

# ITALY

## UNHCR UPDATE #11

January 2017

### KEY FIGURES<sup>1</sup>

**4,467**

People arrived by sea.

**798**

Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) arrived by sea.

**26%**

Sea arrivals disembarked in hotspots.

**254**

Dead and missing at sea.

**33%**

Average EU protection rate of top nationalities arriving by sea in Italy.

**551**

Asylum-seekers relocated from Italy under the EU relocation scheme.

**3,205**

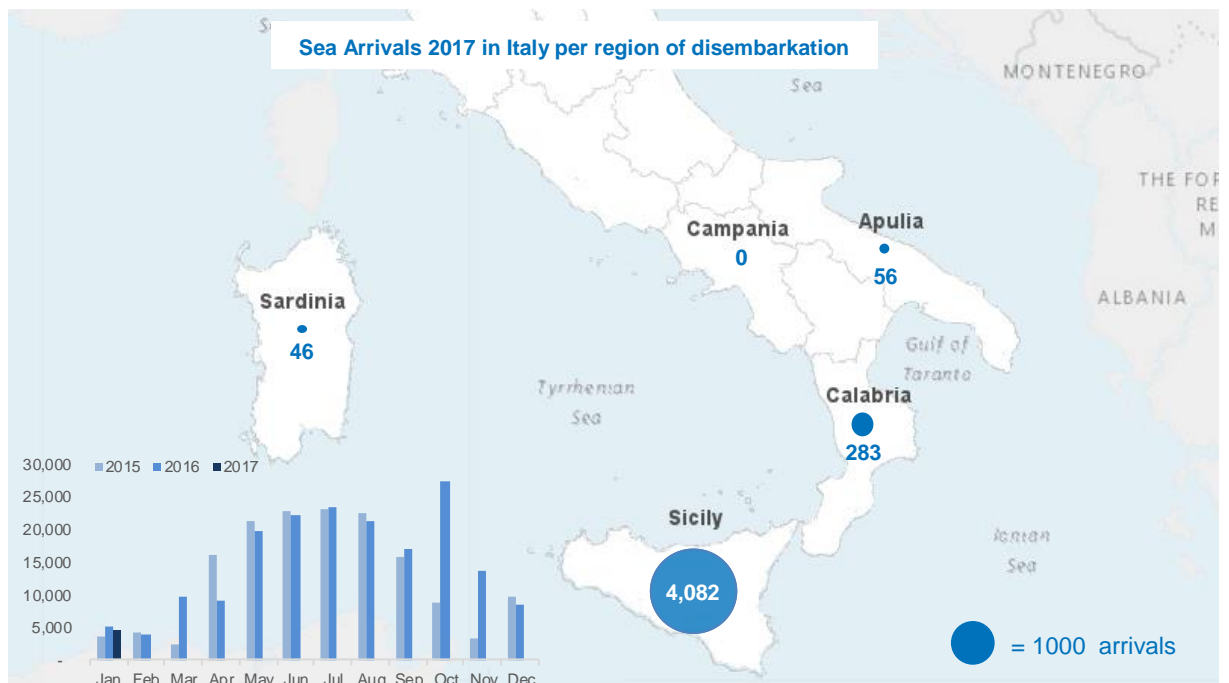
Total relocations from Italy under the EU relocation scheme.<sup>2</sup>

**174,573**

People accommodated in reception centres on 31 January 2017.

### HIGHLIGHTS

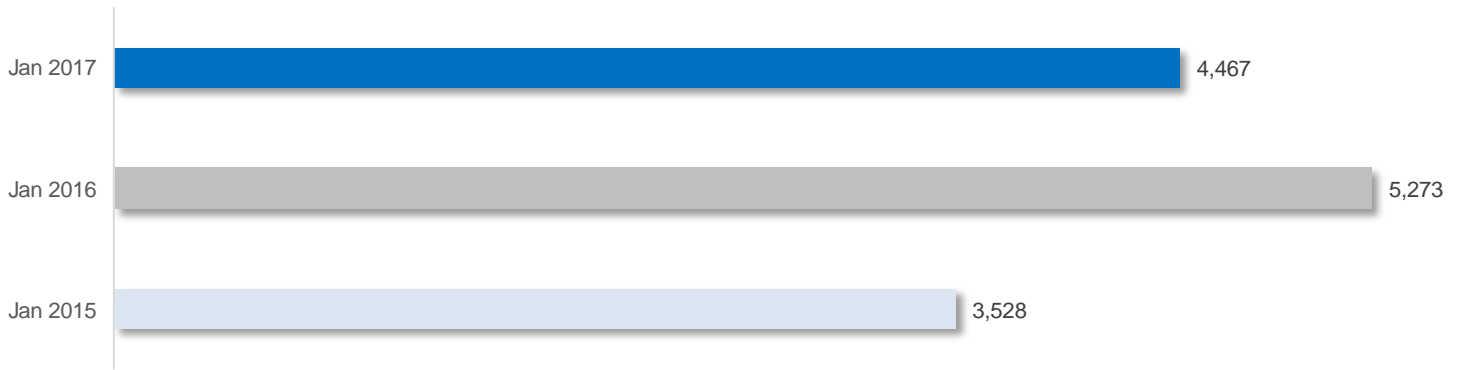
- 4,467 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea in January 2017, compared to 5,273 sea arrivals in January 2016. The main nationalities among sea arrivals are Ivoirian, Guinean and Nigerian.
- In 2017 so far, 798 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) arrived in Italy by sea. This corresponds to 18% of all sea arrivals. In 2016, 14% of all sea arrivals were UASC, up from 7% in 2015.
- In January 2017, 551 asylum-seekers departed through the intra-European relocation scheme to Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Spain. Since the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation up until 31 January 2017, 3,205 persons (8% of the 39,600 target) were relocated from Italy.
- At the end of January 2017, 174,573 asylum-seekers were accommodated in reception centres across Italy, 78% of whom were in temporary facilities.



<sup>1</sup> Sources: UNHCR, Ministry of Interior, Eurostat, European Commission (EC). Unless stated otherwise, figures reflect the period between 1 January and 31 January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> This figure reflects total relocations from Italy since the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocations, as of 31 January 2017.

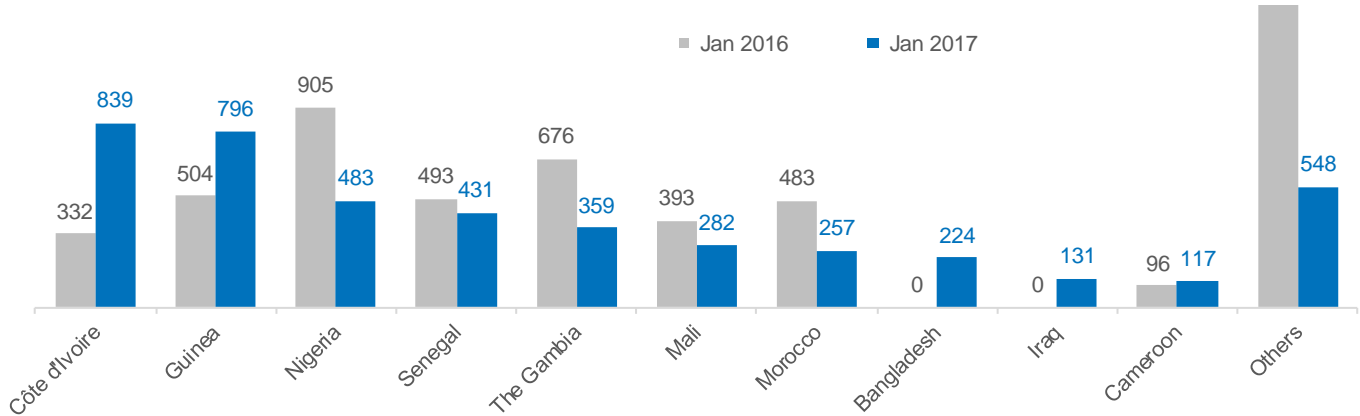
**Figure 1. January sea arrivals in Italy | 2015, 2016, and 2017**



In January 2017, **4,467 persons arrived in Italy by sea**. This is a slight decrease compared to the same period last year, when 5,273 persons reached Italian shores. Consistent with trends in recent years, sea arrivals are comparatively lower during the winter, due to less favourable weather and sea conditions. Fluctuations on a monthly basis may also be linked to other factors, including the situation in countries of departure and origin and the capacity of smugglers to organize departures. Most January 2017 arrivals disembarked in the main ports of southern Italy. **26% of them disembarked in the four operational hotspots** (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani), while the others disembarked in non-hotspot sea ports.

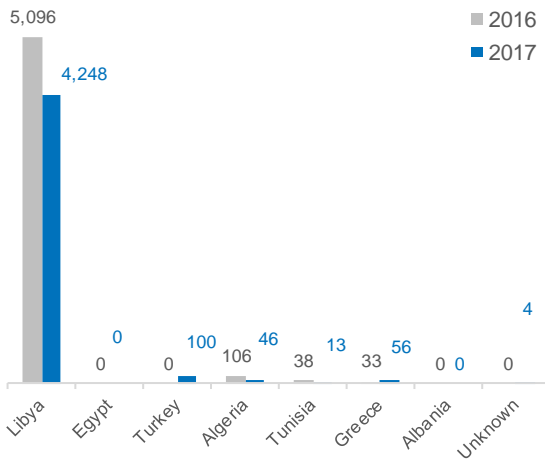
UNHCR staff is present during all phases of disembarkation procedures, both at hotspots and non-hotspot sites in several locations in southern Italy. UNHCR field teams (24 staff) provide support to the authorities, delivering information on international protection and the EU relocation scheme. UNHCR also helps to identify people with specific needs, including persons with medical conditions, pregnant women, UASC, victims of trauma and survivors of torture or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UNHCR continues to work to strengthen the authorities' capacity to identify persons with specific needs. Upon disembarkation, UNHCR staff provide new arrivals with leaflets on international protection and later conduct collective information sessions. Preliminary information is delivered immediately after new arrivals are pre-identified, while in-depth information is provided after registration.

**Figure 2. Most common nationalities of sea arrivals | January 2016 and January 2017**



In January 2017, **individuals arriving by sea mainly originated from Côte d'Ivoire (19%), Guinea (18%), Nigeria (11%), Senegal (10%), The Gambia (8%), Mali (6%), Morocco (6%), Bangladesh (5%), Iraq (3%) and Cameroon (2%)**. This represents a partial shift from the most common nationalities of sea arrivals recorded in 2016, when Nigerians and Eritreans were the most numerous national groups, followed by Guineans, Ivoirians, Gambians, Senegalese, Malians, Sudanese, Bangladeshis, and Somalis. However, the trend with regard to the most common sea arrival nationalities remains comparable overall to January 2016. For instance, although Moroccans were not among the main nationalities to reach Italian shores in 2016, 6% of sea arrivals in January 2017 were Moroccans, compared to 9% in the same period last year. The numbers of Ivoirians and Guineans arriving by sea rose considerably compared to January 2016 (increases of 153% and 58%, respectively). Nigerians represent the third most numerous national group among sea arrivals so far this year. However, fewer Nigerians arrived in January 2017 (483) compared to the same period last year (905). Sea arrivals from Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan decreased considerably in the first month of the year compared to January 2016. In the January 2017, Eritrean, Somali and Sudanese sea arrivals dropped by 87%, 98% and 79%, respectively, compared to January 2016. So far this year, 16 Eritreans, 6 Somalis and 27 Sudanese arrived by sea. In January 2017, 15 Syrians reached Italian shores, compared to 6 who arrived in January 2016. According to Q3 2016 Eurostat data, around 33% of all sea arrivals in Italy since the beginning of the year would be entitled to a form of protection if the average EU recognition rates were applied.

**Figure 3. Sea arrivals by country of departure**  
January 2016 and January 2017



**Libya is by far the main country of departure** for persons arriving in Italy by sea. In January 2017, 95% of sea arrivals crossed from Libya. Most of them reported leaving from the coastal town of Sabratha. New arrivals reported the precarious security situation in Libya, as well as instances of abuse, including torture, which occurred there. Most new arrivals departing from Libya reached Italian shores following SAR operations conducted by various actors, including the Italian Navy, the Italian Coast Guard, vessels from other countries and NGOs.

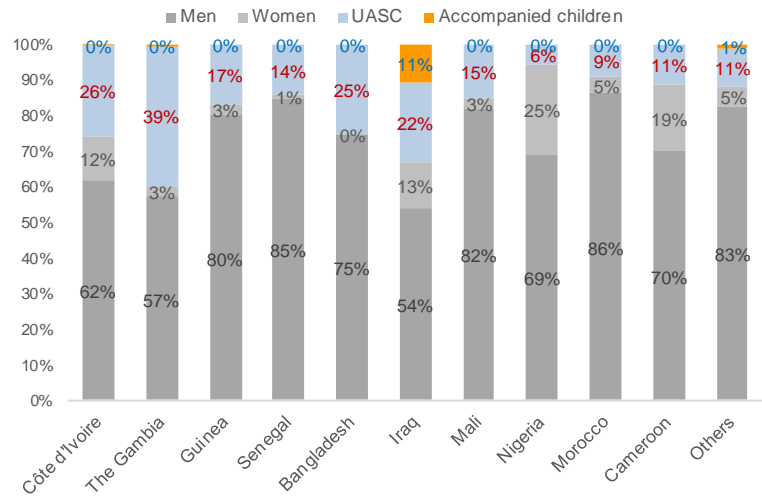
In January 2017, no sea arrivals were reported of persons departing from Egypt.

A number of autonomous sea arrivals occurred during the month, with comparatively smaller groups of persons reaching southern Italy after departing from Turkey, Greece, Algeria and Tunisia. Most autonomous arrivals involved vessels that were intercepted by the authorities just off the Italian coast and transferred to port sites, with persons subsequently undergoing identification procedures. In a smaller number of cases, persons autonomously reached shore and were only subsequently intercepted and identified by the authorities. Persons autonomously reaching Italian shores from Turkey, and, to a lesser extent, from Greece, mainly originate from Iraq and Iran.

Furthermore, in January 2017, two small groups of Iraqi and Syrian nationals were intercepted by the authorities at the Trieste port, in northern Italy. Both groups had travelled hiding inside containers on board cargo ships that had departed from Turkey. This follows a trend that emerged in late 2016, when other small groups of persons, mainly originating from Iraqi Kurdistan, Iran and Syria were intercepted at the Trieste port.

Numerous tragedies at sea occurred in January, with over 254 persons reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean. A considerable number of casualties were caused by drowning, when overcrowded boats unfit for large movements of persons leaked, capsized and sank, causing

**Figure 4. Most common 10 nationalities of UASC sea arrivals: breakdown by age and gender** | January 2017



persons to fall into the water. In January, persons were also reported to have lost their lives due to hypothermia during the sea crossing.

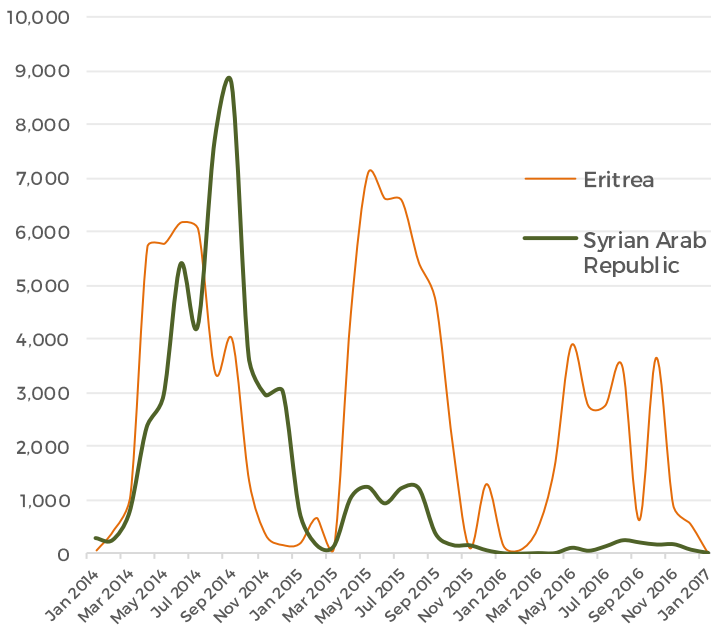
As in previous years, **men represented the vast majority** (74%) of persons arriving by sea in January 2017. Adult women accounted for 8% of sea arrivals during the month, which is comparable to January 2016, when 9% of sea arrivals were adult women. (However, adult women accounted for 13% of total yearly sea arrivals in 2016). Only 22 accompanied children arrived in January 2017, representing 0.5% of the total.

**Increasing arrivals of UASC occurred in January 2017**, following the trend observed throughout 2016. In the first month of 2017, 18% of sea arrivals (798 persons) were UASC. In the whole of 2016, 14% of those registered at landing points were UASC, whereas they accounted for 7% of the total in 2015.

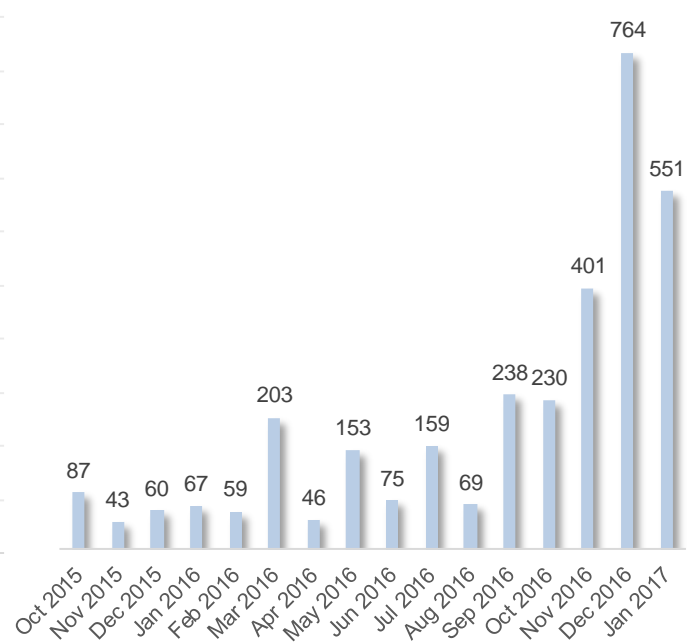
Age profiles vary among different national groups. Most UASC reaching Italian shores in January 2017 originate from Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Guinea. Although the increasing number of Ivoirians and Guinean UASC is consistent with a general increase in arrivals of these two nationalities, the percentage of UASC among these nationalities is also on the rise. In January 2017, UASC accounted for 25% of Ivoirian nationals and 17% of Guinean nationals arriving by sea. While Eritreans were the most numerous UASC group arriving by sea in 2016, only 5 were registered at landing points in January 2017. This is, however, comparable with January 2016, when 6 Eritrean UASC disembarked in Italy.

Three UNHCR child protection experts currently work with the authorities to promote good practices on best interest assessment and determination. UNHCR staff also support information provision for UASC at arrival points and in reception facilities.

**Figure 5. Monthly sea arrivals in Italy of Syrians and Eritreans (nationalities eligible for relocation) | January 2014 – January 2017**



**Figure 6. Relocations from Italy under the EU relocation scheme | October 2015 – January 2017**



Four hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani) are currently operational in Italy, with a total capacity of approximately 1,600 places. Representatives of the European border agency Frontex, EASO (European Asylum Support Office), Europol and Eurojust provide operational support to Italian authorities in the hotspots, in order to identify new sea arrivals. However, identification procedures are routinely also carried out in other sea ports.

In 2016, UNHCR participated in an *ad hoc* Ministry of Interior working group supporting the Italian authorities in drafting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be applied by competent authorities in the hotspots. The SOPs - published in May 2016 and implemented as a pilot document - aim to ensure that access to the territory and to the asylum procedure are granted in accordance with national and international standards. UNHCR monitors the implementation of the SOPs and has suggested reviews and amendments, where required, to promote procedural safeguards and their tailored implementation in non-hotspot sites as well.

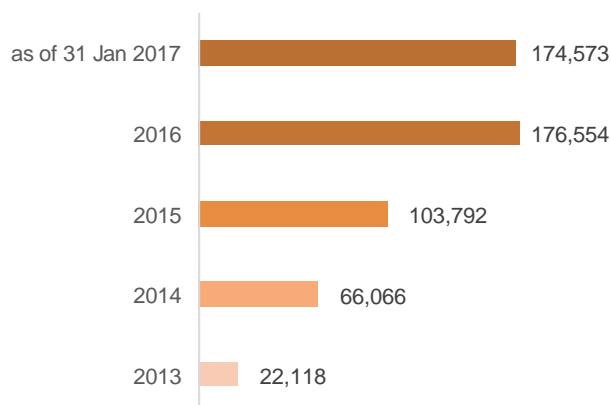
In line with the hotspot approach, three official regional hubs (Bari, Crotone and Villa Sikaniana) are also operational and host relocation candidates, with a total official capacity of over 2,200 places. Other facilities throughout the country also host relocation candidates.

In January 2017, some 30 potential relocation candidates (Syrians and Eritreans) arrived in Italy by sea. **During the month, 551 persons were relocated** to German, Latvia, The Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Spain, bringing total relocations from Italy to 3,205 (8% of the 39,600 target). **No UASC have been relocated from Italy yet.** While authorities are making efforts to begin relocating UASC, an effective procedure is yet to be developed. UNHCR has been liaising with the Ministry of Interior to enhance efforts towards implementing UASC relocation.

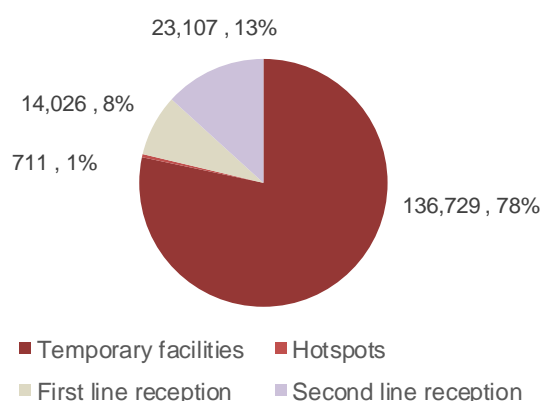
In January 2017, Italy received a total of 851 relocation pledges from participating states. However, there is still a significant gap between the number of pledges and the number of potential relocation candidates currently present in Italy. Furthermore, delays continue to affect the relocation process. One of the main impediments relates to the fact that regional hubs are at full capacity and potential relocation candidates are consequently accommodated in a decentralized manner. Serious gaps in training and registration capacity at the various decentralized locations hinder effective relocation processing.

In close cooperation with EASO, UNHCR provides potential relocation candidates with counselling and information. UNHCR also liaises with the Italian authorities to expedite the registration of non-registered candidates, in particular persons who were dispersed and then moved to facilities in Rome. UNHCR has also deployed a team in northern Italy, where it conducts capacity-building activities to assist the authorities in providing persons in transit with information on the asylum and relocation procedures. In northern Italy, the team also monitors land border procedures and their potential impact on access to international protection. Furthermore, the team monitors instances of readmission, focusing in particular on people with specific needs, such as UASC. Readmissions of UASC to Italy have been reported, more specifically from France and Switzerland.

**Figure 7. Persons accommodated in reception facilities in Italy | 2013 – 31 January 2017**



**Figure 8. Persons accommodated in Italy by type of facility on 31 January 2017**



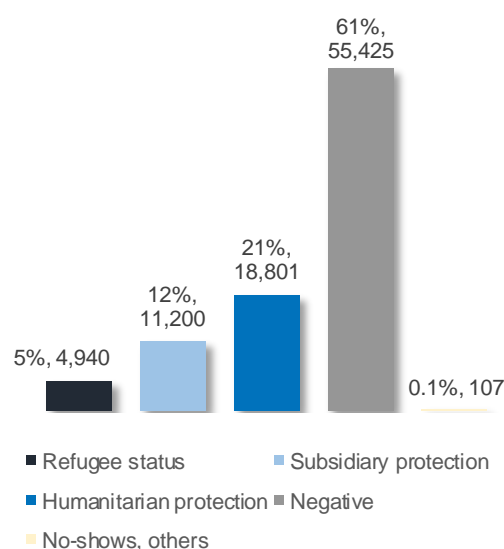
**On 31 January 2017, 174,573 persons were accommodated in reception centres across Italy.** Italian law provides for a 3-tier reception system, composed of: (1) first assistance facilities (so called CPSA) and hotspots; (2) first-line reception facilities, including first reception centres (so called CPA) and regional hubs; and (3) second-line reception facilities (so called SPRAR centres, run by the National Association of Italian Municipalities). If no spaces are available in first-line or second-line reception centres, the law stipulates that persons be accommodated in temporary facilities, also known as extraordinary reception centres, or CAS. Persons remain in first assistance centres and hotspots only for the purposes of undergoing identification and fingerprinting procedures, before being transferred to first-line or second-line reception centres.

**The vast majority of persons are currently accommodated in temporary reception centres.** On 31 January 2017, 820 persons (0.5% of the total) were in the four operational hotspots, while 136,729 persons (78%) were accommodated in temporary facilities and 14,026 (8%) were in first line reception centres.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, 23,107 persons (13%) were in second line reception facilities.<sup>4</sup> UNHCR provides support to the Italian authorities in developing mechanisms to monitor reception conditions. UNHCR advocates for the harmonization of reception conditions across the three-tier system and for their compliance with national and EU standards.

Reception capacity in Italy has steadily increased in the recent years in order to keep pace with rising numbers of persons staying in Italy compared to previous years. **In 2016, over 181,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea and over 123,000 asylum applications were lodged,** a significant increase compared to 2015, when some 84,000 claims were submitted. UNHCR participates in first instance Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures, with staff members posted in the 48 operational decentralized Territorial Eligibility Commissions. These UNHCR staff provide advice on the use of eligibility criteria, procedural standards, and country of origin information. Furthermore, UNHCR teams, in close cooperation with the National Commission for the Right of Asylum, monitor the quality of RSD procedures and supports the implementation of guidelines for the referral of potential victims of trafficking who seek asylum.

Together with the Ministry of Interior and the National Commission for the Right of Asylum, UNHCR continues to be involved in the working group on the reform of the asylum procedure, which was set up in October 2015.

**Figure 9. Outcome of RSD decisions in Italy January – December 2016**



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**Links:** [Regional web portal](#) [UNHCR Italy webpage](#) [Twitter: @UNHCRItalia](#) [Facebook UNHCRItalia](#)

<sup>3</sup> These figures reflect the situation on 31 January 2017 and are subject to constant change. Please note that MoI data does not statistically capture the reception capacity of transit facilities opened by local authorities in the northern border areas (e.g. Como, Ventimiglia) to provide basic services to refugees and migrants in transit.

<sup>4</sup> As of 23 January 2017.