



# GREECE REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE- UPDATE #4

17 – 04 October 2015

## KEY FIGURES

**400,387**

Sea arrivals in Greece as of 02 October

**161,320**

Sea arrivals to Greece in September

**41%**

Of 2015 sea arrivals to Greece, arrived in September

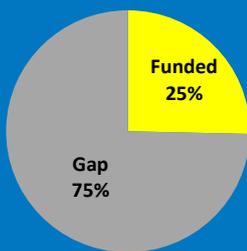
**5,500**

Average daily arrivals between 17 September and 2 October

## FUNDING

**USD 11.4 million**

requested for the situation in Greece in 2015



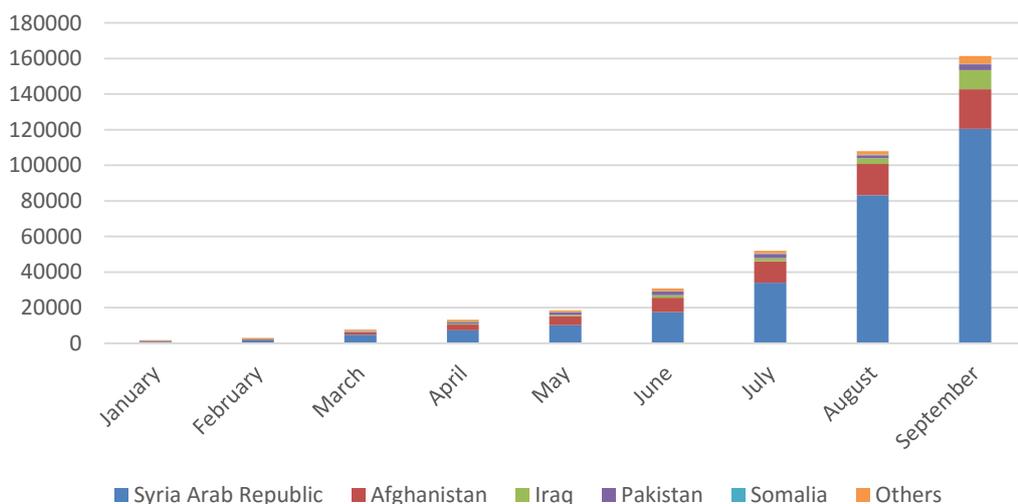
## PRIORITIES

- Boost reception capacity and provide emergency assistance in receiving countries through support for States, civil society and local communities.
- Strengthen protection systems and prevent *refoulement* including through presence and capacity building.
- Increase strategic messaging and advocacy to and about people of concern.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- As of October 2, the number of sea arrivals since the beginning of 2015 has exceed 400,000. Over 40 % of refugees who arrived to Greece by sea in 2015, arrived in September. The average daily sea arrivals during the reporting period was 5,500 persons a day, compare to 4,900 persons a day during the first two weeks of September.
- Some ad-hoc informal, solutions have been found to improve accommodations in islands as well as in Athens and Eidomini as the weather conditions started being inclement. These emergency shelters represent a real improvement for accommodations of people of concern. However, they remain temporary and often substandard.
- Eight shipwrecks took place off the coasts of Lesvos and Kos, taking the live of 4 people. Another 37-39 people, including many children, were estimated to have gone missing.
- The opening of a transit site in Eidomeni, providing service and protection to refugees has a significant impact in term of easing tensions and strengthening protection of people of concern, especially the most vulnerable. Daily, an average number of 5,700 people crossed the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia during the reporting period.

## Sea arrivals per month in 2015



# UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

## Operational Context

As of October 2, the number of 2015 sea arrivals exceed 400,000. Over 40 % of refugees who arrived to Greece by sea in 2015, arrived in September. And arrivals in September and August represent almost 70% of 2015 total sea arrivals. The average daily sea arrivals during the reporting period was 5,800 persons a day, compare to 4,900 persons a day during the first two weeks of September. The main nationalities include Syrians (71%), Afghans (18%) and Iraqis (5%). Despite high average of daily arrivals, due notably to the worsening weather conditions, sea arrivals decreased and reached a low of 1,632 on 1 October.

At the parliamentary elections that took place on 20 September, "Syriza" won a clear victory, gathering over 35% of the votes - about 7% ahead of the opposition "New Democracy". "Syriza" is expected to form a coalition Government with "Independant Greeks", with whom they have been governing since January 2015.

The EU Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs met on 22 September in Brussels and adopted a decision on the relocation of an additional 120,000 people in need of international protection from Greece and Italy, the number from Greece been 66,000 people. The relocation, which will be implemented through the scheme of "hostpots", will begin in November.

## Achievements



### Protection

#### UNHCR protection presence:

- **Presence and outreach at entry locations.** UNHCR is strengthening its presence and outreach capacity with permanent community-based protection teams in 6 sea entry locations (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, Rhodes) and one land entry location (Orestiada); field teams have a roving capacity which enables coverage of 10 sea entry locations through missions. At present, UNHCR has 40 protection and community based protection staff on the ground, including a network of 20 Greek lawyers, a roving expert on SGBV-prevention and response, and 7 NRC deployees with protection expertise. UNHCR is working closely with authorities on the situation of refugees who arrive on rocky and precipitous islands and areas. At the end September, in cooperation with the Hellenic Coast Guard, blankets and energy biscuits were sent and distributed among arrivals to the small island of Farmakonissi, where only military presence is found.
- **Urban activities.** As part of its protection urban programme in Athens, UNHCR has deployed staff in the Eleonas and in the recently established Galatsi site in Athens. Teams provide information to refugees accommodated there as regards rights and obligations in Greece in accordance with national and EU law, as well as individualized follow up assistance and support.
- **Border crossing point of Eidomeni (GRE/FYR border).** Since September 24, a temporary facility has opened in Eidomeni, providing refugees with protection against weather conditions, 24/7 medical services, hygiene facilities, a child protection space, as well as individual distributions of food and non-food items. This new system has increased the overall protection of refugees in particular the most vulnerable, as it make possible a better identification of vulnerable people and provision of specific assistance.
- **Provision of information.** UNHCR teams on the ground provide face to face information on procedures, rights, responsibilities, and assistance to refugees. During September, a total of 2,300 face to face group information sessions, group are being conducted on Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, South Dodecanese (Rhodes, Symi) and Evros. A notice board was set up in Leros and Kos, while more are planned in other locations. Megaphones have been distributed in the islands for use by UNHCR teams, the authorities and humanitarian actors.
- **Ensuring safety and security during registration procedures.** UNHCR is also supporting the Authorities in implementing the registration procedures on the islands by providing information to persons of concern on applied procedures, and by ensuring the prioritization of persons with specific needs, among them unaccompanied and separated minors, disabled people and survivors of shipwrecks. In Kos, the collaboration with police officers on this

matter has considerably improved. The police is also regularly spontaneously identifying and prioritizing vulnerable individuals. UNHCR and its implementing partner, METAction, are working closely with the Hellenic Coast Guard and the Police to ensure that registration processes take place in safety and dignity. On Lesbos, UNHCR assisted the authorities in maintaining a system of priority for the registration procedures in the sites of Moria and Kara Tepe. The effort resulted in the setting up of separate lines for families with children and women alone in order to avoid crowd situations and increased danger against the safety of the most vulnerable. On Kos, daily presence of UNHCR staff at the police premises has helped to organize the registration system and to identify vulnerable cases for prioritization. UNHCR continues to engage in confidence building measures among refugees in order to calm down sporadic tensions which occur on the spot.

- **Community based and participatory approaches.** UNHCR teams on the ground are working together with municipal authorities to promote participation of the refugee and migrant population on the response to the humanitarian emergency. On Leros, daily community cleaning campaigns are organized in close collaboration with the municipal cleaning services. On most entry locations, UNHCR is conducting NFI daily distributions with the help of refugee volunteers. In Eidomeni, refugee volunteers with language skills are helping to organize the new arrivals and the access to humanitarian services as mediators.
- **Profiling and identification of vulnerable cases.** Protection teams are identifying and providing individualized protection support to people with specific needs on a daily basis. The profile of cases most commonly identified and supported are unaccompanied and separated children, persons with disabilities in need of mobility equipment and persons in critical medical condition. On Lesbos, with the support of Euro Relief, Save the Children, IRC and ActionAid, a child friendly space, a woman friendly space and a private space for individual counseling have been established. Similarly in Eidomeni, child and family care facilities have been set up by UNHCR and partners (MSF, Mdm, PRAKSIS, ARSIS, Hellenic Red Cross).
- **Family separation.** UNHCR identifies on daily basis cases of family separation which reportedly, have occurred during the trip from Turkey as well as during transit and in Greece. UNHCR teams are conducting family tracing activities on the spot, as well as referring cases to the Hellenic Red Cross and other actors. Family unity becomes a challenge also during registration procedures, due to the high numbers and absence of appropriate reception facilities.
- **Capacity building.** UNHCR conducted a workshop on Leros, on protection mainstreaming during distributions of humanitarian aid, for international volunteers. Through this training programme, UNHCR aims to promote considerations of safety, dignity, vulnerability, participation and accountability into voluntary work in Greece.
- **Assistance in improving shelter and accommodation.** On Lesbos, UNHCR set up rub halls in Molyvos assembly points to enhance safety and dignity conditions for refugees while waiting to be transferred by bus to the registration centres. In addition, UNHCR, with partners, increased the number of buses to reduce the waiting time, in order to avoid people make the journey between north shores to Mytilini on foot (70 kilometers). On Samos and Chios UNHCR is supporting, local initiatives to increase shelter, through site planning expertise and potentially infrastructure.
- **Protection response to shipwrecks.** UNHCR, in close coordination with authorities and partners, is supporting survivors of shipwrecks with food, accommodation, psychosocial support, assistance in the process of claiming their missing members and making an informed decision as regards their future. UNHCR is developing a procedures to make the response to shipwreck more predictable and coordinated.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

UNHCR responds, with protection-focused activities, to an increasing number of new arrivals. However, the complexity of the operational environment of Greece continues to constitute a serious challenge in this process. As of 02 October 2015, a total of 400,387 persons have arrived in 44 sea entry points and one land point (Evros region). People arrive on daily basis to big islands (as Lesbos, Kos), but also islets (as Pserimnos, Agathonisi), rocks and military bases (Farmakonisi, Kalolimnos) where UNHCR does not have access. UNHCR has received testimonies of people arriving to rocky and remote areas where they have been lost for hours or days.

- Initial administrative treatment (registration and Eurodac, nationality screening, issuance of administrative decisions) continues to raise concerns in terms of procedural guarantees. Despite the deployment of additional

human resources (Police Officers) to register refugees, not always sustained, implementation of registration procedures including Eurodac, continues to face long waiting periods, which often generate tensions. The frequent changes in applied procedures in registration limit the understanding of refugees and hinder information provision to this end. Additionally, competent authorities do not provide information on processes in either written or verbal form.

- High numbers of arrivals and lack of reception infrastructure do not allow thorough identification of persons with special needs and profiling of the population.
- Despite preventive actions conducted by UNHCR, cases of family separation occur due to different reasons including registration which is not proceeding in once for all members of a family. In addition, crowd situations and lack of formal information expose vulnerable individuals to further risk.
- Serious gaps continue to exist in the protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UAMs). Appropriate shelter (transit or open reception facilities) in almost all sea locations for UAMs is lacking; as a result of this, most children remain under police custody for several days, before being transferred to facilities in the mainland. This fact seriously hinders identification of minors, as the latter are extremely reluctant in declaring their status. Additionally, absence of State social services does not allow proper assessment of adult caregivers that could act as temporary guardians of the children further to relevant decision of the Public Prosecutor.
- The time of Dublin procedures for family reunification is of several months. As a result, many cases that are entitled to apply for family reunification under Dublin (including minors) decide to travel through the Balkan route.
- Refugees still lack basic survival and welfare means, including lack of means to communicate with relatives abroad.



## Site Planning, Shelter and Basic Relief Items

### Achievements and Impact

#### Shelter

- Some ad-hoc informal, solutions have been found to improve accommodations in Samos, Chios, Leros as the weather conditions started being inclement.

On **Leros**, an abandoned hotel is being used as temporary emergency reception shelter. In support of local authorities, UNHCR and MSF have improved WASH conditions on the site, especially through daily hygiene campaigns, installment of 3 toilets, 2 showers and 1 water point. In addition, electricity was brought by the municipality.

On **Samos**, as a measure of emergency, 20 containers were provided by the prefecture, to be installed at the port to accommodate approximately 200 people. The Prefecture provided 4 toilets and 4 showers. The Hellenic Red cross and Spanish Red Cross as well as a Governmental medical unit provide medical assistance in this informal settlement.

On **Chios**, UNHCR and the municipality worked closely to improve Mersinidi center by putting 25 new family tents up, providing blankets and sleeping mats, setting up water points and toilets. In addition, 15 UNHCR tents were set up in a public garden, at the request of authorities, to provide refugees with protection from the rain.

Beyond these emergency temporary accommodations, to cope with the increasing number of arrivals, the municipality of Chios has identified a land for the construction of a fully functional site where all services will be transferred. UNHCR's experts is supporting local authorities in setting up the site.

On **Lesvos**, 60 Refugee Housing Units (RHU) were installed during the reporting period, including 43 in Kara Tape, 6 in Moria, 4 in Pikpa and 2 in Molivos assembly site.



*Tents set up outside Mersidini site in Chios to provide shelter to refugees pending the establishment of a new reception site*

The total of RHU installed in Lesvos reached 89. Thanks to these additional shelter accommodations, an approximate 1,000 people can now remain safely in Kara Tape. The Mayor in Lesvos appointed 2 additional camp managers for Kara Tape. The camp managers will ensure a continuous presence on the site and prioritize persons with specific needs for the allocation of the 38 refugee housing units (RHUs) dedicated to accommodation. UNHCR will provide training on camp management and camp coordination to the managers.

In order to improve waiting conditions in Kara Tape, UNHCR installed plastic sheet shade construction in front of rub halls, creating a space where family can wait, beside the child friendly space.

- In Molivos, the refugee housing unit installed aimed at ensuring food and water distribution to refugees after arrivals and before being transferred to registration site.
- In Athens, as the weather conditions worsened, on September 22, authorities opened a Tae Kwon Do stadium to accommodate 400 refugees, mainly Afghans nationals, staying in Victoria train station. To replace this short term solution, on September 28, authorities made available the Hockey Field in Elliniko, where hundreds of people can be accommodate. In addition, on October 1, the Government opened a new site, in Galatsi area, which can accommodate 1,000 people. Both ongoing accommodation facilities are managed by the Ministry for Migration Policy, in cooperation with municipal authorities. Local volunteers and NGOs provide food and medical assistance on the site. UNHCR's through its partner METaction ensured interpretation services as well as protection monitoring.
- UNHCR, through its partner Praxis, has set up an emergency temporary accommodation referral mechanism to provide a safe immediate shelter to vulnerable individuals or families, as for example survivors of shipwrecks. Three apartments are operating in Lesvos (2) and Athens (1).
- On Kos, in absence of a reception center, UNHCR cooperates with a network of volunteers to ensure that the most vulnerable refugees are provided with accommodation and basic assistance.

### Basic Relief Items

- UNHCR conducts distributions targeting in priority the most vulnerable, such as children, on a daily basis in most islands as well as in Eidomeni. Distributions conducted by UNHCR complement the ones ensured by groups of volunteers, which distribute food as well as non-food items such as clothes. During the reporting period, over 2,000 sleeping mats, 4,000 packets of high-energy biscuits, 2,000 blankets, 400 sleeping bags and 400 hygiene kits were distributed on the islands. UNHCR also provided some wheelchairs and baby kits. In Lesvos, distribution are ensured by partners such as Save the Children, International Islamic Relief, IRC as well as volunteers.
- In Eidomeni, 3 refugee house units, which have a functional role and can be used by all actors, are dedicated to distributions: one is dedicated to distribution of water, one of food and the last one of NFIs. Thanks to the newly constructed site, it has been possible to shift from collective distributions of water, food and NFIs, through group leaders, to individual distributions. During the last 2 weeks of September, 90,000 people benefitted from distribution of food, water and NFIs, out of which over 45,000 people benefitted from individual ones. Distributions are conducted by volunteers and NGOs partners, with the support and coordination of UNHCR.
- UNHCR and partners provided support to the survivors of the eight boat incidents, counting for 4 deaths and 37-39 people missing, and are facilitating their access to medical and psychological services.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The serious gaps in reception infrastructure, as it is the case on all islands of the Dodecanese (Leros, Kalymnos, Kos, Rhodes, Symi, etc), or its currently substandard status such as on Lesvos, Chios and Samos, remains a major obstacle to most of UNHCR's protection activities. Emergency shelter solutions enhanced or set up in response to the worsening weather conditions, remain temporary and do not provide all services required.
- There is a need for improving the coordination of distributions of food and non-food items, especially in enhancing the coordination of the support provided by volunteers. In parallel to the implementation of the refugee

coordination model, which helps to prevent overlapping, UNHCR is working with volunteers to ensure a better management and coordination of distributions, in accordance with humanitarian principles.

## Working in partnership

- UNHCR continues to closely cooperate with the European Commission and relevant EU Agencies, including FRONTEX and EASO.
- UNHCR's emergency assistance and protection services in Greece are delivered through several partners including the Greek Refugee Council, Praksis, ICMC, METAction, Ecumenical Refugee Council, Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, Hellenic League for Human Rights and Hellenic Theatre Drama & Education Network. These partners have supported the provision of legal assistance and information on rights and obligations, the addressing of immediate relief/medical needs of persons of concerns and the transfer of unaccompanied children to specialized facilities on the mainland as part of the annual programme and the emergency appeal. UNHCR continues to closely cooperate with IOM, MSF, MDM, IRC, Hellenic Red Cross, Apostoli/IOCC among others, as well as with groups of volunteers, which play a significant role in the provision of assistance to refugees. In addition, in line with the Refugee Coordination model, UNHCR supports the Government's coordination efforts at central and local level, facilitating general and sectorial coordination meetings.
- Coordination meetings take place on a regular basis at a central level, as well as in most of the islands and in Eidomeni. Sectorial coordination meetings are also organized whenever required, as in Lesbos for example where a protection coordination meetings take place.
- UNHCR launched a call for expression of interests to enhance the humanitarian response on islands and mainland.

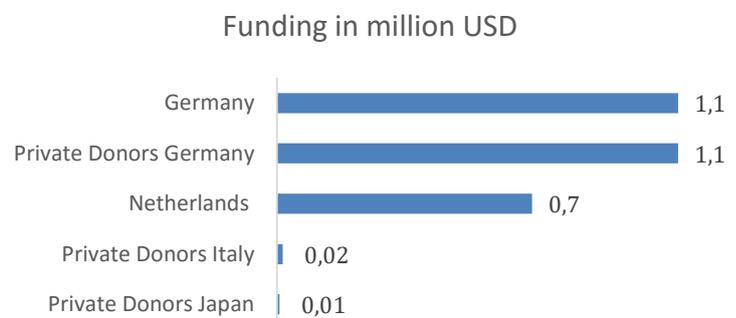
## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

On 30 September, UNHCR presented its revised appeal of USD 128 million for the Special Mediterranean Initiative (June 2015 – December 2016), which incorporates targeted programmes in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa subregion. The total financial requirements for Europe from June 2015 to December 2016 now amount to **USD 77.4 million** (USD 29.9 million for June-December 2015 and USD 47.5 million for January-December 2016), including support costs. Out of this total amount, USD 27.2 million are requested for the humanitarian response in Greece (USD 11.4 million for 2015 and USD 15.8 million for 2016).

A total of USD 6.8 million has so far been received for this emergency appeal, including **USD 2.9 million** for activities in Greece. UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the situation.

### Funding :

A total of **USD 2.9 million** has been funded out of **USD 11.4 million** requested for activities in 2015



### Contacts:

Marion Muscat, Reporting Officer, UNHCR Greece, [muscat@unhcr.org](mailto:muscat@unhcr.org) , Tel: +30.69.44.58.58.06

Ioannis Papachristodoulou, IM & Data, UNHCR Greece, [papachri@unhcr.org](mailto:papachri@unhcr.org) , Tel: +30 2 106 756 801

**Links:** [Arrival figures website](#) - [Refugee stories](#) - [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#)