

# EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



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Syrian artist Allam and his wife Mervat with a stencils of a child's foot, that he used in one of his pieces. Allam and Mervat found asylum in Switzerland thanks to the Swiss resettlement programme. Already an artist in Syria, Allam continues to paint & draw in the workshop he has set up in his new apartment.

## TRENDS AND KEY FIGURES

Some 10,200 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe via the three Mediterranean routes<sup>2</sup> in July 2019. In the first seven months of the year, the number of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe by these three routes dropped by 37% from 73,900 in 2018 to 46,500 in 2019. The primary reasons for the decrease include reduced arrivals in Europe from Libya (following the introduction of limited access to European ports for disembarkation, the removal of EUNAVFOR Med naval vessels from off the Libyan coast, and the restrictions placed on NGOs), along with reduced sea arrivals to Spain this year (following increased cooperation by Spain with Morocco on search and rescue). These have contributed to a 77% reduction in the number of refugees and migrants arriving from Libya to Europe (from 12,100 to 2,750). In addition, changes to Spain's approach to search and rescue in the Western Mediterranean limited the areas of operations to Spain's Search and Rescue Region, resulting in a 39% reduction in the number of arrivals to Spain (from 27,700 to 16,800). As of the end of July, most refugees and migrants entering Europe via the Mediterranean routes did so via Greece.

**Greece:** In July, just over 5,800 refugees and migrants arrived, of which some 5,000 arrived by sea, most commonly to Lesbos, the highest number of arrivals by sea in a month since the EU–Turkey statement in March 2016. One reason for the increase was a larger number of Syrians crossing the sea from Turkey in July. In the first seven months of 2019, some 24,200 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece by land and sea. Some 34% of those who have arrived by sea in Greece so far in 2019 have been from Afghanistan, along with 19% from the Syrian Arab Republic and 12% from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many people have arrived

Mediterranean  
**46,700**  
arrivals in 2019<sup>1</sup>

**823**  
estimated dead/missing in 2019<sup>1</sup>

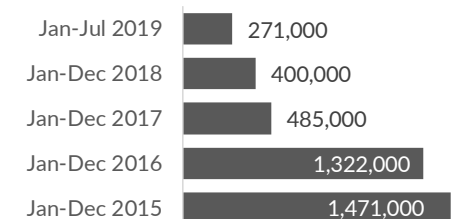
**Greece<sup>2</sup>**  
**24,300**  
3,198 4,059 5,846  
May Jun Jul

**Italy**  
**3,900**  
782 1218 1,088  
May Jun Jul

**Spain<sup>2</sup>**  
**16,700**  
1,928 2,823 3,434  
May Jun Jul

**Cyprus**  
**1,300**  
381 475 -  
May Jun Jul

### New asylum applications in Europe<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [data.unhcr.org/mediterranean](http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean) as of 31 July 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Arrivals include Cyprus, Italy, Malta; Greece and Spain both include sea and land arrivals; Spain includes sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands.

<sup>3</sup> Sources: Eurostats for EU+ countries (Only partial data for May, June and July 2019. All data is provisional and last updated 06 August 2019); UNHCR for Eastern Europe and Turkey (as of 31 December 2018) and South Eastern Europe (as of 30 June 2019).

in family groups and so far 40% of arrivals have been men, 24% women, and 36% children.

**Spain:** In the first seven months of 2019, some 16,700 refugees and migrants arrived by land and sea in Spain. While land arrivals at the enclaves have decreased by 16% compared to the same period last year, sea arrivals dropped by 43% following Spain's decision in February to limit rescues to Spain's Search and Rescue Region, as well as increased measures to prevent departures from North Africa. In the first seven months of 2019, most people arriving in Spain were from Morocco (30%), Mali (14%), Guinea (13%), Côte d'Ivoire (11%) and Senegal (8%).

**Italy:** Some 3,900 refugees and migrants arrived by sea in Italy in the first seven months of 2019, a 79% decrease (from 18,500 in the same period of 2018). In addition to the decrease in sea arrivals from Libya, the number of people crossing from Tunisia (mostly Tunisians) has also dropped by 66% to 1,300 in the first seven months of 2019 from some 3,800 in the same period during 2018. While in previous years the vast majority of people arriving by sea to Italy had departed from Libya, in the seven months of 2019 around 27% of people who reached Italy by sea departed from Libya, 33% from Tunisia, 24% from Turkey, 8% from Algeria and 8% from Greece. As a result, the primary nationalities arriving in Italy, were Tunisians (22%), Pakistanis (16%), and Ivoirians (11%). The primary nationalities arriving in Italy from Libya in this period were Ivoirians (16%), Bangladeshis (16%), and Sudanese (15%).

**Malta:** While the number of sea arrivals from Libya to Italy had decreased in the first seven months of 2019, those arriving to Malta had increased as more regular disembarkation of people rescued after departing from Libya resumed in July 2018. So far this year, some 1,600 refugees and migrants have arrived in Malta by sea after departing from Libya (compared to 500 during the same period of 2018). Some 82% of sea arrivals to Malta in 2019 were rescued in the Maltese Search and Rescue Region, almost all by the Armed Forces of Malta. Most people who were disembarked in Malta after departing from Libya were from Sudan (41%), Eritrea (11%), and Nigeria (7%).

# 1,892

**Returns EU-Turkey statement**<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 31 July 2019.

**Western Balkans:** Some 15,400 people have been recorded as having arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina irregularly this year while moving onwards to the EU, a 52% increase compared to the same period last year. Most people reported coming from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Similarly, some 13,000 newly-arrived people, including some 1,900 unaccompanied or separated children, have been observed by UNHCR and partners in Serbia where the primary nationalities have been Afghans and Pakistanis. Push-backs continue to be widely reported across the region, including the use of violence, while at least 17 people are known to have died along the route so far this year, including while trying to hide in vehicles to cross borders and drowning in border rivers.

**Dead and missing:** In the first seven months of 2019, 823 people are believed to have died or gone missing at the Mediterranean sea on their way to Europe. The majority of deaths took place in the Central Mediterranean where 574 people were believed to have died, 233 of which occurred in July. This [includes](#) an incident on 25 July when some 150 were reported dead or missing off Al Khoms, Libya (the biggest known incident at sea since May 2017) when a group of around 250 to 300 people left Libya on a large wooden boat. A further 197 people are believed to have died at sea between North Africa and Spain. In addition, 52 people have died at sea along the short route between Turkey and Greece. The ratio of deaths at sea compared to sea arrivals to Europe during the first seven months of 2019 was one death for every 45 arrivals to Europe compared to one death for every 39 arrivals in the same period during 2018.

Some 50 deaths have been reported along land routes so far in 2019 with 26 of these occurring around the Greece-Turkey land border, of which 11 have drowned in the Evros River.

## OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey **4.0 million**

**Refugees and asylum seekers**<sup>5</sup>

Syrian Arab Republic	3,650,000
Afghanistan	172,000
Iraq	143,000
Other nationalities	57,000

<sup>5</sup> Source: UNHCR as of 31 July 2019

Ukraine **1.5 million**

**Internally Displaced Persons**<sup>6</sup> and **Conflict Affected Persons**<sup>7</sup>

Refugees:	<sup>8</sup> <b>2,627</b>
Asylum seekers:	<sup>9</sup> <b>2,174</b>
Stateless persons:	<sup>10</sup> <b>35,650</b>

<sup>6</sup> Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).

<sup>7</sup> Estimated number of vulnerable, conflict-affected persons living along the 'contact line' in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

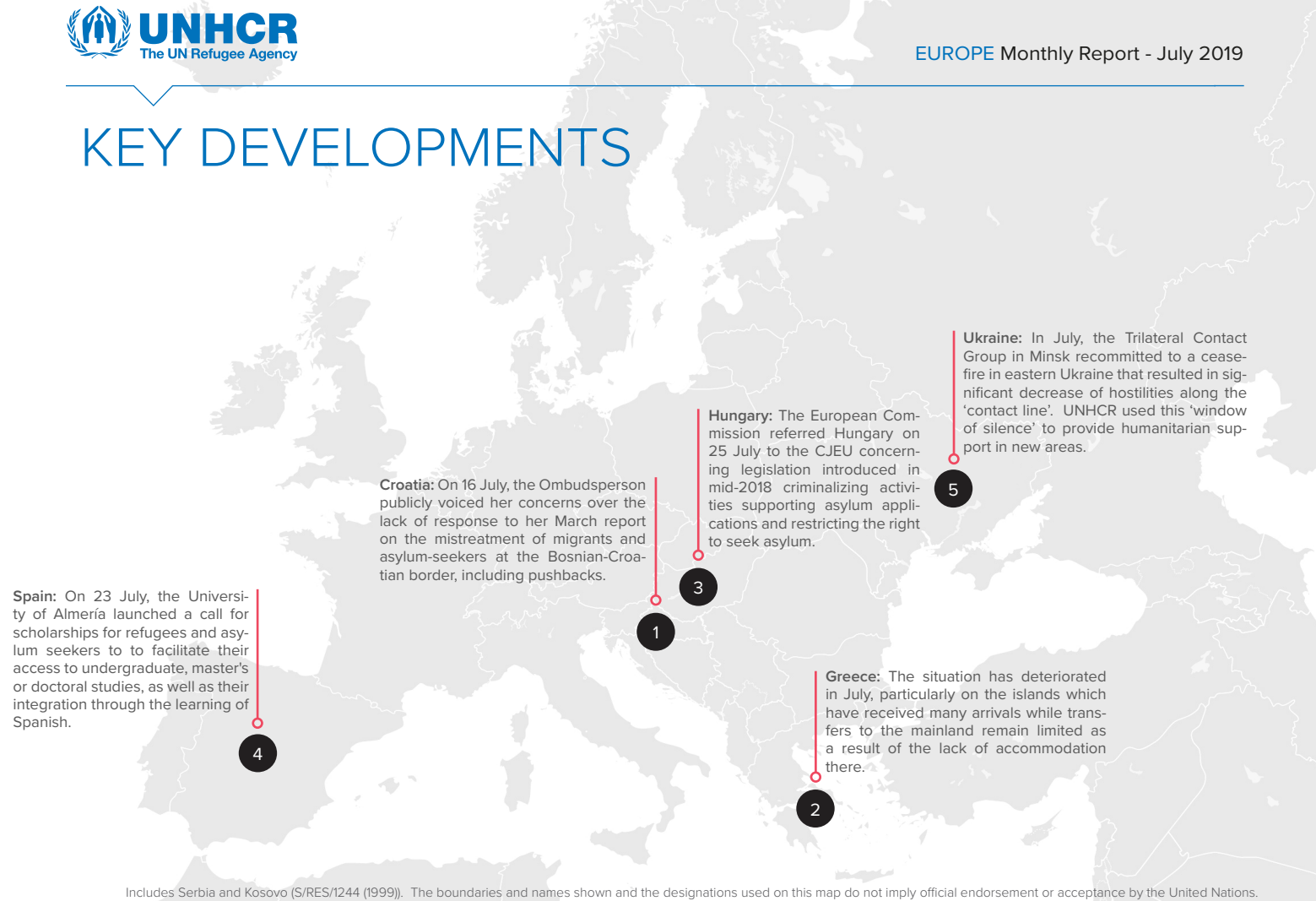
<sup>8</sup> 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), UNHCR

<sup>9</sup> Refugees, including persons with complementary protection, UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 30/06/2019

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR as of 13/08/2019

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 30/06/2019

# KEY DEVELOPMENTS



**Spain:** On 23 July, the University of Almería launched a call for scholarships for refugees and asylum seekers to facilitate their access to undergraduate, master's or doctoral studies, as well as their integration through the learning of Spanish.

**Croatia:** On 16 July, the Ombudsperson publicly voiced her concerns over the lack of response to her March report on the mistreatment of migrants and asylum-seekers at the Bosnian-Croatian border, including pushbacks.

**Hungary:** The European Commission referred Hungary on 25 July to the CJEU concerning legislation introduced in mid-2018 criminalizing activities supporting asylum applications and restricting the right to seek asylum.

**Greece:** The situation has deteriorated in July, particularly on the islands which have received many arrivals while transfers to the mainland remain limited as a result of the lack of accommodation there.

**Ukraine:** In July, the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk recommitted to a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine that resulted in significant decrease of hostilities along the 'contact line'. UNHCR used this 'window of silence' to provide humanitarian support in new areas.

Includes Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)). The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

## Search and rescue in the central Mediterranean:

In July, over 1,600 people were disembarked after departing from Libya by sea. Of them, 59% were disembarked in Libya following interventions by the Libyan Coast Guard as well as two fishing boats.

Over 600 others were disembarked in Malta and Italy (50% in Malta, 50% in Italy). 79% of those disembarked in Malta were rescued in Malta's Search and Rescue Region while 81% of those disembarked in Italy were rescued in Italy or Malta's Search and Rescue Region or arrived directly to Lampedusa.

On 22 July, European States met in Paris to discuss ways to address the situation on the Mediterranean Sea. The violence in Libya in recent weeks has made the situation more desperate than ever, and the need for action critical. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and IOM Director General António Vitorino [welcomed](#) consensus on need for action on Libya, Mediterranean.

UNHCR repeatedly reiterated that due to intense fighting, as well as widespread reports of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, Libya cannot be considered a safe port, and no one should be returned there.

**Austria:** According to the statistics of the Austrian Labour Market Service published on 28 July, 44% of recognized refugees who arrived in 2015 have

found employment. The majority are employed in the agricultural or construction sectors. Many refugees find work in their local communities directly.

Asylum applications in the first half of 2019 are at a ten-year low, with Austria having received 3,240 first time asylum applications by 30 April, 25% less than during the same period of 2018.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Ministry of Security (MoS), Sector for Asylum conducted a three-day registration exercise (16-18 July) in Una-Sana Canton, where a total of 110 asylum seekers were duly registered. The registration exercise was the first that took place in the USC since early October 2018. The MoS has also announced plans to conduct a registration exercise in the Salakovac refugee reception centre near Mostar, for early August, following the previous one conducted in December 2018.

**Croatia:** On 16 July, answering the [concerns](#) that the Ombudsperson publicly voiced over the lack of response to her March report on the mistreatment of migrants and asylum-seekers at the Bosnian-Croatian border, including pushbacks, President Grabar-Kitarovic [underscored](#) that Croatian authorities treat migrants humanely and in accordance with the law. The Human Rights Watch has sent the President an [open letter](#) asking for the

immediate stop of the summary returns of migrants and asylum-seekers to Bosnia, while a web portal Telegram has [published](#) an interview with an anonymous border police officer who describes the police illegal practices at the border.

**Cyprus:** The Interior Minister at the informal Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Helsinki [called](#) for a comprehensive solution for effective management of migration flows to the EU, pointing out the disproportionate migratory pressures on Cyprus.

**EU:** Ursula Von der Leyen was elected President of the European Commission on 16 July and is expected to start her term-of-office on 01 November. During her election campaign Von der Leyen made some commitments on issues of asylum and migration. These include a more sustainable, permanent approach to search and rescue in the Mediterranean, moving away from case-by-case solutions and a stronger commitment to resettlement, as well as pathways for legal migration.

**Germany:** One year after the entry into force of the Family Reunification Act for subsidiary beneficiaries, UNHCR has [called](#) for a more flexible family reunification regime that includes minor siblings. "In all cultures, there is nothing more important than the family," said UNHCR representative Dominik Bartsch on Wednesday in Berlin.

While refugees generally have the right to family reunification with their parents or children, people with the so-called subsidiary protection status, for example many refugees from Syria, have been subject to the law of 01 August 2018 under a monthly quota of 1,000 places. However, the possibility of family reunification does not apply to the minor siblings in both groups.

**Greece:** The situation has deteriorated in July, particularly on the islands which have received <sup>2</sup> many arrivals while transfers to the mainland remain limited as a result of the lack of accommodation there. In total, the population on the islands has reached almost 20,000 refugees and migrants, most commonly on Lesbos and Samos, and include at least 810 unaccompanied and separated children.

According to the Presidential Decree 84/17.7.2019 (GG 17.7.2019), the new General Secretariat of Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum in the Ministry of Citizen Protection will assume the responsibilities of the General Secretariat for Migration Policy; the Asylum Service; the Appeals Authority and the General Secretariat for Reception; the Sector managing AMIF funds and the General Secre-

tariat for the Coordination for aliens, third-country nationals and irregular migrants.

On 11 July, the new Minister of Labour rescinded a Circular on social security numbers issued to aliens, including asylum-seekers and refugees. This change affected asylum-seekers and refugees' access to public healthcare. UNHCR estimates that so far some 5,000 asylum-seekers do not have health coverage.

**Hungary:** on 25 July The European Commission <sup>3</sup> referred Hungary to the CJEU concerning the legislation introduced in mid-2018 criminalizing activities supporting asylum applications and restricting the right to seek asylum. The Commission also sent a letter of formal notice to Hungary in an urgent procedure concerning the situation of persons in the transit zones at the border with Serbia whose asylum applications have been rejected, and who are waiting to be returned to either their countries of origin or Serbia. In the Commission's view, their compulsory stay in the transit zones qualifies as detention, and detention conditions, in particular the withholding of food, contravene EU law.

**Italy:** On 18 July, several UN Special Rapporteurs released a statement condemning Italy's criminalization of rescue activities in the Central Mediterranean and threats to the independence of the judiciary. The statement was issued in the context of the ongoing proceedings against the captain of Sea Watch 3 .

Following the rescue of two boats in the Central Mediterranean between 25 and 26 July, their subsequent disembarkation in Italy were delayed. Interior Minister Salvini [stated](#) that rescued individuals would not be allowed to disembark until an agreement was reached with European countries for new arrivals' post-disembarkation transfers. [Pressure](#) from the Syracuse Prosecutor and the National Ombudsperson for the Rights of Persons Detained or Deprived of their Personal Liberty, led to the [authorisation](#) of their disembarkation by Mol on 31 July.

On 25 July, the Chamber of Deputies approved the conversion into law of the so-called "security decree bis" introducing potential increases for vessels that disregard the entry ban from 10,000-50,000 Euros to 150,000-1 million Euros and the compulsory seizure of any vessel violating the entry ban. The discussion will proceed before the Senate in August.

**Kosovo (Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)):** On 11 July, the Government approved the Regula-

tion on Integration of Foreigners, providing the basis for developing a system of integration for those granted international protection and stateless status in Kosovo.

**Luxembourg:** On 17 July UNHCR released the [Arabic](#), [Farsi](#), and [Tigrinya](#) versions of an animation film explaining the first steps of the reception and asylum procedure and integration to unaccompanied and separated children in Luxembourg. The film, originally released in [French](#) in June, is funded by the EU (DG Justice) as part of the Strengthening Policies and Practices for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Western Europe project.



**Spain:** According to information provided by Eurostat and Spanish Ministry of Interior, Spain is the country receiving the second highest number of asylum claims (55,616) in Europe in 2019, behind Germany (84,500). Between January and June 2019, an average of 9,300 persons requested international protection in Spain every month. Most of them originate from visa-exempt countries in Latin America, including Venezuela (19,800), Colombia (12,200), Honduras (3,220), Nicaragua (3,200), and El Salvador (2,500). The refugee status recognition rate decreased to 10 per cent, while pending applications increased to 122,100.

On 23 July, the University of Almería [launched](#) a **4** call for scholarships for refugees and asylum seekers to to facilitate their access to undergraduate, master's or doctoral studies, as well as



their integration through the learning of Spanish.

**Ukraine:** In July, the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk recommitted to a ceasefire in eastern **5** Ukraine that resulted in significant decrease of hostilities along the 'contact line'. UNHCR jointly with partners used this 'window of silence' to reach out to new villages that had been cut off from humanitarian support since the start of the conflict – Opytne and Staromykhailivka. In Opytne UNHCR's partner delivered construction materials to 13 conflict-affected families, who already started repairing their homes. The village, located near Donetsk airport, remained inaccessible for shelter assistance since 2014 due to mines and UXO.

Although it is still summer, UNHCR has already started preparing for winter. In July, UNHCR accessed eleven hard to reach locations in Luhansk oblast where it delivered winterization kits, jackets and construction materials to 2,237 persons with specific needs, including many elderly individuals, who are now better prepared for winter.

Since the beginning of 2019, 14,673 Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other conflict-affected persons have received legal assistance from UNHCR partners.

**United Kingdom:** This year's [Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement](#) was co-hosted with the UK government and the British Refugee Council and commenced on the 01 July in Geneva. "Given the record numbers of people needing safety from war, conflict and persecution and the lack of political solutions to these situations, we urgently need countries to come forward and resettle more refugees," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. According to estimates released in July, more than 1.44 million refugees currently residing in over 60 refugee hosting countries will be in need of resettlement in 2020.

# REFUGEE STORIES

## [A young Afghan is pursuing his dream at a design high school in Belgrade](#)

By Helen Womack and Mirjana Milenkovski in Belgrade

Rasuli himself traveled to Italy, but Serbia provided him with the practical training he needed for a career in the fashion industry

Rasuli himself knew from a young age that he wanted to be a designer. "I loved watching movies and fashion shows," he says. An 18-year-old Afghan, who grew up in Iran with limited educational opportunities, is now studying textile design in Belgrade and has a realistic chance of realizing his dreams.

"It stands out on its own," says Svetlana Tasic, one of his teachers at the TehnoArt Belgrade School of Engineering and Arts. "He always tries to understand the task well and then he is fully committed. He is such a good soul. This can be seen in the warm colors he uses. "

He himself grew up as a child of Afghans in exile in Tehran. The vibrant colors he saw there made an impression on him. "I was inspired by the styles of my home country - the long, colorful dresses and jewelry of my sisters." However, since he is not Iranian, he had little chance of getting a college degree.

"I went for the freedom to be a designer, an artist," he says. "My parents had to accept it.

Sami arrived in Serbia in 2016. "I didn't spend long hours on the street - just one afternoon - before Serbian organizations gave me help," he says.

As an unaccompanied child, Sami is housed in an Integration House run by the Jesuit Refugee Service, assigned a guardian under UNHCR's support program, and given the opportunity to graduate from Branko Pesic Elementary School.

Now, in the second year of Textile Design School, she is the only refugee in it and one of four boys in a class of 28 students who take up fashion design. In the first year he was assigned to a general, technical



direction, but when he learned enough Serbian to be able to express himself and when the teachers recognized his talent, they switched him to the fashion design direction he wanted.

"We saw that he was gifted for drawing," says mathematics teacher and Sami's classmate Olivera Tubic, who herself is a refugee from Croatia in the 1990s. "Look at his progress report, he focuses on volume and plasticity of forms; has an eye for light and shadows."

