

Greece

October saw **1,200 arrivals recorded**, bringing the total arrivals in **2020** to **14,200** – with the majority from conflict-ridden Afghanistan. The onset of winter adds to the need for **large-scale interventions** in the new Lesvos site. UNHCR helped authorities to **reinforce shelter for 7,800 people**. UNHCR, with IOM and EASO, supported Greece in the first relocation of **101 recognised refugees** to Germany. So far, **1,451** vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees have been **relocated** to other European countries.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

119,500

99,600 in the mainland and **19,900** on the islands

Arrivals



*UNHCR estimates as of 31 October 2020 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

78,700

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees received cash assistance this month

15,000

accommodation places by UNHCR

13,600

accommodation places by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum

PEOPLE IN UNHCR'S ESTIA ACCOMMODATION

69% children enrolled in schools

55% have tax identification number (AFM)

52% have access to healthcare (AMKA or PAAYPA)

22% registered with unemployment agency (OAED)

6% have a bank account

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 311 National Staff
- 33 International Staff

Offices:

- 1 Country Office in Athens
- 2 Sub Offices in Thessaloniki, Lesvos
- 3 Field Offices in Chios, Samos, Kos
- 4 Field Units in Evros, Ioannina, Leros, Rhodes



A 5-year-old asylum-seeker from Afghanistan in a tent prior to the installation of wooden flooring at Mavrovouni site, Lesvos.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece which leads the refugee response, working closely with other United Nations agencies, State institutions, municipalities, international and national NGOs, grassroots organizations, refugee communities and the local community.

Main Activities

COVID-19 Prevention and Response

- UNHCR assists the Greek Government's prevention and response to COVID-19 in the reception centres by increasing water and sanitation capacity, providing core relief and hygiene items, installing health units for screening and isolation, distributing additional cash assistance, facilitating information dissemination through helplines and interpreters and enhancing its coordination role with authorities, NGOs and UN agencies, including the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).
- Quarantine and isolation spaces are now available in almost all border locations but lack the medical staff to be fully operational. On the islands and in Evros, UNHCR has undertaken groundworks and provided **60 medical units** for screening and isolation as well as **244 portable units** for hygiene and sanitation, including chemical toilets, showers and hand washing stations.
- UNHCR protects the population at high risk of COVID-19 complications in the island reception centres – where it is difficult to apply social distancing measures – by moving them to safer accommodation. Since mid-March, UNHCR has moved **2,110 people**.
- UNHCR has provided over **187,700 hygiene items** such as soap and baby care kits, **101,500 core relief items**, such as blankets and sleeping bags, as well as more than **452,000 personal protective equipment** for front-line workers.
- UNHCR facilitates access to quality information for asylum-seekers via helplines, interpretation, the [HELP](#) website, [podcasts](#), [radio spots](#), [a YouTube channel](#) and through information disseminated via phone SMS. UNHCR has donated 67 pieces of audio-visual equipment to the authorities in support of information provision. UNHCR assists refugee communities offer help to residents in the island reception centres.
- UNHCR and partners running non-formal education centres ensure that classrooms are adequately equipped, social distances are observed, and children can learn in a safe environment.

Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- UNHCR runs the EU-funded [ESTIA accommodation](#) and [cash assistance](#) programmes in cooperation with the Government, municipalities and NGOs. UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies for the transition of these programmes to the Greek authorities.
- Apartments in cities and towns offer asylum-seekers and refugees greater dignity and independence. The host population benefits from the **4,625 apartments and eight**

buildings that the programme rents in **21 cities and towns** across Greece. Following the transition of accommodation places to the Greek State, UNHCR in October managed **15,000 places** and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum **13,600**.

- UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to **78,660 asylum-seekers and refugees** in apartments and sites. In October, approximately **8 million euro** in cash assistance was re-injected into the local economy.

Protection and Assistance

- A month after the fires in Moria, UNHCR [reiterated](#) the need to accelerate works that can help improve living conditions for some **7,800 refugees and asylum-seekers** sheltered in the Mavrovouni site. While large-scale improvements are needed, UNHCR continued supporting with targeted technical interventions, including by preparing shelter for the winter and providing essential items. The authorities, with the support of UNHCR and medical actors, swiftly set-up health infrastructure for medical services, including screening and COVID-19 quarantine area. In addition to the re-established Protection Desk, UNHCR undertook protection outreach to site residents to identify and refer persons with special needs to available services. UNHCR teams identified at least **2,140 people** with specific needs.
- Organized transfers from the islands to accommodations on mainland Greece continued in October, with the Government arranging large-scale itineraries. Over **2,550** asylum-seekers and refugees were moved out of islands through organized transfers totalling **12,880 persons** since the beginning of the year. Of those, **8,016** were supported by UNHCR. UNHCR supported this effort with logistics, preparation arrangements and providing targeted information sessions along with IOM and EASO.
- UNHCR's team on the islands and land border in Evros, helped those arriving, such as families and unaccompanied children, to access necessary services, provided them with information on procedures, rights and obligations and helped the authorities identify those with specific needs who require special assistance.
- UNHCR helped strengthen the national system and expertise by seconding **66 experts** to various State agencies to bolster their response and by organizing trainings for Governmental staff.
- UNHCR supported the Asylum Service with experts who advised the caseworkers, upon request, on how to conduct interviews, draft decisions on asylum applications and provided on-the-job training. UNHCR assisted in **11,554 instances of consultation in 2020, and 58,685 since 2016**. This support improved the quality of asylum processing while ensuring continued integrity of the procedure.
- From the beginning of 2020, UNHCR and its partners have helped over **8,500 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection** with counselling and legal representation in order to prepare and support their cases, for example for family reunification procedures.
- UNHCR [HELP website](#) answers questions in seven languages on [how to apply for asylum](#), on [rights and obligations](#), and on available services when [living in Greece](#).

Child Protection

- Very few unaccompanied children remain in the reception and identification centres on the islands and Evros following concerted efforts under the leadership of the Migration and Asylum Ministry.
- Similar initiatives to ensure protection and care are necessary for the approximately **1,000 unaccompanied children** in Greece who are living in informal or insecure housing conditions such as in apartments with strangers, in squats, are homeless or on the move (data of [Ministry of Labour](#) as of 30 September).
- By October, UNHCR supported **2,000 homeless and vulnerable children**, offering psychosocial support, legal aid and cultural mediation, while also facilitating their safe removal accompaniment out of precarious conditions.
- UNHCR also boosts the response of the Government with expertise, trainings and research. Since January, **954 trainings** on the protection of children have been organized for State agencies and partner staff.
- Along with partners, UNHCR works with the authorities to diversify alternative care arrangements, such as family-based foster care for younger children.

Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence

- Lack of privacy, inadequate lighting and long distance to toilets and showers fosters risks of gender-based violence (GBV) in the sites. In Mavrovouni site on Lesbos, each household has been provided a UNHCR portable solar-powered lamp, which helps mitigate risks in unlit areas.
- UNHCR and its partners continued efforts to prevent and respond to GBV in urban areas as well as some field locations and islands to identify [survivors](#), including men and LGBTI persons, as well as people at-risk, offering case management, legal information, counselling, psychosocial and medical attention through partners. UNHCR refers those affected to State services and shelters or accommodation in apartments where they can get expert help.
- UNHCR supported the authorities to strengthen the national reporting mechanism on trafficking, especially on the islands where the situation is more challenging.

Education

- UNHCR with UNICEF and other actors support the [Ministry of Education](#) to include refugee boys and girls in public education.
- In the current school year, **78% of recognized refugee children** in ESTIA accommodation are enrolled into public schools alongside their Greek peers. Several hurdles continue hindering education opportunities on the islands, where out of **4,200 school-aged children** (4-17), **175** attend public schools. In addition, with quarantine and restriction of movement measures significantly affecting the transportation of students, school openings have equally been impacted, while special reception classes on the islands remain idle.
- Twenty four teenage refugees expressed their thoughts and feelings during the first coronavirus-induced lockdown in Greece through '[The Quarantine Monologues](#)', as part of UNHCR's educational programme

Health

- UNHCR continued to work with the [Ministry of Health](#), the [National Public Health Organization](#) (EODY) and partners to help refugees and asylum-seekers gain entry into the health care system, in coordination with WHO.
- Access to health care for asylum-seekers and refugees continued to be limited at several locations across Greece, in particular on the islands, mainly due to the limited public sector medical staff and difficulties in obtaining the necessary documentation.
- UNHCR supported primary healthcare and psychosocial support services in Lesvos and mental health services in Attika and Thessaloniki. UNHCR continued to work with experts towards refugee skill building and training, in order to provide essential psychosocial support and to empower vulnerable refugees, including those with mental health conditions.

Durable Solutions

- Since 2013, **54,300** people acquired **refugee or subsidiary protection** in Greece ([Asylum Service](#) and [Ministry of Migration and Asylum](#) data as of February). In October, **6,800 recognised** refugees benefitted from cash assistance and **6,500 beneficiaries of international protection** were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments.
- UNHCR's partners support those living in the accommodation scheme with job matching or referral to develop skills, vocational trainings and language courses. Of the recognised refugees living in UNHCR's accommodation, **74% have an AMKA social security number, 73% have an AFM tax number, and 34%** are registered with **OAED unemployment agency**. However, only **10% have a bank account** which is a prerequisite for receiving a salary.
- UNHCR also helps refugees navigate the Greek civil, social and economic system and obtain much needed documents, such as travel papers and family certificates. These are necessary for refugees to find gainful employment and eventually be included in the Greek society. More language classes and job trainings for adults can accelerate refugees' integration.

Relocation

- The first relocation of recognized refugees in October saw **101 persons** depart to Germany. So far, **1,451 asylum-seekers and refugees** have been relocated from Greece to Germany, Finland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxemburg, Ireland and France, with more European States' having pledged to accept **1,135** in total so far. Of these, **362** are **unaccompanied** children and **940 children** with serious medical needs and their family members.
- UNHCR and its partners, in coordination with IOM, UNICEF and EASO, supported the authorities, in the identification and selection of children according to their best interests. UNHCR also supported the whole spectrum of the relocation of homeless children, providing operational and expert assistance. Since January, UNHCR and partners have supported with provision of guardians and in assessing the best interest of **395 children**, while leading at the operational level the best interest process for homeless children and children living in precarious conditions, including coordination and practical arrangements.

Returns

- In October, **no people** were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with a total of **2,140 people** [returned](#) since 20 March 2016.

Shelter

- [Following the fires in Moria](#), UNHCR continued targeted technical interventions to support authorities in preparing the site for the winter. In October approximately **300 UNHCR tents** had been equipped with insulation and wood flooring and works were underway to finish the rest. To help protect and stabilize tents, UNHCR continued to gravel parts of the site most prone to flooding. As of end October, UNHCR had distributed over **34,700 core relief items**, including sleeping bags, blankets and mats.
- UNHCR with partners is managing – in coordination with the Municipality of Mytilene on Lesbos island – the Kara Tepe accommodation site which provides quality accommodation and protection to **900 vulnerable people or families**.

Partners

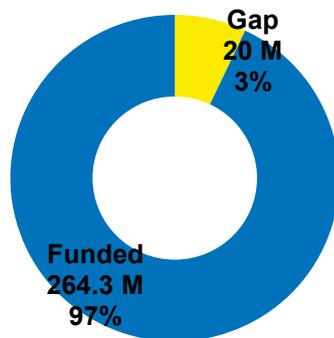
In October, UNHCR worked through **30 partners**: [ARSIS](#), [INTERSOS](#), [Praksis](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#), the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#), [METAdrasi](#), the [Greek Council for Refugees](#), the [Network for Children's Rights](#), [Doctors of the World](#), the [Association for Regional Development and Mental Health \(EPAPSY\)](#), [Diotima](#), [Faros](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [International Catholic Migration Commission \(ICMC\)](#), [Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network \(TENet\)](#), [UNOPS](#), [Perichoresis](#), [OMNES](#) and the Local Authorities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Herakleion, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa, Tripoli and Tilos.

LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation](#) – [UNHCR Greece](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Facebook](#) - [YouTube](#)

FUNDING (AS OF 17 NOVEMBER 2020)

USD 284.3 M requested for the Greece Operation



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