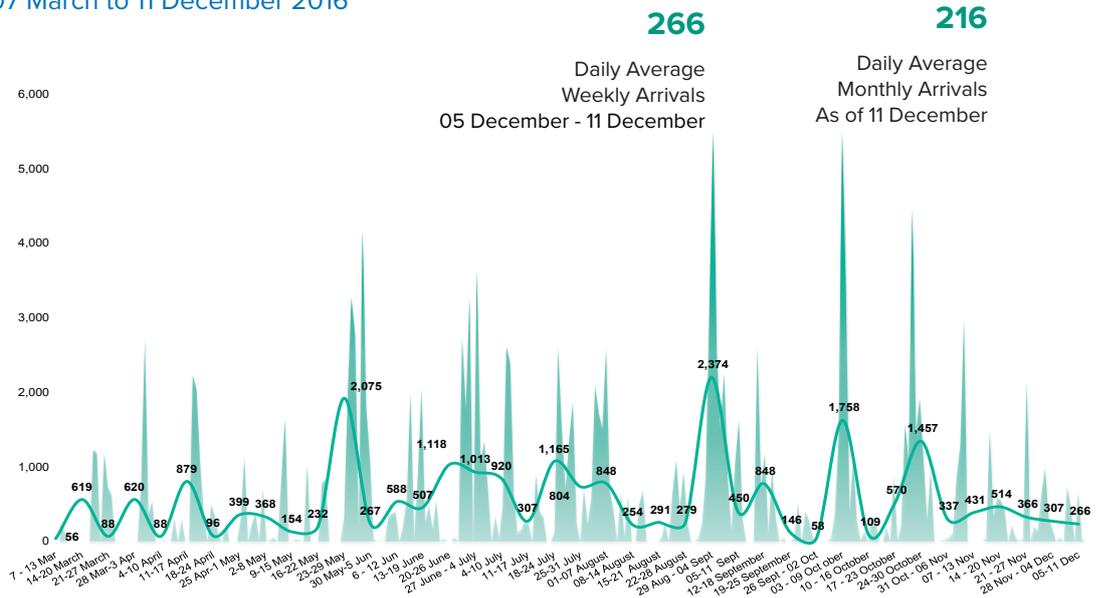
Heli. UNHCR is improving transportation between the hotels and to/from urban areas for asylum-seekers and making referrals of those with specific needs.

From 20 March to 04 December, authorities have recorded 21,314 expressions of intention to apply for asylum on the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Rhodes, Kos and Leros, and these are steadily increasing every week. Those fully registered by the Asylum Service (AS), amount to 9,753, while 2,110 appeals have also been submitted at second instance. In an effort to alleviate pressure on the islands, the AS is currently trying to prioritize the referral of all vulnerable cases identified on the islands to be fur-

Daily and Weekly Average Arrivals to Greece
07 March to 11 December 2016



Daily and Weekly Average Arrivals to Italy
07 March to 11 December 2016



conducting daily visits to the 'transit zones', identifying those with specific needs and providing asylum-seekers with information and counselling on their rights and obligations in relation to the border, Dublin procedures and on the implications of the safe third country notion.

[Update on Relocation](#)

During the week, 82 people were relocated from Italy to Switzerland, bringing the total number of asylum-seekers relocated from Italy since the adoption of the relocation scheme to 2,032. This corresponds to 5% of the 39,600 target for Italy ([latest EC data, 09 December](#)).

A total of 144 asylum-seekers were relocated from Greece during the week to Netherlands (109) and Romania (35). As of 11 December, 6,436 asylum-seekers have been relocated from Greece representing only 9.6 % of the September 2017 target. The overall number of pledges to Greece still remains low at 12,534, 19% of the targeted 66,400 who are expected to relocate from Greece to other EU Member States by September 2017. Till the end of the year, a total of 7,059 asylum-seekers are expected to relocate to another EU Member State. In support of the relocation program, UNHCR in Athens assisted 612 relocation candidates by providing them with accommodation and 416 received transportation services during the reporting period.

A total of 335 asylum-seekers were relocated from Greece during the week, to Germany (218), Lithuania (12), Luxembourg (35), Malta (35), Netherlands (42), and Romania (18). Thus far, a total of 6,149 (9.2%) asylum-seekers have been relocated from Greece against the targeted 66,400, since the beginning of the relocation program in November 2015. The overall number of pledges to Greece still remains low at 12,496 (19 % of the targeted 66,400). There were 20 new pledges from Estonia during the reporting period. In support of the relocation programme, UNHCR in Athens assisted 546 relocation candidates by providing them with accommodation and 461 received transportation services during the reporting period.

[UNHCR Calls for Stronger EU Action for Refugees](#)

In a [paper](#) presented by the High Commissioner to the European Union (EU) on 05 December, UNHCR called for a far-reaching reform of Europe's global engagement with refugees, including the European asylum system. UNHCR called on Europe to offer more strategic and targeted support to countries of origin, countries of asylum and countries of transit for refugees, to review its contingency preparations to respond to large refugee and migrant arrivals, and to put in place a more efficient and better managed asylum system. It also asked for greater investment by EU Member States in the integration of refugees, including housing, employment and language training.

The [proposals](#) include a common European registration system, accelerated and simplified procedures for asy-

lum determination, prioritization of family reunion, a common approach to UASC which respects their best interests, a distribution mechanism for Member States under pressure from high numbers of arrivals and an efficient system for returning individuals who are not in need of international protection to their countries of origin.

[EU Related Developments](#)

At the 08-09 December Justice and Home Affairs Council, among [other issues](#), EU Ministers of Home Affairs [discussed](#) the reform of the CEAS. The Slovak Presidency submitted two progress reports to the Council, which feature the main concerns raised by Member States. The [first report](#) covers the proposals for a recast Dublin Regulation, the Reception Conditions Directive, the Qualification Regulation, the Asylum Procedure Regulation and the Union Resettlement Framework Regulation. The [second report](#) covers the proposal for an EU Asylum Agency Regulation. The Council also agreed on [its position](#) on the [proposal for a recast Eurodac Regulation](#).

On 08 December, the European Commission (EC) released its [Eighth Report on relocation and resettlement](#).

On 08 December, the EC also released a recommendation to Member States to gradually resume Dublin transfers to Greece under certain circumstances. Under the EC's [recommendation](#), transfers could resume for applicants who enter Greece irregularly from 15 March 2017 onwards or for whom Greece is responsible from 15 March 2017 onwards under other Dublin criteria. According to the recommendation, applicants should only be transferred if the Greek authorities give individual assurances in each case with the standards set out in EU law. This resumption would not apply to vulnerable cases, particularly UASC. The recommendation is non-binding and responsibility for deciding lies with Member States.

Also on 08 December, the EC released its [Fourth Report on the Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement](#). The report refers in particular to a slow pace of returns from Greece to Turkey which has put additional pressure on the already overstretched reception facilities on the Greek islands. To address this, the EC notably calls on EU Member States to fully respond to EASO's calls for the deployment of experts, and on the Greek authorities to ensure that asylum decisions can be taken swiftly and that the pace of returns is increased. The EC also calls on Turkey to take the measures necessary to fulfil the remaining benchmarks of its visa liberalization roadmap. [A Joint Action Plan](#) between the EU Coordinator on the implementation of certain provisions of the EU-Turkey Statement and the Greek authorities is also included as an annex.

Timeline Overview

Highlights

