

EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



Ukraine. Living conditions of people in the conflict area in Eastern Ukraine. Winterization. © UNHCR/Anastasia Vlasova

ARRIVAL TRENDS AND FIGURES

Between 1 January and 30 November, 131,100 refugees and migrants reached Europe via the three Mediterranean routes compared to almost 171,430 arrivals in the same period in 2017. This marks a 25% reduction from the previous year's arrival figures, showing a continued declining trend of the overall arrivals numbers to Europe. After a spike in October, arrivals dropped in November with over 10,080 people reaching Europe. Figures from previous years show that arrivals in November tend to drop in comparison with other autumn months. Most confirmed arrivals so far this year have been to Spain, with some 58,965 arriving by land and sea compared to almost over 44,100 in Greece and some 23,000 in Italy. Primary nationalities amongst arrivals in 2018 so far were from Guinea, Morocco and Mali.

CYPRUS: Some 540 people arrived to Cyprus by sea thus far in 2018. Syrians make up the majority of those arriving to Cyprus.

GREECE: Nearly 44,100 refugees and migrants have arrived by land and sea in Greece, with 67% arriving by sea so far in 2018. Overall arrivals have increased by around 35% compared to those who arrived in the same period in 2017. Arrivals in November decreased significantly with some 2,100 people reaching Greek shores compared to 4,070 from the previous month. Some 24,100 people were intercepted or rescued by the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) at the sea borders of Turkey, majority of which took place in the Aegean Sea. In November, an estimated 1,190 individuals were

Mediterranean
131,100
arrivals in 2018 ¹

2,191
estimated dead/missing in 2018 ¹

Greece²
44,100
3,960 4,073 2,100
Sep Oct Nov

Italy
23,000
947 1,007 980
Sep Oct Nov

Spain²
58,965
8,568 10,912 5,660
Sep Oct Nov

Cyprus
540
216 67 83
Sep Oct Nov

New asylum applications in Europe ³

Jan-Nov 2018: **519,300**
Jan-Dec 2017: **819,000**
Jan-Dec 2016: **1,323,000**
Jan-Dec 2015: **1,471,000**

¹ data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 30 November 2018.

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

³ Sources: Eurostats for EU+ countries (Only partial data for September and October 2018. All data is provisional and last updated in November 2018); UNHCR for Eastern Europe (as of 30 June 2018), Turkey (as of 31 May 2018) and South Eastern Europe (as of 30 September 2018).

34,705

Relocated in total ⁴
⁴ Source: [European Commission](#), as of 30 October 2018.

 from **Greece**

21,999

(33% of 66,400)

 from **Italy**

12,706

(32% of 39,600)

1,795

Returns EU-Turkey statement ⁵
⁵ Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 30 October 2018.

rescued or intercepted by TCG, which is lowest figure since the beginning of the year. At the Greek land border in Evros, a total of nearly 14,500 people have crossed into Greece this year. Some 750 crossed during November, half compared to the 1,550 who arrived through Evros the previous month. The three top countries of origin of arrivals by sea so far in 2018 remain Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

ITALY: Nearly 23,000 refugees and migrants have arrived in Italy by sea in 2018 by the end of November. Continuing the downwards trend of arrivals compared to the same period in 2017 (over 117,000), just over 980 refugees and migrants reached Italian shores in November, an 80% decrease compared to the 5,645 arrivals in November last year. In November, 52% of arrivals by sea to Italy departed from Libya, while 16% departed from Tunisia and 20% from Turkey. On 24 November, 264 refugees and migrants arrived in Pozzallo, having departed from Misrata, Libya: new arrivals landed spontaneously, without SAR interventions by authorities or NGOs. Among the various nationalities arriving by sea in Italy in November the majority were from Eritrea and Tunisia. As of 30 November, over 3,400 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) reached Italian shores.

On 7 November, forty-four refugees were resettled from Libya to Italy. Furthermore, fifty-one refugees and asylum-seekers, including women, children and vulnerable persons, arrived from Niger to Italy on 14 November, following evacuation from Libya to Niger. Evacuated persons originate from Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan. The vast majority of them experienced detention and serious abuse in Libya, and were evacuated to Niger in the context of [UNHCR's](#) Emergency Transit Mechanism.

MALTA: A total of 1,445 people arrived in Malta by boat in 2018 (of whom 425 were relocated to other EU Member States). This represents a major increase in arrivals by sea as in 2017 there was no disembarkation of rescued persons taking place in Malta, apart from a small number of medically evacuated individuals. The 2018 boat arrivals are the highest since 2013 when 2,008 arrived by sea to Malta. Nearly 150 refugees and migrants reached Malta's shores in November by boat. Among the various nationalities arriving by sea in Malta in November the majority were from Ivory Coast, Mali and Guinea Bissau". Meanwhile, in 2018 Malta also had regular arrivals by other means (ferry and air). The number of people who applied for asylum in Malta in 2018, increased by 42% compared to 2017.

SPAIN: A total of 58,965 refugees and migrants have reached Spain both by land and sea so far in 2018, representing an increase of 128% compared to the same period in 2017 (over 25,900). Arrivals by land and sea to Spain in November (5,660) dropped from October with an average daily arrival number of 189. This is a slight increase of 21% compared to the 4,680 refugees and migrants who arrived to Spain in November last year. The five most common nationalities of sea arrivals in Spain are Moroccans, Guineans, Malians, Ivoirians and Algerians. The most common nationalities of land arrivals are Syrians, Guineans, Algerians, Palestinians, and Malians.

WESTERN BALKANS: Arrivals to the Western Balkans region continued in November, with people entering the region from Greece and Bulgaria, the vast majority of them trying to transit, via FYR Macedonia and Serbia, or via Albania and Montenegro, further through Bosnia and Herzegovina, to eventually continue onward to their final destinations in EU Member States. As of 30

OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey **3.9 million**

Refugees and asylum seekers ⁶

Syrian Arab Republic	3,622,370
Afghanistan	172,000
Iraq	143,000
Other nationalities	57,000

⁶ Source: UNHCR as of 30 October 2018

Ukraine **1.8 million**

Internally Displaced Persons ⁷ and **Conflict Affected Persons** ⁸

Refugees:	⁹ 3,225
Asylum seekers:	¹⁰ 6,023
Stateless persons:	¹¹ 35,574

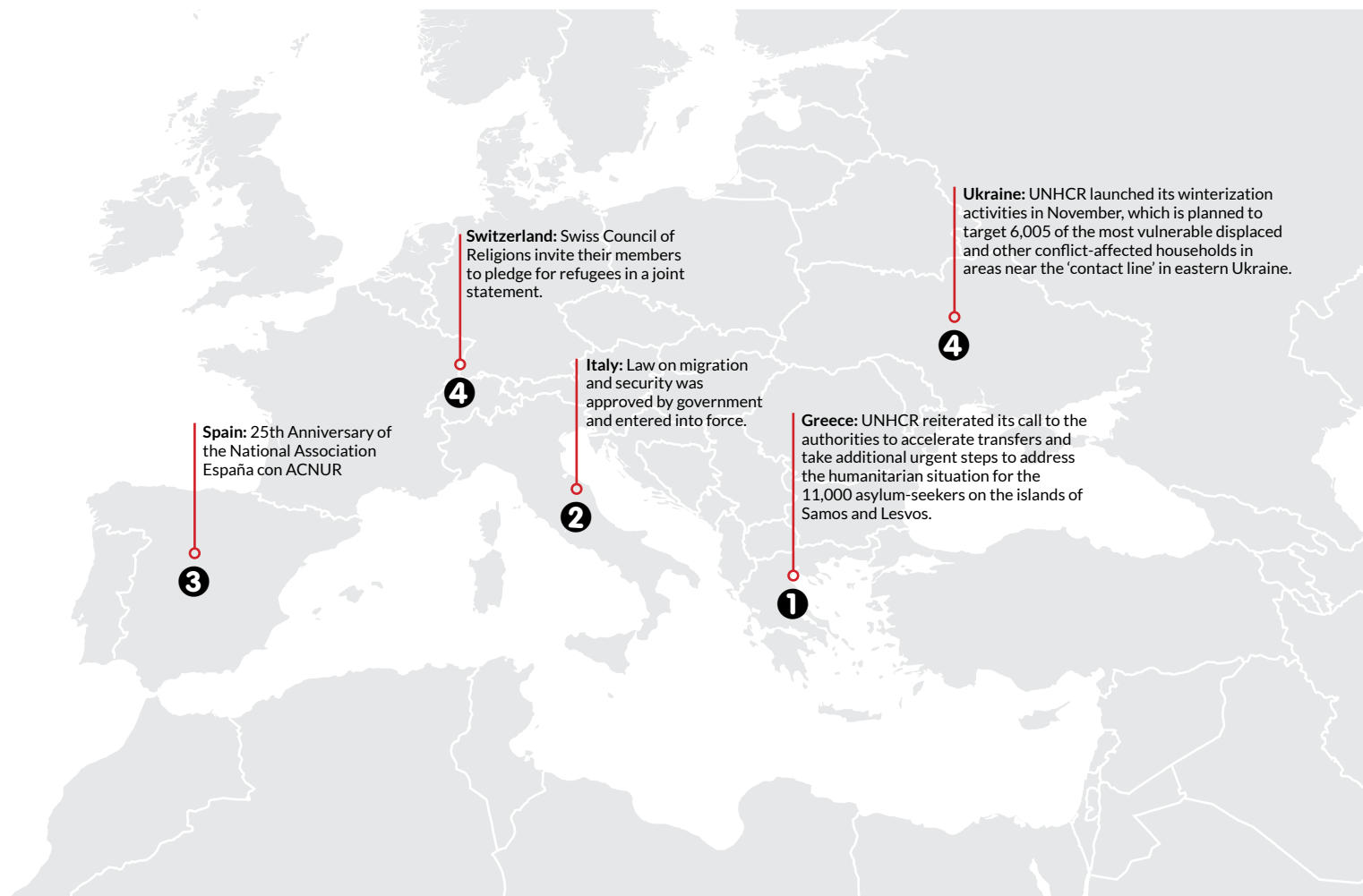
⁷ Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).
⁸ Estimated number of conflict-affected people living along the line of contact in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).
⁹ UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/07/2018
¹⁰ UNHCR as of 25/10/2018
¹¹ State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/01/2018

November, 23,132 refugees and migrants were reported to have entered Bosnia and Herzegovina, including 1,931 in November, entering mostly from Serbia or Montenegro. So far in 2018, of the 23,132 arrivals, 1,356 people were eventually able to lodge asylum claims in BiH, including 44 in November. The number of newly arriving refugees and migrants went down 62% vis-à-vis October (5,057). Main countries of origin of new arrivals include Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. It is estimated that there were approximately 5,300 asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants in the country at end of November. Many attempt to move onwards through Croatia and it is estimated that, as of end November, 4,100 were accommodated in shelters throughout the country. So far in 2018, of the 15,014 arrivals in Serbia, 292 people eventually lodged asylum claims, including 34 in November. According to Serbian

authorities, 4,165 refugees and migrants were assisted in the country in November, Serbia, 93% of whom were accommodated in 16 different government-run Reception/ Transit or Asylum Centres. By end November, 5,400 refugees and migrants were reported to have arrived in Albania, including 409 in November, which is 15% less than in October (484). So far in 2018, of the 5,400 arrivals, 4,095 people asked for asylum in Albania, including 365 in November. The flow remains transitory in nature; with the vast majority of new arrivals leaving the country after a few days. At the end of November an estimated 4,030 refugees and migrants were reporting to be present in Serbia, followed by 3,990 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 250 in Albania, 110 in Montenegro and 45 in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

DEAD AND MISSING: So far over 2,191 people have died or gone missing while trying to reach Europe by sea which is a 30% decrease compared to the number of deaths in the same period in 2017 (3,116). Most deaths occurred along the Central Mediterranean route (1,276 or 58%) followed by the route to Spain (690 or 33%). 1 out of 49 people perish when attempting to make the journey across the Mediterranean.

The death toll along land routes has increased, with at least 120 refugees or migrants known to have died so far this year at or near European borders, compared to the 75 deaths in the whole of 2017.



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

AUSTRIA: On 28 November, the Austrian government presented its plans for a federal social aid system, impacting the minimum income for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection. The planned regulations restrict social aid to refugees on the basis of language requirements which serve as a pre-requisite for eligibility to obtain full social welfare income and completely excludes beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. "The minimum income is a social safety net and has the purpose to protect needy people in Austria from poverty. Due to the planned restrictions, refugees now threaten to fall far below the poverty line", says Christoph Pinter, Head of UNHCR Austria. Instead, refugees and subsidiary beneficiaries should be actively supported in their integration. The guaranteed minimum income is an important start-up aid for many affected people to be able to stand on their own two feet and take care of themselves. UNHCR [appeals](#) to the Federal Government to rethink the present draft and to implement the planned new regulation with a view to the best possible integration of persons entitled to protection in Austria and in accordance with international law.

1 GREECE: In a [briefing note](#) on 6 November UNHCR reiterated its call to the authorities to accelerate transfers and take additional urgent steps to address the humanitarian situation for the 11,000 asylum-seekers on the islands of Samos and Lesbos. UNHCR also called on the European Commission and Member States to continue preparations for emergency support and relocation measures at the request of the Greek Government. The accelerated transfers of asylum-seekers from the islands to apartments, sites and hotels in the mainland, also thanks to additional accommodation created in mainland hotels, helped reduce significantly the population on some islands' reception centres. The impact was most positive on Chios where the population nearly matched the centre's capacity. The population also reduced in Moria's reception centre in Lesbos, remaining however more than double its capacity by the end of the month. The situation remained dire in Samos where the centre hosted six times its capacity and the adverse weather exacerbated residents' living conditions.

This month UNHCR provided 26,500 places in apartments around Greece for asylum-seekers and refugees. In total 54,100 people have benefited from the programme since it started in November 2015. Also this month, 56,700 people received cash assistance from UNHCR bringing the total to over 90,000 of those who have received cash assistance from UNHCR at least once.

2 ITALY: The law conversion of the decree on migration and security was approved by the Senate and by the Chamber of Deputies on 7 November and 27 November, respectively. The Law then went for signature by the President of the Republic and publication in the Official Journal, coming into force 15 days thereafter. UNHCR was

invited to attend a hearing before the Constitutional Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies. On 3 November Corriere della Sera published a [letter](#) from ROSE Regional Representative reaffirming UNHCR's position in relation to the law decree. On 5 November UNHCR issued a [press release](#) focusing on the negative impact of some of the provisions under discussion. Also, on 26 November, Corriere della Sera published a [letter](#) from the High Commissioner reiterating UNHCR's concerns over the provisions under discussion in Parliament. In reaction to recent developments on the new law, UNHCR has engaged with counterparts at all levels to map out the impact on persons of concern.

Mini Feature: The children's book *Anche Superman era un rifugiato* (Also Superman was a refugee) published by Piemme Edizioni and UNHCR, was [launched](#) on 20 November.

MALTA: The government issued a new policy, Specific Residence Authorization (SRA), with the aim to regulate the status of those holding temporary humanitarian status permits on 15 November. Those falling under this category will gain access to long-term residence and social aid after fulfilling certain criteria as per the new national integration policy. Prior to this refugee and migrant communities called on the government to find solutions for those with temporary humanitarian protection status who faced deportation. UNHCR welcomes the policy initiative as a positive step towards social integration and inclusion.

3 SPAIN: In commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the National Association España con ACNUR, the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, visited Spain on 26 November. During celebratory events, the High Commissioner expressed UNHCR's gratitude to Spanish society for its continued commitment to refugees and support to UNHCR. With the aim of discussing matters related to the country's asylum and reception systems, Grandi also met with the [Minister for Foreign Affairs](#), the Minister of Interior as well as the Secretary of State for Migration, who announced the launch of a [pilot project in the Basque Country](#) on Community sponsorship for refugee reception, in collaboration with UNHCR. Media echoed the HC's visit with two in-depth interviews given with [El País](#) and the [news agency EFE](#) focusing on the situation in Venezuela situation, the Central America Caravan, the Global Compact, the dangers of more restrictive policies, and migration and border management.

4 SWITZERLAND: The religious communities represented in the Swiss Council of Religions invite their members to pledge for refugees in a joint statement [issued](#) on 07 November, demonstrating the vital role religious communities and their organizations can play for refugee protection and integration. Faced with this situation, the former High Commissioner for Refugees and current UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched in 2012 the international dialogue "Faith and Protection of

Refugees", inviting religious communities to continue their commitment in this context for the protection of refugees. The Swiss Council of Religions have taken a pioneering role in adopting and launching a joint declaration on the protection of refugees which includes five appeals relating to Swiss refugee policy. The themes included in the declaration deal with protection on site, fair and effective asylum procedures, rapid integration, dignified referrals and resettlement. In a [news comment](#), Pascale Moreau, UNHCR Director for Europe welcomed the powerful initiative from Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Islamic leaders in Switzerland adding that she "hopes this initiative would inspire many other leaders in Europe and beyond".

🇺🇦 UKRAINE: With the onset of winter, UNHCR launched its winterization activities in November, which is planned to target 6,005 of the most vulnerable displaced and other conflict-affected households in areas near the 'contact line' in eastern Ukraine. Through UNHCR's winterization cash program a total of 1,020 conflict affected and displaced families in eastern Ukraine will receive cash grants of 10,000 Ukrainian Hryvnia equivalent to 360 US Dollars. UNHCR will also distribute 1,000 winter jackets and 1,500 winterization kits in Luhansk. In Donetsk, UNHCR will deliver life-saving support to over 2,485 vulnerable households with three metric tons of coal.

UNHCR opened an administrative service centre in Novotroitske, Kherson region on 16 November 2018, to provide support to people crossing the entry/exit checkpoints (EECPs) from Crimea in the towns of Kolonchak, Chongar and Chaplinka. The opening of this centre combined with the adoption of an administrative procedure for birth and death registration in temporarily occupied territories are meant to significantly reduce time for processing the civil documentation of Ukrainians still residing in Crimea.

On 25 November, a Russian Navy ship seized three Ukrainian naval vessels, arresting 26 servicemen for trying to cross the Kerch Strait increasing tensions in the region. In response,

Ukraine introduced a 30-day martial law regime starting on 28 November 2018, valid in ten regions bordering Russia, including Donetsk and Luhansk where UNHCR have sub-offices and field offices, respectively. In this context, UNHCR and its partners did not experience any significant operational changes and were able to conduct over 610 protection monitoring visits in November mostly to conflict-affected populations in settlements located on the 'contact line' in eastern Ukraine.

FEATURES

[MIT WORKSHOP TEACHES REFUGEE CHILDREN JOYS OF DIGITAL DESIGN](#)

Teenage asylum-seekers in Athens are hooked on classes that show them how to use technology to express their creativity. More than 20 asylum-seeker children from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, aged from nine to 17, took part in a two week long course organized by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) D-Lab in the United States and a local NGO, Faros, a UNHCR partner. Vulnerable unaccompanied refugee children in Greece such as Odai and Farshid who knew almost nothing about electronics, computers or design before attending the Digital Design Fabrication Workshop were able to tap into their creativity and imagination. Dan Biswas, co-founder of Faros, says most had been starved of an education because of conflict and, after a slow start, they were hooked by the classes and the idea of creating something that they could be proud of. The course taught basic computer skills, programming and software as well as how to use hand tools such as soldering irons, screwdrivers, wire cutters and files. The boys taking part built friendships with the tutors as well as with their fellow students, despite different origins and languages. Odai, who fled violence in Damascus, feels much more confident after this experience. "It's a very good feeling, and you share this with your friends."

[FASHION STARDOM BECKONS FOR SOMALI REFUGEE IN HUNGARY](#)

A new documentary tracks Kafia Mahdi's path from child refugee to in-demand model. "[Easy Lessons](#)" ("Könnyű Leckék") by Hungarian director Dorottya Zurbó shows Kafia at school and starting her modelling career. On the surface, all seems well, but her heart is heavy at leaving her mother behind and being uprooted from her culture in Somalia. To avoid a forced marriage and seeking an education, Kafia left Somalia aged 15 and undertook a hard journey, which took almost a year. In the documentary Kafia describes the difficulties faced along the journey, acquaintance with her new life in Hungary and ambitions for her future. The film shows Kafia studying, doing sports, learning to swim, wearing Western clothes and even going ballroom dancing. She is modest about her achievements and although experiences moments of homesickness hopes for Hungarian citizenship and is beginning language courses. "I hope it will help other refugees by showing them they are capable of doing anything", says Kafia.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

On 13 November 2018, the [Council of Europe Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals](#) (HELP) and UNHCR [launched](#) at the International Maritime Organization in London a national version of its [new Course on Refugee and Migrant Children](#). The aim of this course is to improve the knowledge and skills on the existing European and international standards on refugee and migrant child protection, their relevance in the United Kingdom's legal context, and how to apply them in their daily work.



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ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE 2018 EUROPEAN NGO CONSULTATION

UNHCR and the [European Council for Refugees and Exiles](#) (ECRE), one of UNHCR's key NGO partners in Europe, held their annual consultations with European NGOs on 07-09 November 2018. The consultations were attended by more than 200 NGO representatives, and aimed at fostering cooperation between UNHCR, ECRE and other NGOs on [several topics](#), including the reform of EU asylum rules, return, EU funding for asylum and the Global Compact on Refugees. Participants concluded on the need to counter externalization efforts and ensure continuous access to protection in Europe. The need to speak out as early as possible against attempts for legal crackdowns on NGO activities was also mentioned. Participants also highlighted the need to enhance cooperation with refugee group representatives and refugee-led NGOs. In that context, it is key to involve refugees as active participants in the debate, and not as victims. Additionally, a bottom-up approach, including through partnerships with grassroots organizations, could help change negative stereotypes about refugees in Europe.



Formerly stateless Makonde community member Amina shows off her Kenyan identity card, Kwale, Kenya, March 2017.
© UNHCR/Modesta Ndubi

STATELESS FEATURES

“ERADICATING STATELESSNESS IN UKRAINE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES”

November marked four years since the launch of UNHCR’s global campaign to eradicate statelessness. In Ukraine, where UNHCR estimates 35,000 people are stateless, an event was organized entitled “Eradicating Statelessness in Ukraine: Achievements and Challenges” gathering a wide range of governmental and NGO representatives to discuss statelessness determination procedures. The event gathered representatives of the Ukrainian Government, Members of Parliament (MPs), partner NGOs, civil society activists and Embassies. The highlight of the conference was the discussion of the draft Law that establishes a Stateless Determination Procedures for Ukraine. The law was registered in September 2018 in Parliament which UNHCR and its legal partner, the NGO the Right to Protection (R2P) have previously advocated for. Birth registration was also discussed, as large number of unregistered newborns in non government controlled areas (NGCA) are at risk of statelessness. Ukraine has started establishing an administrative procedure for registering children born in NGCA.

[FOUR YEARS INTO ITS #IBELONG CAMPAIGN TO END STATELESSNESS, UNHCR CALLS FOR MORE RESOLUTE ACTION BY STATES](#)

Four years after the launch of a decade-long campaign to eradicate statelessness globally, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, called today on states to take faster and more resolute action to help meet the campaign goal. Important results have been achieved since November 2014 when UNHCR’s #IBelong campaign began. More than 166,000 stateless people have acquired or had their nationality confirmed, 20 states have acceded to the Statelessness Conventions bringing the total number of parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons to 91 and 73 to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Nine states have established or improved statelessness determination procedures, six states reformed their nationality laws and another two have eliminated gender discrimination preventing women from passing on their nationality to their children. National plans to end statelessness have been formally adopted in nine countries.

Statelessness has many causes, but the biggest driver is problems in nationality laws, including discrimination. The impact on individuals and their families is immediate and can be dire. Statelessness means a life without a nationality and everything that comes with it.

On 13 November, UNHCR Switzerland published its 2017 mapping on the situation of stateless persons in Switzerland during a launch event. The mapping calls *inter alia* for a better identification and a more generous recognition practice, i.e. through the introduction of specific provisions for the statelessness recognition procedure. The mapping also appeals to facilitate access to Swiss citizens for stateless people, particularly stateless children born in Switzerland.

On 2 November, UNHCR organized a conference on “Combating Statelessness in Serbia – Achievements and the Way Forward”, which was opened by the Minister for Public Administration and Local Self-Governments and the Deputy Ombudsman. Panel of experts from government and civil society commended the excellent progress Serbia has made in reducing and preventing statelessness and identified four concrete priority tasks in line with action points from the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness that could lead to complete eradication of statelessness in the country.

On 28 November, fYR Macedonia Prime Minister Zoran Zaev hosted a high level event in Skopje, to discuss ways of resolving the problem of lack of birth and civil registration. At the event, which was held with the support of UNHCR, the OSCE Mission and UNHCR’s partner MYLA (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association), the Government pledged to amend laws in order to ensure universal birth/civil registration and to facilitate subsequent birth/civil registration – based on a legal analysis that had been commissioned by UNHCR, OSCE and MYLA to identify the necessary legal changes that would ensure that the risks of statelessness in the country are minimized.

In November, as part of the joint Coalition with UNICEF “Every Child’s Right to a Nationality”, UNHCR organized three round-tables in Graçanicë/Gračanica, Plemetinë/Plemetina and Gjakovë/Djakovica, Kosovo,¹² to advocate with the representatives of the communities, as well as central and local municipal authorities, the importance of the timely birth registration.

In almost every region of the world, a declaration and action plan to address statelessness has been launched. These regional initiatives are driving blocs of nations to work with each other to confront and resolve this human rights problem. Among the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16 is the elimination of statelessness – with its goal of ensuring legal identity for all by 2030.

STATELESSNESS ROBBS TWO MEN OF NORMAL LIVES IN CROATIA

Two citizens of former Yugoslavia, Bedri and Boro, found themselves stateless in Croatia after a series of bureaucratic mishaps. For Bedri, not having documents meant barely living. After the European Court of Human Rights backed him in April 2018, Croatia began to put matters right. Bedri has now received a travel document issued under the 1954 Statelessness Convention, enabling him to travel and claim his rights. By contrast, Boro lived a perfectly normal life for decades, only to wake up one day and discover he had become stateless. They are among nearly 3,000 people in Croatia who are stateless, or at risk of statelessness, most of them Roma. Neither Bedri nor Boro is Roma. Both came to Croatia from other parts of what was the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Both suffered the consequences of administrative decisions. They often are not allowed to go to school, see a doctor, get a job, open a bank account, buy a house or even get married. Civil Rights Project Sisak, a non-governmental organization that partners with UNHCR, supported Bedri and Boro with free legal advice and legal aid. After years of various administrative hurdles both have been issued official documents by Croatian authorities, recognizing them as stateless under the 1954 Statelessness Convention, and given a Convention travel document.

¹² UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)