

Greece

Conditions in the mainland are generally improving. The Government is closing temporary sites and more people are staying in rented housing. However, **increased sea and**

land arrivals of 4,200 people this month accentuated the overcrowded conditions in island and border reception centres leading to alarming conditions and slower asylum procedures.

To help, UNHCR intensified the transfer of those eligible to the mainland and **called for robust action** to improve conditions on the islands and provide additional staff.

44,043 refugees and migrants in Greece¹

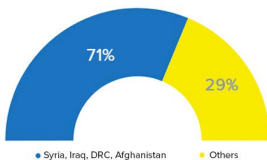
34,076 in the mainland

9,967 on the islands

33,443 eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR this month

32,711 people have so far benefited from UNHCR accommodation²

12,246 people transferred from the islands to the mainland (UNHCR supported)³



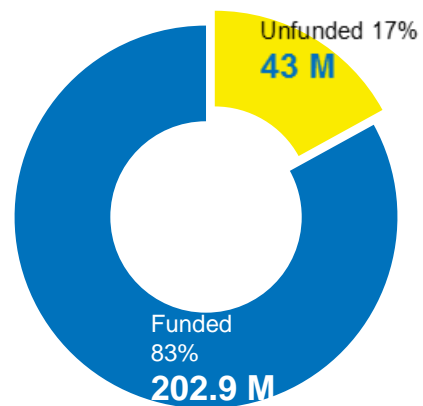
71% of arrivals in 2017 are from Syria, Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan

¹UNHCR estimates as of 31 August 2017
²Since the start of the programme in November 2015
³Between June 2016 and August 2017

FUNDING (AS OF 18 SEPTEMBER)

USD 245.9 M

requested for the Greece operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

397 National Staff

72 International Staff

Offices:

1 Branch Office in Athens

5 Mainland Offices in Attika, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Larissa, Evros

6 Island Offices in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, and Rhodes



© UNHCR/Despina Anagnostou. Asylum-seekers resort to sleeping outside the overcrowded reception and identification centre of Vathy, Samos as the centre's capacity is not sufficient to accommodate all. August 2017.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities through sectoral Working Groups at the national and field levels.

Main Activities

ESTIA Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can now choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods. This month, 33,443 people received cash assistance in Greece from UNHCR, and the UNHCR-funded Greece Cash Alliance partners.
- By the end of August, UNHCR had created 18,315 places to house vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation helps provide beneficiaries with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services, including education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece, while the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments.
- This month, the municipalities of Larisa and Nea Philadelphia – Nea Chalkidona joined the Accommodation Scheme with a total of 110 additional apartments. Along with Karditsa, Trikala, Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, and a consortium of municipalities in Crete there are now eight agreements with municipalities in Greece.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers in Greece, funded by the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Protection

- To alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the reception and identification centres of the islands, UNHCR organizes the transfers of eligible asylum-seekers from the islands to urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete or to sites in the mainland. In August 2017 UNHCR intensified transfers in response to the increase in arrivals and supported the transfer of 1,954 asylum-seekers from Samos (584), Chios (577), Lesbos (658), Kos (65), Leros (39), and other south Dodecanese islands (31). A total of 12,246 people have been assisted since June 2016.
- UNHCR supports the capacity building of the asylum procedures in Greece and in August delivered a training to the 23 newly recruited lawyers of the Asylum Service who will provide free legal aid to asylum-seekers at second instance, as part of the State-run legal aid Scheme.
- UNHCR also provides legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. This includes legal aid on asylum proceedings and access to

rights, as well as on family reunion under the Dublin Regulation to other EU Member States. From January 2016 and the end of July 2017, 6,500 people received legal aid.

- UNHCR supports the Greek Asylum Service by helping upon request the caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. In August, UNHCR helped in a total of 971 instances.

Child Protection

- As the number of 2,400 unaccompanied children in Greece exceeds the 1,200 available places in shelters for their accommodation, children risk spending extended periods of time in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody. Unfortunately, this affects an increasing number of children with over 113 children in police detention and 223 at the RICs at the end of August (EKKA Statistics). This has serious repercussions for their protection and wellbeing.
- To respond, UNHCR facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme, thus freeing very much needed space in shelters. In addition, UNHCR with partners support the authorities in developing diverse alternative care arrangements, including through Supported Independent Living where children will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- UNHCR also provides advice and technical support to the Government, as well as expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children (UAC) to shelters.
- UNHCR coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to monitor and develop Standard Operating Procedures and minimum standards to enhance the protection of children.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands translate into poor shelter allocation and a lack of privacy, both of which heighten the risk for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This adds to the volatility of refugees already suffering from the sudden breakdown of family and community structures as a result of their forced displacement.
- UNHCR co-chairs the SGBV Working Group with the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) and the General Secretariat on Gender Equality to coordinate the prevention and response to SGBV in Greece. The SGBV WG has developed Standard Operating Procedures, while in Thessaloniki and Lesvos, regional SGBV sub-WGs coordinate on specific issues in the field where the risk of SGBV is even higher.
- UNHCR and partners have also developed referral pathways for refugee-hosting sites so that survivors of SGBV receive appropriate help.
- Finally, UNHCR conducts trainings for state and non-state actors in Greece to strengthen the prevention and response to SGBV nationally.

Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare, working together with the Ministry of Health and other partners including by co-chairing the Health Working Group.

- UNHCR is providing technical expertise to the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, KEELPNO in the development of the 'Vulnerability Assessment' tool. The tool aims to guide medical and psychosocial teams identify vulnerable people and their specific needs at the reception and identification centres, and refer them to appropriate services for further assistance.
- A particular problem in Greece is the lack of places in the public mental health institutions. UNHCR is working to develop referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health disorders to private institutions.
- UNHCR also funds specific health services in Lesbos, Chios as well as in the Municipality of Athens.

Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service in Greece have translated into an accelerated rate for the granting of status to those in need of international protection. As such, 5,100 people were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection between January and July 2017, nearly double the 2,700 of the entire 2016.
- This translates into a pressing need to support recognized refugees transition from the assistance they received as asylum-seekers to the national programmes they are eligible for in Greece, on the same terms and conditions as Greek nationals. To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and relevant actors have agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recognized refugees can access cash assistance and accommodation.
- The Government announced the adoption of a comprehensive social integration policy for refugees and migrants as one of its priorities for the end of 2017 and UNHCR stands ready to offer its support.

Relocation and Returns

- In August, 1,762 people relocated from Greece to other EU Member States according to the Greek Asylum Service, bringing the total to 19,216 people since the start of the programme.
- Also in August, 18 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. – Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,307 people have been returned to Turkey.

Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and transportation. UNHCR ensures that this does not hinder access to asylum. In August, UNHCR provided transportation to the Asylum Service and embassies as well as to accommodation for some 5,000 asylum-seekers in Northern Greece and Attika.
- UNHCR provides transportation for its beneficiaries who need to move from sites to UNHCR accommodation, from sites and urban accommodation to Asylum Service, embassies and back, and from Kavala port (transfers from islands) to UNHCR accommodation. During August 2017, UNHCR organized 4,347 transportation routes.

Partners

- In August UNHCR worked through 30 partners in 9 sectors. UNHCR worked on Protection with Arsis, GCR, KSPM-ERP, METAdrasi, Praksis, ICMC, UNOPS and DRC; on Child Protection with Arsis, Faros, Iliaktida, METAdrasi, NCDP, Nostos and Praksis; On Cash with Care, CRS, IFRC, IRC, Mercy Corps and Samaritan's Purse; On Accommodation with Arsis, Faros, Iliaktida, Nostos, Praksis, Solidarity Now, CRS, Municipality of Athens, Municipality of Andravida, Municipality of Heraklion, Municipality of Livadia, Municipality of Thessaloniki and Municipality of Trikala; On NFI, shelter & WASH with Samaritan's Purse; On Site Management Support with DRC, Intersos, Samaritan's Purse, UNOPS and Reception and Identification Service; On Health with MDM; On Peaceful coexistence & Integration with Arsis, KEAN, Solidarity Now, Samaritan's Purse, Intersos and UNOPS; On Public awareness raising with TENet-Gr, UNOPS.

External / Donors Relations

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

United States of America (226 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Private Donors Spain (41 M) | Norway (41 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Private Donors Republic of Korea (20 M) | Australia (19 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Private Donors USA (13 M) | Private Donors Italy (13 M) | Germany (12 M) | Private Donors Japan (10 M) | Italy (10 M)

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (200 M) | Spain (2 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M)

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