

GREECE: ACCOMMODATION FOR RELOCATION PROJECT FACTSHEET

As part of the EU-funded project:

"Support to Greece for the development of the hotspot/relocation scheme as well as for developing asylum reception capacity"



CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS

6,294 accommodation
places established for
relocation candidates and
asylum-seekers in Greece.

6,743 beneficiaries
(Cumulative number of current and
past places occupied, including
persons relocated to Member States
and irregular departures and/or
abandons).

5,173 places pledged by EU
Member States for relocation
from Greece.

2,621 persons accepted by
the EU Member States for
relocation from Greece.

1,142 persons left Greece
to other EU countries under
the relocation scheme.

538 vulnerable asylum-
seekers not eligible for
relocation are currently
benefitting from the
accommodation scheme.

128 unaccompanied and
separated children (UASC)
accommodated.

What is the Accommodation for Relocation project?

In response to the Greek Government's request and the dramatic increase of need for enhancing the reception capacities, UNHCR committed to establish 20,000 accommodation places for the relocation process, at the EU Leaders' Summit on 25 October 2015. The reception capacity of Greece after 6 years of support plan was at that time below 1,200 places. UNHCR's contribution is expected to complement the efforts of the Government of Greece to increase their reception capacity by 30,000 both on the mainland and on the islands designated as 'hotspots' and later renamed "registration and identification centres", yielding to a total of 50,000 reception places. In addition, UNHCR also contributes significantly through its partners to the management of 3,570 places in open accommodation, on the islands.

UNHCR is actively supporting the Greek Government through site planning, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), provision of core relief items (CRIs), protection interventions with a particular focus on persons with specific needs, information and counselling of asylum seekers and potential relocation candidates. Those activities amongst others are carried out in the 43 sites established by the authorities throughout the country. Since January 2016, UNHCR has provided over 2,000 shelter and WASH solutions, over 300,000 CRIs in the mainland (in addition to the over 500,000 distributed on the islands), daily group and individual information sessions at the sites on asylum, family reunification and relocation.

Through the Relocation Scheme implemented by the Greek Asylum Service under the overall supervision of the Alternate Minister of Migration Policy, a total of 66,400 asylum seekers are to be relocated from Greece to other EU Member States during September 2015-September 2017.

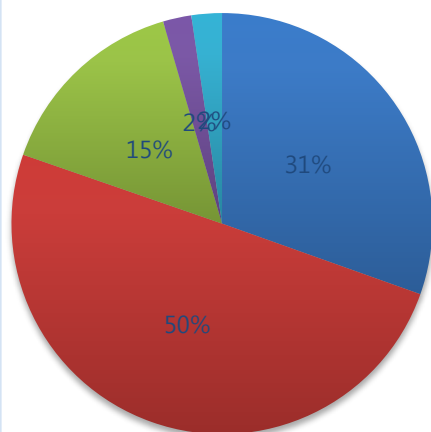
UNHCR started the Accommodation for Relocation project in November 2015 by using its own funds. 710 persons were accommodated during November-December 2015, of which 108 left to other EU Member States. In January 2016, UNHCR received funding from the European Union to continue the project throughout 2016 and to gradually establish the 20,000 places. The project focuses on relocation candidates however, it also benefits persons seeking asylum in Greece, prioritizing the most vulnerable.

UNHCR's Accommodation for Relocation project includes the creation of accommodation places in private apartments, hotels/other buildings, host families, etc. as well as the provision of basic assistance to the accommodated asylum seekers and relocation candidates such as food (cooked meals or food vouchers), hygiene items, interpretation and accompaniment services, referral to medical facilities, limited psychosocial and legal assistance.

Main Challenges and UNHCR Strategy

- The relatively slow implementation of the Relocation Scheme including the low number of departures to other EU Members States has increased the length of time the asylum seekers are spending in the accommodation places, from the initially envisaged 8 weeks to, in some cases, over 6 months, which has both financial and accommodation capacity implications. As of 31 May 2016, a total of 1,142 persons were relocated to other EU Member States, representing 1.7% of the 66,400 target.
- As of 31 May 2016, UNHCR and its partners created 6,035 accommodation places in Greece, representing 30.18% of the 20,000 target, which UNHCR is planning to reach by the end of 2016. Included are places in host families, private apartments, hotels and one accommodation site (Lagadikia). ***Establishment of additional accommodation sites would facilitate a rapid increase in the available accommodation places and would allow the project to respond more quickly to the pressing needs of the vulnerable families, women and children.*** UNHCR relies on the Government support for identification of suitable sites that can be used for accommodation of asylum seekers and relocation candidates.
- UNHCR is gradually creating the 20,000 accommodation places for asylum seekers and relocation candidates by:

Types of Accommodation (as of 1 June, 2016)



■ Hotels/buildings

■ Apartments

■ Relocation sites (Lagadikia)

■ Host families

■ Places for unaccompanied and separated children

Photo Gallery



Photos of UNHCR's activities of supporting the Greek Government to establish reception capacities.

- Working with Municipalities and NGO partners who are seeking accommodation with host families, are renting private apartments and are booking cost-effective hotel accommodation;
- Direct implementation (e.g. contracting hotels for full-occupancy, establishment and management of relocation site/s allocated by the Government for management by UNHCR).

- Local support is vital for the successful implementation of the project, which sometimes was hindered by resistance from local authorities and communities, due to misinformation. UNHCR will continue to explore the qualitative benefits of the project and will proactively inform the public of the positive aspects and the opportunities created at the local level.

Coordination and Monitoring

- A stakeholder coordination meeting with all partners involved in the project is held every 2-3 weeks.
- Project control is undertaken in close coordination with all partners to ensure efficient reporting requirements, prevent fraud and control costs.
- UNHCR is closely liaising with local authorities to ensure understanding and acceptance by local communities.
- UNHCR works with the Greek Asylum Service and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) for referral to accommodation places.
- A public [data portal](#) and a database accessible by partners gives a snapshot of the current achievements.

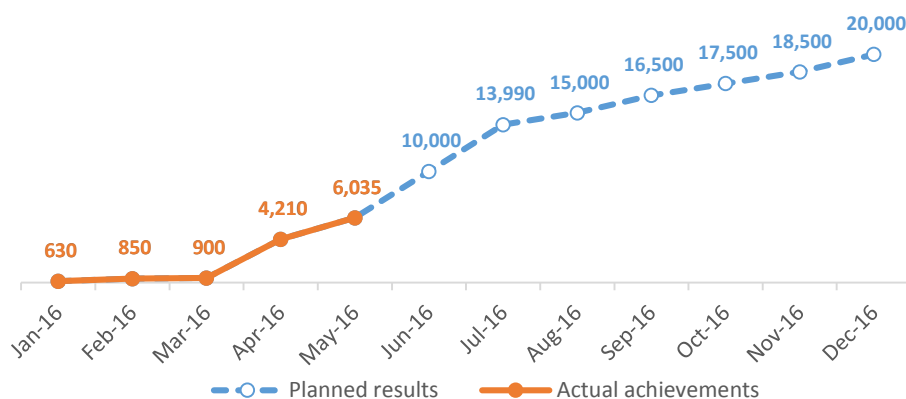
Partners and Main Activities

- In addition to accommodation, partners engaged in the Accommodation for Relocation project provide food, hygiene items, basic social support and transportation services.
- Medical, legal and psychosocial support is provided as required.

These services are provided to both relocation candidates and asylum-seekers with specific needs.

Partner	Available and/or in use as of 01/06/2016	Places planned to be available by end of July
Praksis	3,659	7,400
Municipality of Athens through Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)	36	1,200
Arsis	24	600
SolidarityNow	133	880
Nostos	352	350
Iliaktida	200	230
Municipality of Thessaloniki	0	330
UNHCR through hotels and apartments	1,005	2,000
UNHCR through relocation site (Lagadikia)	885	1,000
Total	6,294	13,990

Accommodation for Relocation Project Timeline



Contact: Won-Na Cha, Associate External Relations Officer, chaw@unhcr.org

A beneficiary's story:

Saeed's long pursuit of a safe home.

'We used to have a life, a job. I owned a family business, a dye factory in Aleppo for more than 20 years. But when ISIS arrived, they bombed my building and neighbors died. Then, they kidnapped my second son, Juma (22). They wanted 10,000 USD in ransom. I had to sell my factory to pay. He came back after 4 days. We left our house and sought shelter within Syria for three years. Life became very difficult. We had to burn shoes to keep warm'

Saeed (50) is with his family, including three daughters and two sons, in Greece. His first son, Shakir (26), has a family of his own including two children, aged 4 years and 6 months. Saeed's family is one of the more than 2,700 cases currently registered with the Accommodation for Relocation project, and accommodated under the UNHCR Reception Scheme in Greece, funded by the European Commission. This programme will provide relocation to eligible asylum-seekers from nationalities which have a recognition rate of 75% or above in the EU from Greece and Italy to other EU States, where they can have their asylum application processed. This plan is a solidarity and responsibility sharing mechanism with Greece, where more than 156,000 refugees and migrants have arrived by sea so far this year alone. Whilst they are waiting to be transferred to another EU State, UNHCR is providing accommodation in various housing schemes, ranging from hotels, houses and host families throughout the country, through seven partners: Praksis, Arsis, Nostos, Iliaktida, Solidarity Now, the Municipality of Athens through its Development Agency (ADDMA) and the Municipality of Thessaloniki. UNHCR is also providing accommodation directly through hotels.

Saeed's family first sought refuge in various locations within Syria, however funds ran out rapidly. They crossed the border to Turkey, Istanbul, where Shakir (26) and Juma (22), who used to work in the family dye business, had to work more than 12 hours a day, with whatever they could find in order to survive: waiting tables, ironing, construction and baking. They wanted to obtain legal residence in Turkey, send the children to schools and rebuild their family. However, the lack of information and resources on how to start this process left the family in despair.

After three years in Istanbul, they decided to move on to Greece. They sold everything they had and borrowed more to get hold of the 4,000 USD they needed to pay the smugglers

for the journey for the entire family. On 2 January 2016, the family assembled very early in the morning with 50 others at the coast town of Izmir, in a 30 person capacity rubber boat.

'We set to sea for around three hours. Once we were on the Greek side, we were rescued by the Médecins Sans Frontières boat (MSF). We were escorted to the Samos Island where we were warmly welcomed by the volunteers. There, through one of the information sessions conducted by the UNHCR, we were informed about the option of relocation, and we thus registered for the programme. This seemed to be the only way to gain a legal status, which we have been wanting for so long. We were then taken to Lesbos Island, then to Piraeus which is the mainland port of Greece, and finally to Athens. We now live in a furnished apartment in Athens. The neighbors have been kind and welcoming so far. The NGO Praksis are helping us with interpretation and monitoring any constraints. Finally, we feel safe and hopeful with a future to look towards.'

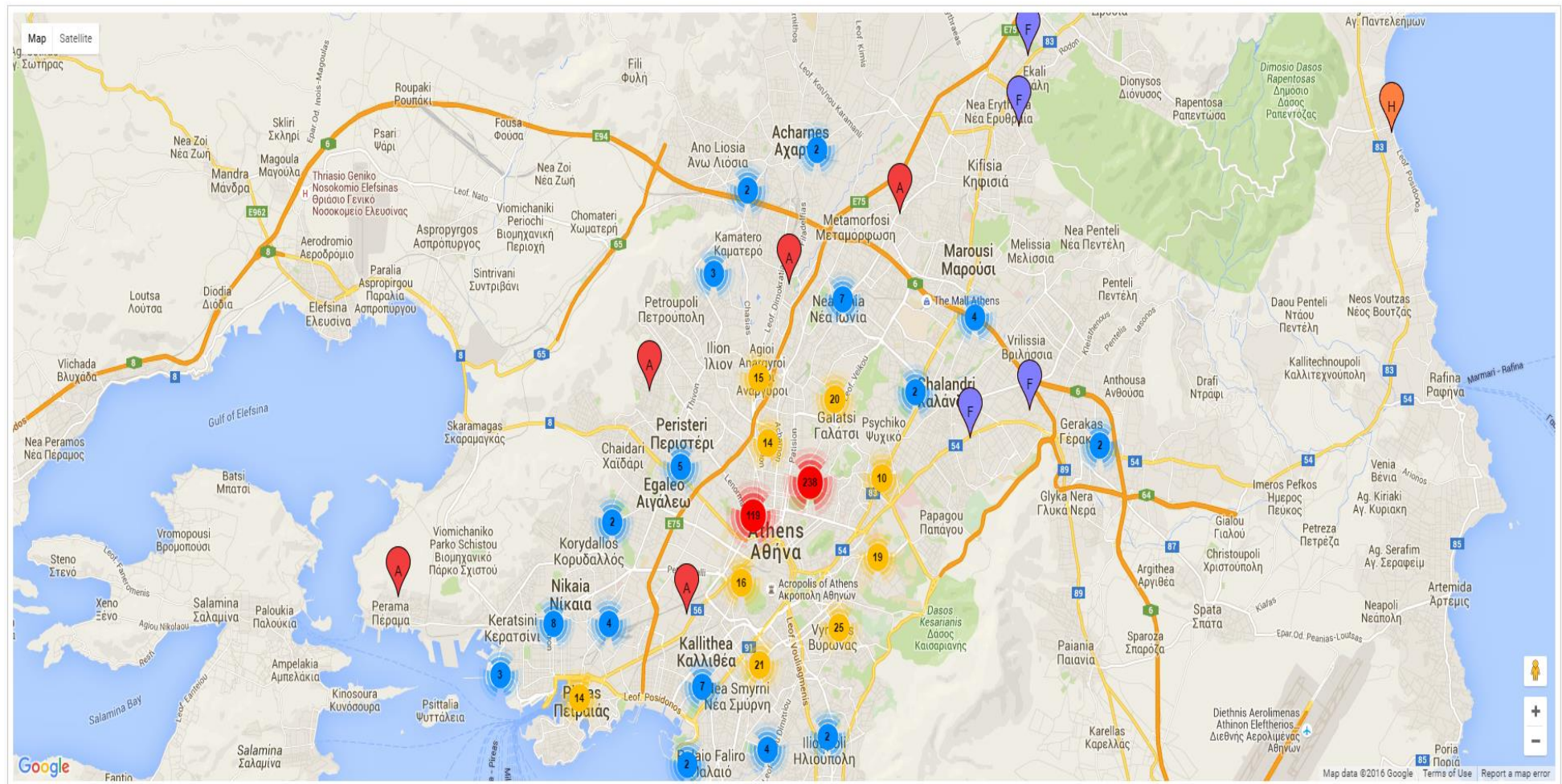
Saeed's family will be relocated to France in the near future where their application for refugee status will be examined. *'We want safety. We want education for our children. The young ones have never been to school yet. I would like to have a job so I can provide for my family. We used to have a house, cars, a life in Syria. Now we have nothing'.*

Shakir's phone rings during our discussion. *'We are scheduled for a medical screening this coming Tuesday as part of the pre-departure formalities'* he cries. The excitement in his voice is evident.

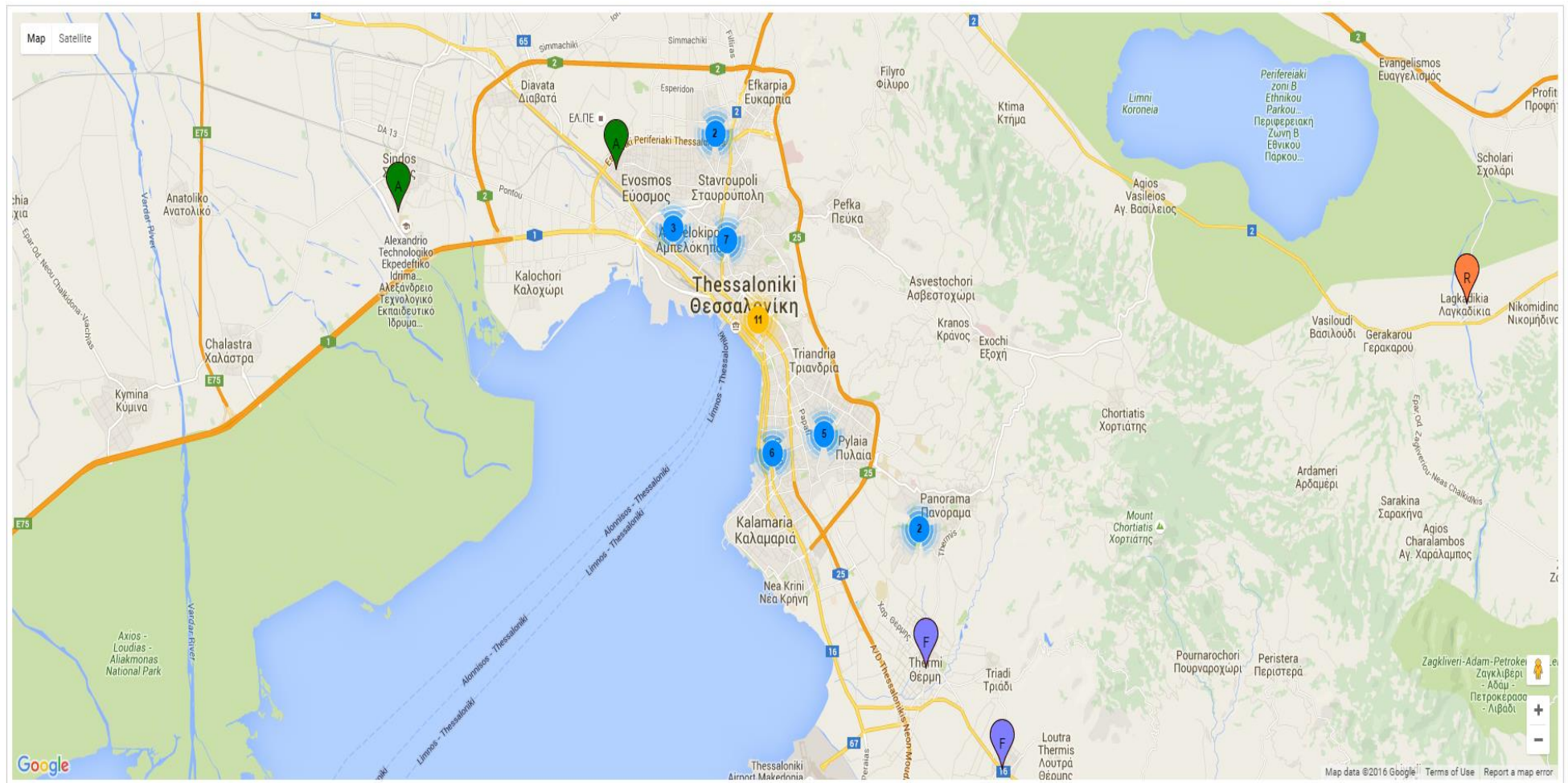
Photo: Saeed's family poses at their temporary home in central Athens as a part of the Relocation Scheme, with staff members from UNHCR's partner, Praksis.



MAP OF ACCOMMODATION-ATTICA (I)



MAP OF ACCOMMODATION -THESSALONIKI (II)



ADDMA
 ARSIS
 ILIAKTIDA
 NOSTOS
 PRAKSIS
 SOLIDARITY
 UNHCR

MAPS OF ACCOMMODATION - LESVOS (III) AND KOS (IV)

