

# EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



Una Sana Canton in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the Croatian border - it is estimated that there are now around 4,500 refugees and migrants there. The opening of a new reception centre in Una Sana Canton, is a significant step in improving reception conditions for vulnerable refugees and migrants.

## TRENDS AND KEY FIGURES

Between 1 January and 30 July, 72,200 refugees and migrants arrived via the three Mediterranean routes to Europe <sup>2</sup> compared to almost 121,000 arrivals who arrived in the same period in 2017. This marks a 67% reduction from the previous year's arrival figures showing a continued declining trend of the overall arrivals numbers to Europe. A monthly comparison to previous years, shows a continued decrease with nearly 15,600 arrivals in July 2018 who reached Europe whereas in 2016 and 2017 there were 16,500 and 25,880 arrivals during July respectively. As of 30 July, most confirmed arrivals so far this year have been to Spain with some 27,500 arriving by land and sea compared to almost 26,100 in Greece and some 18,500 in Italy. Primary nationalities amongst arrivals in 2018 so far were Syrians, Guineans, and Iraqis.

**GREECE:** Some 26,100 refugees and migrants have arrived by land and sea in Greece with 62% arriving by sea so far in 2018. Sea arrivals (16,260) in this period have increased by 41% compared to the same period last year (11,530). In July 2018, over 2,540 have arrived in Greece by sea while the Turkish Coast Guard has intercepted or rescued 1,500 in the Aegean. The average daily number of sea arrivals in July was 82. At the Greek land border in Evros, a total of 9,840 people have crossed into Greece in 2018 so far, with some 1,500 crossing during July marking an increase compared to 1,070 whom arrived through Evros in June. The top five countries of origin of arrivals by land and sea were Syrians (38%), Iraqis (17%), Turkish nationals (17%), Afghans (12%) and from Congo, Democratic Republic of (3%).

**ITALY:** Over 18,500 refugees and migrants have arrived in Italy by sea in 2018 so far. This is a 81% decrease compared to the same period in 2017

Mediterranean

# 72,200

arrivals in 2018 <sup>1</sup>

# 1,512

estimated dead/missing in 2018 <sup>1</sup>

**Greece<sup>2</sup>**

## 26,100

4,374	3,515	4,049
May	Jun	Jul

**Italy**

## 18,500

3,963	3,136	1,944
May	Jun	Jul

**Spain<sup>2</sup>**

## 27,500

3,937	7,313	9,597
May	Jun	Jul

**Cyprus**

## 73

0	61	0
May	Jun	Jul

**New asylum applications in Europe <sup>3</sup>**

Jan-Jun 2018: **286,700**

Jan-Dec 2017: **819,000**

Jan-Dec 2016: **1,323,000**

Jan-Dec 2015: **1,471,000**

<sup>1</sup> [data.unhcr.org/mediterranean](http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean) as of 31 July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Greece and Spain both include sea and land arrivals; Spain includes sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands.

<sup>3</sup> Sources: Eurostats for EU+ countries (Only partial data for June and July 2018. All data is provisional and last updated 23 August 2018); UNHCR for Eastern Europe (as of 31 December 2017), Turkey (as of 31 December 2017) and South Eastern Europe (as of 31 July 2018).

# 34,693

**Relocated in total** <sup>4</sup>
<sup>4</sup>Source: [European Commission](#), as of 9 July 2018.

 from **Greece**

## 21,999

(33% of 66,400)

 from **Italy**

## 12,694

(31% of 39,600)

# 1,673

**Returns EU-Turkey statement** <sup>12</sup>
<sup>12</sup>Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 31 July 2018.

(over 95,000). The overall reduction in arrival numbers to Italy this year is primarily due to lower numbers of refugees and migrants being able to cross from Libya, a situation that has also led to a sharp decline in the total number of refugees and migrants reaching other European countries. Just under 2,000 refugees and migrants have arrived by sea to Italy in July, an 83% decrease compared to those who arrived in July last year (11,460). Around 66% of arrivals so far this year have crossed from Libya, whereas 20% crossed from Tunisia and 9% from Turkey. In July, over 2,200 people were intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard which is now taking responsibility for the majority of interventions off the Libyan coast. The largest groups that arrived by sea in Italy in July were from Iraq (18%), Tunisia (16%), Eritrea (16%), and Pakistan (13%).

**SPAIN:** In July, nearly 9,600 refugees and migrants arrived to Spain via land and sea borders, the highest number in a single month so far this year, of which 89% (8,640) arrived by sea. A total of 27,600 refugees and migrants have reached Spain both by land and sea so far in 2018, representing an increase of 130% compared to the same period in 2017 (over 12,000). The increase in arrivals continues to challenge existing reception capacity in some disembarkation locations in Spain. The five most common nationalities of sea arrivals in Spain so far this year are Guineans (18%), Malians (15%), Moroccans (15%), Ivoirians (14%) and Gambians (7%).

**BALKANS:** As of 30 July, over 10,100 refugees and migrants were reported to have arrived in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) including some 2,500 who arrived in July – making July the month with the highest number of arrivals. Of new arrivals so far this year, 33% have been from Pakistan,

15% from Syria and 12% from Iran. While many of the refugees and migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina attempt to move onwards through Croatia and Slovenia, some 3,600 refugees and migrants were present in Serbia, a slight increase compared to the 3,350 recorded in June. UNHCR continues to offer its support to authorities and partners in order to address arising humanitarian needs.

**Dead and Missing:** So far in 2018, 1,511 people have died or gone missing while trying to reach Europe by sea which is a 38% decrease compared to the number of deaths occurred in the same period in 2017. Most deaths occurred along the Central Mediterranean route (1,095 or 72%) with 317 (21%) of the deaths along the route to Spain. Along land routes, at least 67 refugees or migrants are known to have died so far this year at or near European borders.



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Eritrean woman who survived abuse in Libya resettled to Europe from Libya: "They didn't see you like a human being. If you were sick they would throw you out in the desert to die."

## OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey

# 3.9 million

**Refugees and asylum seekers** <sup>5</sup>

 Syrian Arab Republic **3,534,000**

 Afghanistan **164,000**

 Iraq **143,000**

 Other nationalities **55,000**
<sup>5</sup> Source: UNHCR as of 31 July 2018

Ukraine

# 1.8 million

**Internally Displaced Persons** <sup>6</sup> and **Conflict Affected Persons** <sup>7</sup>

 Refugees: <sup>8</sup> **3,257**

 Asylum seekers: <sup>9</sup> **5,610**

 Stateless persons: <sup>10</sup> **35,294**
<sup>6</sup> Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).

<sup>7</sup> Estimated number of conflict-affected people living along the line of contact in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/01/2018

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR as of 20/07/2018

<sup>10</sup> State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/01/2018

# KEY DEVELOPMENTS



**AZERBAIJAN:** The Japanese Fuji Vision Aid Mission team, including six optometrist specialists and led by the 2006 Nansen Refugee Award Winner Dr. Akio Kanai carried out its 14th humanitarian mission to Azerbaijan during 1 – 11 July. During the mission, the six Japanese optometrists checked the eyes of 2,815 refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and other vulnerable people and dispensed 2,244 pairs of eyeglasses. In addition, some 190 complicated cases were identified for which special pairs of eyeglasses will be prepared in Japan within a couple of months and will be delivered to the patients through UNHCR Azerbaijan. Around 54,000 pairs of high quality optic eyeglasses and other items have been brought to Azerbaijan as in-kind donation to the UNHCR operations. In total, more than 28,000 refugees, IDPs and other vulnerable people have benefited from free vision screening services. On 10 July, Dr. Akio Kanai was received by the Deputy PM Ali Hasanov, the Deputy PM Ali Ahmadov and the Chairman of the State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and IDPs Rovshan Rzayev.

**1** **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:** The opening of a new reception centre for families on 25 July in Cazin municipality, established with European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) Directorate support, and managed by IOM and supported by UNHCR represents a significant step in improving reception conditions for vulnerable refugees and migrants in the Una Sana Canton (USC). Besides food and accommodation, residents through UNHCR partners will have full access to

legal assistance and to the asylum process, as well as to healthcare and psychosocial support. Humanitarian needs are particularly critical in USC where the daily movement of refugees and migrants is estimated to be between 70 and 90: it is estimated that there are now around 4,500 refugees and migrants there.

**GERMANY:** On 9 July, Germany's Minister of Interior Horst Seehofer finally presented his so-called "Masterplan Migration" comprising of 63 measures in respect to reception, accommodation and return. In particular the rejection at the border of asylum-seekers who have been registered in another MS sparked a heated debate. In addition to this, the plan, inter alia, includes non-kind benefits instead of cash, faster return procedures and so-called AnKER centres, a centralized concept of accommodation for asylum-seekers in one compound together with the relevant authorities for the asylum procedure. In a [press release](#), UNHCR, while welcoming the need to improve the quality of asylum procedures, voiced its concerns over areas still in need of improvement within the proposals.

**GREECE:** The increased arrivals in 2018 compared to 2017 have led to a shortage of accommodation for asylum-seekers across Greece. This in turn has exacerbated overcrowding in island reception centres and some mainland camps, and led to delays in asylum procedures both for interviews and in the issuance of decisions. UNHCR supported the authorities' efforts to increase accommodation in existing and new camps by offering shelter items

for 2,800 people, the final of over 2.5 million relief items UNHCR provided to the refugee response in Greece since 2016. Work still remains to be done however to ensure that new camps have sufficient medical and social support for the residents. Through the [accommodation scheme](#) as part of the ESTIA programme, UNHCR provided 25,406 housing places in apartments and buildings for asylum-seekers and refugees. Of those accommodated, an estimated 4,687 have been granted international protection in Greece. In total 50,177 people have benefitted from UNHCR's Accommodation Scheme since November 2015. UNHCR also provided [cash assistance](#) to 51,945 people in July of a total of 5,179,941 Euro. This includes 4,123 people receiving assistance for the first time this month. Wildfires in Attica left 96 dead and many homeless. Greek PM Alexis Tsipras declared three days of national mourning and issued an urgent appeal for help. Refugees, migrants and humanitarian organizations [volunteered their help](#) and offered [solidarity](#) to the fire victims. UNHCR extended assistance and provided relief items to the municipality of Athens. The Staff Association delivered medicine and pharmaceutical products donated by UNHCR Greece staff to Nea Makri, one of the affected municipalities.



**2** **ITALY:** UNHCR issued a [press release](#) on 19 July, welcoming the actions carried out during the course of the month by several European countries to collectively end a standoff on the Mediterranean involving some 450 refugees and migrants who had been stranded at sea amid a dispute over disembarkation. On 18 July the governments of France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Spain and Portugal, agreed to jointly process and relocate 450 people after disembarkation was granted. In this context, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi welcomed the development but stated, "However, solutions are needed that go beyond piecemeal or 'ship-by-ship' arrangements. Disembarkation needs to occur in a place of genuine safety, including for those who may be in need of international protection; but not necessarily in a place of their preference."

On 23 July, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Moavero Milanesi, stated that Italian ports will be open to Operation Sophia vessels, until the Operation's rules are changed at

the end of August, reportedly putting an end to disembarkations occurring in Italy alone.

On 25 July, Minister of the Interior Mr. Salvini addressed the Constitutional Affairs Commissions of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. He touched upon the following issues: the importance of supporting UNHCR's and IOM's presence in transit countries in order to facilitate humanitarian corridors procedures; the need to redefine criteria for granting humanitarian protection; the intention to restructure the reception system with first-line reception for asylum-seekers and second-line reception for beneficiaries of international protection and UASC; and the intention to support mayors in identifying solutions against occupied buildings.

**3** **THE NETHERLANDS:** On 2 July the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment introduced the new integration policy. Unlike the current policy where refugees choose their own civic integration course, municipalities will oversee and assist with the integration process, by setting up a personal integration plan for refugees, which includes language courses, rent and costs for insurance. Dutch language requirements have also been changed from A2 (advanced beginners) to B1 (early intermediate level), in order to increase employment opportunities. The policy will be fully implemented by 2020.

**4** **THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION:** UNHCR participated in a two day Astana-format meeting on Syria in Sochi between 30 and 31 July where UNHCR had the opportunity to share its [views](#) on voluntary repatriation. UNHCR underlined its firm commitment to Syrian refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) to help them to exercise their right to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, and to participate actively in the building of peace in their county. There is a collective responsibility to ensure that returns are in line with agreed international standards. UNHCR is closely following the developments on the ground in Syria and is engaged in all meaningful opportunities to support refugees.

**5** **UKRAINE:** The 20th EU-Ukraine Summit was held on 9 July in Brussels. The main issues on the agenda were the implementation of the association agreement and its free trade area, implementation of the Minsk agreements, the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and regional issues. In a [joint statement](#), President of the European Council Donald Tusk, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko welcomed improvements especially in the areas of health and pensions; progress on structural reforms in the fields of decentralization, public procurement, environment and privatization; improved governance and transparency of state-owned enterprises; and progress made on the law on national security. The statement confirmed the EU's continued support for Ukraine's reform efforts, including the fight against corruption.

## EU RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

On 01 July, Austria took over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU for six months. As is customary, UNHCR [issued recommendations](#) to the Austrian Presidency, based on three priorities: i) a relocation mechanism as part of the reformed Dublin Regulation, ii) a predictable regional mechanism in the Mediterranean for the disembarkation and processing of persons rescued at sea and iii) the expansion of the global protection space rather than a shifting of protection responsibilities outside of the EU.

On 13-14 July, EU Ministers of the Interior gathered in Innsbruck for an informal Justice and Home Affairs ([JHA Council](#)). The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the way forward on asylum and migration as a follow-up to the 28-29 June EUCO [conclusions](#) and at the beginning of the Austrian Presidency. Discussions focused on borders and return, a regional approach to disembarkation of persons rescued in the Mediterranean and the CEAS reform.

On 16 July, EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs gathered

in Brussels for a [Foreign Affairs Council](#). Ministers for Foreign Affairs discussed the situation in Libya following the [visit of the High Representative/Vice President Mogherini](#) to the country on 14 July. Mogherini notably [highlighted](#) the results of the "EU's work on the ground on migration", in particular through the action of UNHCR and IOM. In the [press release](#) summarizing the main findings of her mission, the work of UNHCR and IOM is notably stressed in the areas related to the fight against human trafficking, assistance to voluntary returns, and assistance and protection to refugees, migrants and IDPs.

On 19 July, the EC decided to [refer](#) Hungary to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) for non-compliance of its asylum, reception conditions and return legislation with EU law. Referrals to the CJEU are the last step of [infringement procedures](#). The EC also sent a letter of formal notice to Hungary concerning its new legislation which criminalizes activities that support asylum and residence applications and further restricts the right to request asylum. Letters of formal notice are the first steps of infringement procedures.

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## STATELESSNESS IN EUROPE

On 14-22 July, youth from around 40 European countries and UNHCR discussed how to end statelessness in Europe, in the context of the #IBelong Campaign during [Vilnius 2018 - 87th International Session of the European Youth Parliament](#), in Lithuania.



UNHCR-UNICEF Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality in Albania presented the findings of the Mapping study supported by UNHCR to the Parliament and received considerable attention from Parliamentarians and line Ministries. UNHCR and UNICEF were requested to propose legislative and administrative amendments to address the identified gaps in law and policy and Government Representatives reaffirmed Albania's aspiration to end statelessness by 2024.

During 3-5 July, UNHCR co-organized a Stateless Platform Retreat in Athens together with European Migration Network for government and civil society participants from 20 EU Member States and Norway. The aim of the Retreat was to develop the capacity of the platform's members in statelessness and strengthen the cooperation between the Stateless Platform and the civil society.

# REFUGEE STORIES

## Children learn key to coding success at classes in Belarus

By Kate Bond in Minsk, Belarus

Nine-year-old Masha stares at a computer screen, absorbed in a racing game.



Unlike many parents, Svetlana is keen to encourage her, because not only is Masha playing this game – she created it.

Masha is one of more than 30 children who found refuge in Belarus and are now learning how to code thanks to the IT company EPAM Systems and UNHCR. This eKIDS programme is the company's social responsibility initiative.

"Computers and programming are our future," says 26-year-old Yura, Masha's teacher in Minsk. "Some of these children are living in a different world, it's really impressive. You can just imagine what they will do in the future."

About 70 EPAM staff members like Yura volunteer to teach some 300 children in the eKIDS programme. Among aspiring IT experts are youngsters who have fled upheaval in Ukraine, Afghanistan and beyond. Now, safe at last, the children have hope for the future and a chance to make friends.

"They already have complex lives," Yura says. "We can give them a better future."

## Trio helps fellow newcomers from Middle East cope with life in Vienna

By Helen Womack in Vienna, Austria

Three refugees from Syria have set up a self-help network that organizes language classes and a summer school for children. Thirty children who would otherwise have been sitting at home for the holidays are now able to benefit from a summer school in Vienna run by three volunteers from Syria who are committed to helping fellow refugees.

"Who will help us if we do not help ourselves?" asks Maan Abu Ghazaleh, 38, a Palestinian raised in Syria. He and his Syrian wife Kholoud Al Englizi, 36, and friend Hani Al Khatib, 30, have set up a non-profit organization called "Die Brücke des Friedens" (The Peace Bridge).

Maan and Kholoud got to know Hani in Austria, where all three are now recognized as refugees. Their volunteering began when they saw fellow refugees arriving in large numbers at Vienna's main railway station. Maan and Kholoud were living in Lilienfeld in Lower Austria at the time. "Every day, we travelled in to help people at the station," says Kholoud. "We translated for them. If someone needed a doctor, for example, we searched and found an address."



The three organizers are adamant they want to help themselves and others, not take handouts or charity. During the Austrian presidential election campaign in 2016, when some media were negative towards refugees, they paid to have 10,000 flyers printed and distributed. The leaflets thanked Austria for receiving them and assured the public they had not come to be a burden on society.

# TRENDING ON TWITTER

**Uni of Reading** @UniofReading Follow

We've had feedback over the last week that some people are unhappy with our plan to offer up to 14 scholarships to refugees living in the local area. To these people, we would like to say: Tough. Jog on.

**University of Reading**  
 The University of Reading is a global university that enjoys a world-class reputation for teaching, research and enterprise.  
 reading.ac.uk

6:13 AM - 2 Jul 2018

**Rosie on the way** @rosieontheway Follow

When he was 6, his granddad was shot dead. His family became refugees, in a warzone. He grew up to the sound of grenades exploding. Coaches said he was too weak and too shy to play football. Today, Luka Modric just led Croatia its first ever #WorldCup final. #CROENG



**Emmanuel Macron** @EmmanuelMacron Follow

Steve Jobs' father was a Syrian refugee. It would seem that nationality has nothing to do with the ability to succeed. If you think that being a Nigerian means you can't succeed then you won't. If you fight and you do succeed you will be a role model!

6:10 AM - 4 Jul 2018 from Lagos, Nigeria