

ITALY – SEA ARRIVALS

UNHCR UPDATE #3

November 2015

KEY FIGURES

144,200

Persons arriving by sea in 2015.

3,200

Persons arriving by sea in November.

46,280

Sea arrivals originating from Eritrea, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2015.

53%

Average EU asylum, subsidiary and humanitarian protection rate of top nationalities arriving by sea in Italy (as of October).

69,000

Asylum applications up to August (including from sea and other arrivals).

330

Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) arrived by sea in November.

130

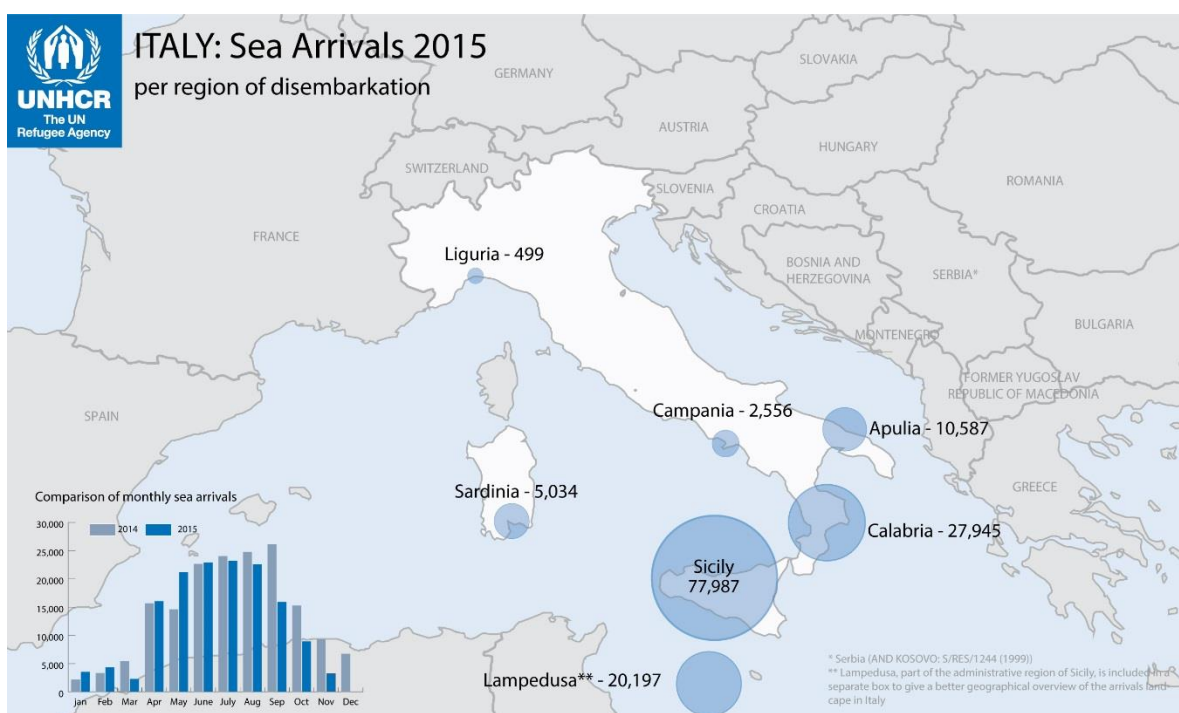
Asylum seekers relocated from Italy under the EU relocation scheme.

17

UNHCR staff positioned at key arrival points.

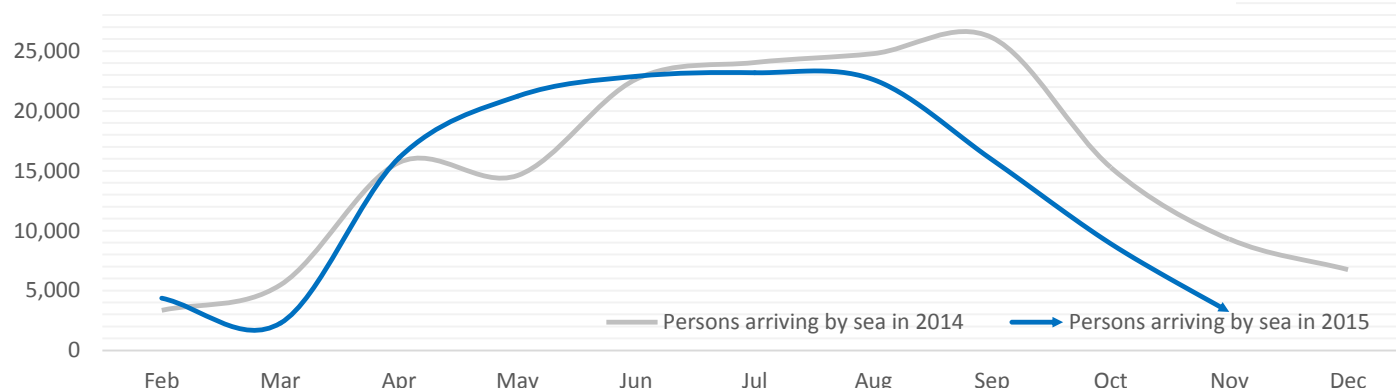
HIGHLIGHTS

- Besides observing a seasonal decrease of refugees and migrants arriving by sea, Italy witnessed a 65% drop of sea arrivals over the last month, compared to November 2014.
- Arrival trends for November include the steady decrease of Syrians arriving by sea, a slight drop of Sudanese as well as a continuing proportional increase of Nigerian nationals.
- In November 43 asylum-seekers were relocated to France, Spain, Germany and Sweden under the EU relocation scheme.
- On 24 November MoI established a working group with the objective to draft a Relocation Operational Manual and an information package including a common narrative on relocation for all actors involved in information activities.
- On 25 November a draft law establishing a new procedure for the determination of statelessness was presented to the Senate. The drafting has been supported by supported by UNHCR and the Italian Refugee Council, and has been developed in line with relevant UNHCR Guidelines.



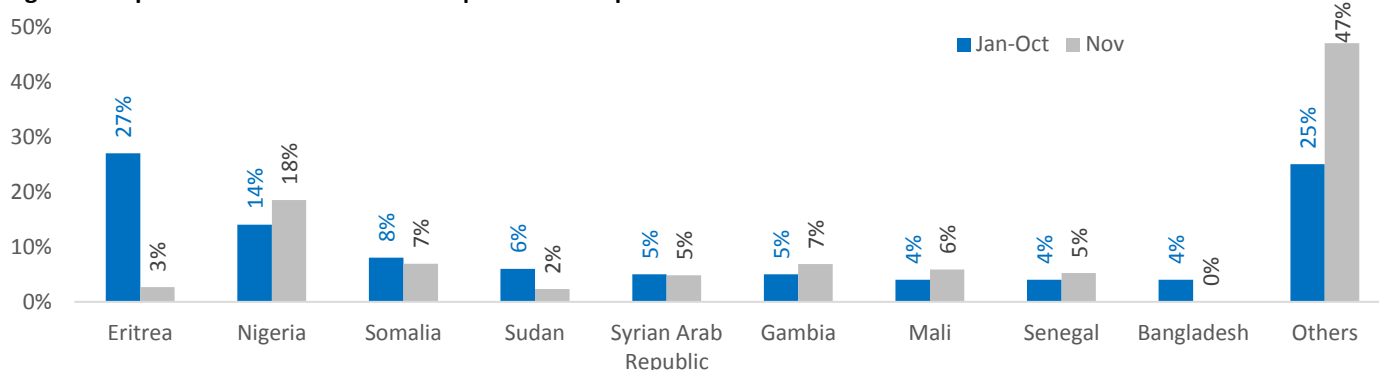
SEA ARRIVALS TO ITALY

Figure 1. Trends of monthly sea arrivals | Jan 2014 – Nov 2015



At the end of November 2015, the total number of refugees and migrants arriving by sea stands at around 144,200 persons, corresponding to a 12% decrease compared to the same period last year. Besides observing a seasonal decrease of refugees and migrants arriving by sea, **Italy witnessed more than a 65% drop of sea arrivals over the last month, compared to November 2014**. This curbing trend has been observed since September and can be partially explained by the decrease of Syrian arrivals, who are now primarily using the [Eastern Mediterranean route](#) to reach Europe. Key disembarkation points in November remained Sicilian ports which have been identified as hotspots (but not all operational), including Pozzallo (31%), Lampedusa (23%), Augusta (19%) and Trapani (10%). In addition, disembarkations took place in Catania (13%). In November, UNHCR increased its staff positioned at key arrival points to 17, to support authorities with the provision of information on international protection. Activities are conducted in cooperation with IOM, which provides information to migrants. Up to November, **3,515 persons have lost their lives or gone missing** in the Mediterranean Sea whilst trying to reach European shores, more than the 3,500 who perished in the entire year of 2014. UNHCR facilitates trainings on the protection of refugees during rescue operations at sea, for search and rescue personnel. In November, around 30 Guardia di Finanza staff participated in the training.

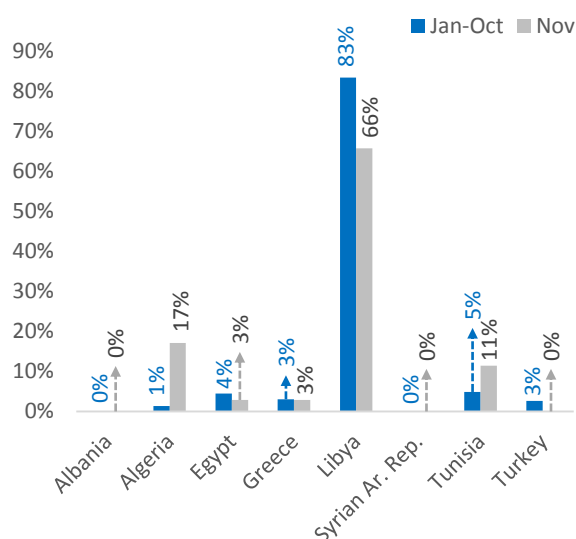
Figure 2. Top nationalities of sea arrivals | Jan-Oct compared to Nov 2015



During 2015 **persons originating from over 65 different countries arrived in Italy**. The trend of decreasing numbers of Syrian sea arrivals continued into November. Overall a **fivefold reduction of Syrian arrivals in 2015** has been observed, compared to the same period in 2014. Another noticeable trend is the **continuous increase of the arrival of Nigerian nationals** since July 2015. A seasonal drop in Eritrean arrivals has been observed in November, similar to 2014. Sea arrivals from Sudan further dropped after a peak of arrivals in July. Bangladeshi arrivals saw a sharp peak in July when they constituted up to 10% of the total sea arrivals, but have dropped to almost zero arrivals in October and November. Whilst numbers remain small, an increase in Moroccans and Egyptians was noticed in recent months, constituting the majority of the “other” nationalities arriving in November.

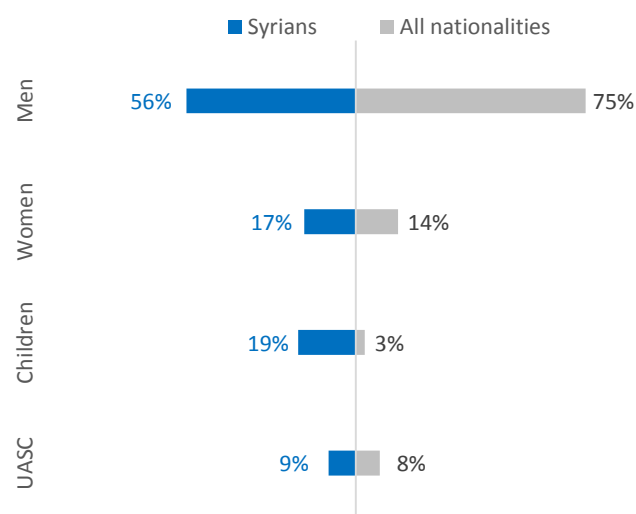
SEA ARRIVALS TO ITALY

Figure 3. Countries of departure of sea arrivals | Jan-Oct compared to Nov 2015



The majority of sea arrivals still leave from Libya, with main departure points being Garabulli, Misurata and Subratha. **Abuse and ill treatment during transit in Libya** continue to be reported, committed by smugglers, security forces and armed groups. The limited safe and legal pathways for refugees to reach Europe, drives population movements underground, leading to risks of new human rights violations and abuses during the journey. **Boats departing from Libya reduced during November, whilst the number of persons arriving from Libya remained similar**, which may indicate the use of larger boats. At the same time, **November observed an increase of boat arrivals departing from Algeria**, whilst the number of refugees and migrants on board of the boats remained limited (4-16 persons). 12 out of the total of 19 boats departing from Algeria arrived in the last two months. In view of the changing dynamics along the Western Balkan route, UNHCR is monitoring possible trends of sea arrivals to Italy from Albania, Greece and Turkey. In November there was one boat arrival from Greece.

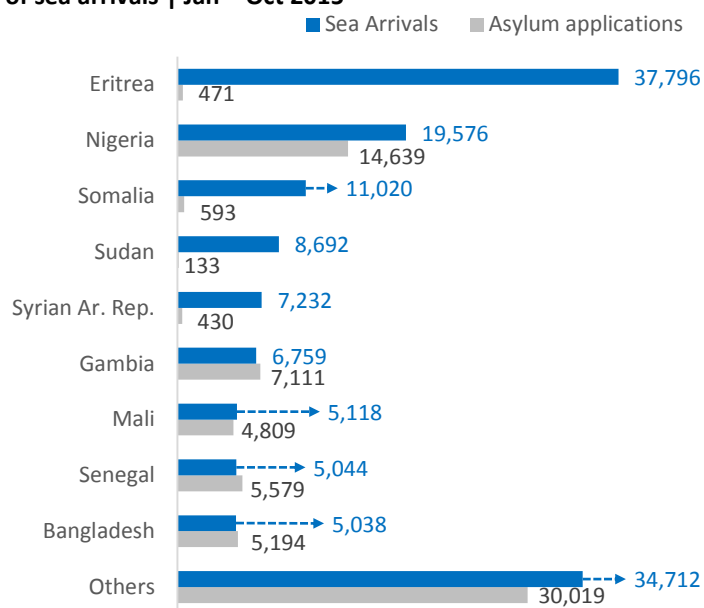
Figure 4. Demographic profile of Syrians compared to all nationalities of sea arrivals | Jan – Nov 2015



More than two thirds of all persons arriving by sea are male adults. However, the demographic profile of Syrian sea arrivals differs significantly and more regularly includes large families with young children and elderly family members. During post disembarkation processes, 17 UNHCR staff support authorities with the identification of persons with specific needs, particularly persons with medical conditions, pregnant women and UASC. UNHCR continues to strengthen capacity to identify other persons with specific needs, such as persons suffering from trauma, victims of torture or Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). The number of women and UASC decreased in November with **around 330 UASC arriving, amounting to 10% of the arrivals**. The majority originated from Egypt (159) and Gambia (35). A **decrease of Eritrean and Syrian UASC** was observed, with zero arrivals in November. Approximately 90% of UASC are male and 15 years or older. Despite the high degree of protection offered in Italian legislation to children, reportedly large groups of **Eritrean, Syrian and Somali UASC continue to consider Italy as a transit country** with the intention to travel onwards to other European countries. Six UNHCR child protection experts work with authorities to promote good practices on Best Interest Assessment and Determination and support information provision for UASC at arrival points and in reception structures.

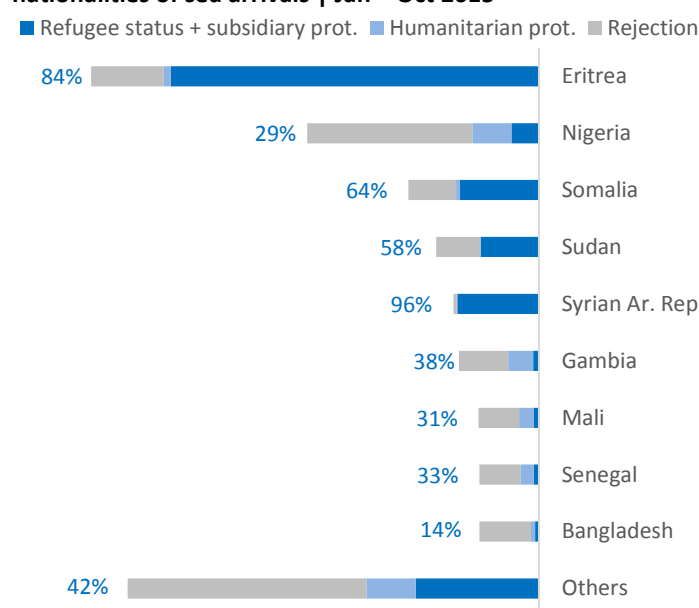
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN ITALY

Figure 5. Asylum applications in comparison to top nationalities of sea arrivals | Jan – Oct 2015*



*Asylum application figures also include asylum seekers who do not arrive by sea. Furthermore, applications are usually recorded at different periods after arrival, varying from a few weeks to over a month. Therefore, the chart merely provides an **indicative comparison**.

Figure 6. Average first instance recognition rate in EU of top nationalities of sea arrivals | Jan – Oct 2015*



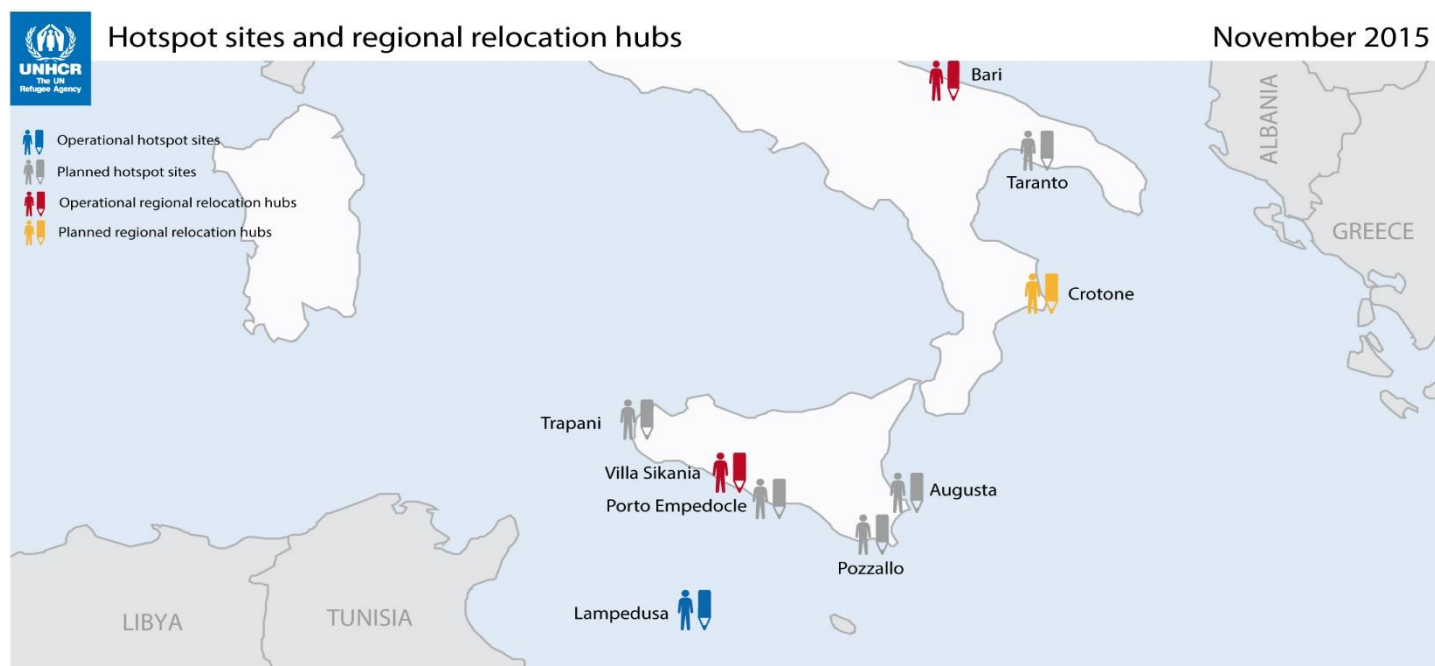
*Percentages reflect the total number of persons granted refugee status, subsidiary protection and humanitarian protection in first instance processes, in the [EU in the second quarter of 2015](#).

From January to October 2015, Italy received around 69,000 asylum applications. The main countries of origin of asylum-seekers are Nigeria (21%), Pakistan (11%), Gambia (10%), Senegal (8%), Bangladesh (8%), Mali (7%), Ukraine (6%) and Afghanistan (5%) – thus differing largely from the main countries of origin of sea arrivals (see figure 5).

Asylum applications increased around 35% during the first ten months of 2015, compared to the same period in 2014. The number of asylum applications by persons from Nigeria, Pakistan and Bangladesh continued to increase. During the month of October, the number of applications from persons originating from Eritrea and Syria also went up compared to previous months. On average in first instance procedures, of the sea arrivals in Italy **53% would be entitled to refugee status, subsidiary and humanitarian protection in the EU**, highlighting the mixed migratory nature of sea arrivals into Italy (see figure 6).

UNHCR participates in first instance Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures, as members of the Territorial Eligibility Commissions and by providing support with regards to eligibility criteria, procedural standards and country of origin information. Up to October, **the Territorial Commissions examined around 24,500 asylum applications indicating an increase of some 70%**, compared to the same period in 2014. Of these asylum applicants, 6% received refugee status, 18% subsidiary protection and 25% humanitarian protection. Humanitarian protection is based on national legislation and is granted in consideration of serious humanitarian concerns, as well as constitutional and international obligations such as Article 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. During 2015 the National Commission for the Right of Asylum in cooperation with UNHCR, developed a mechanism to monitor the quality of RSD procedures. In October the Civil Liberties and Immigration Department established a working group with the aim to prepare proposals for a reform of the asylum procedures in Italy, consisting of UNHCR, MoI and the National Commission for the Right of Asylum.

HOTSPOTS AND RELOCATION


2,484

Eritreans arrived by sea since October.

315

Syrians arrived by sea since October.

34

Iraqis arrived by sea since October.

2

CAR nationals arrived by sea since October.

100

Eritreans relocated since October.

30

Syrians relocated since October.

0

Iraqis relocated since October.

0

CAR nationals relocated since October.

In November, **43 Eritrean and Syrian asylum-seekers were relocated to France, Spain, Germany and Sweden**, bringing the **total of asylum-seekers relocated from Italy to 130**. The hotspot in Lampedusa is currently fully operational, with Villa Sikania and Bari serving as regional relocation hubs. In the hotspots, Frontex, EASO and Europol and Eurojust are providing operational support. As foreseen in the Roadmap developed by the Italian Ministry of Interior (Mol), UNHCR supports information provision and targeted individual counselling in the hotspots procedure and relocation on Lampedusa and in the regional relocation hubs, in close cooperation with EASO. In view of the low number of arrivals in the hotspot of Lampedusa, Mol intensified efforts to identify asylum-seekers to participate in the EU relocation scheme nationwide. At the same time, Mol is working to operationalize additional hotspots and regional relocation hubs before the end of 2015. Delays in transfers under the relocation scheme are due to a variety of reasons including the limited processing capacity by Mol and the lack of concrete/immediate availability of relocation places in member states. The modest pace of relocations is creating disillusion amongst asylum-seekers who may participate in the relocation scheme.

On 24 November Mol established a working group with the objective to draft a Relocation Operational Manual and an information package including a common narrative on relocation for all actors involved in information activities. Participants in the working group include Mol, EC, EASO, border police and UNHCR.

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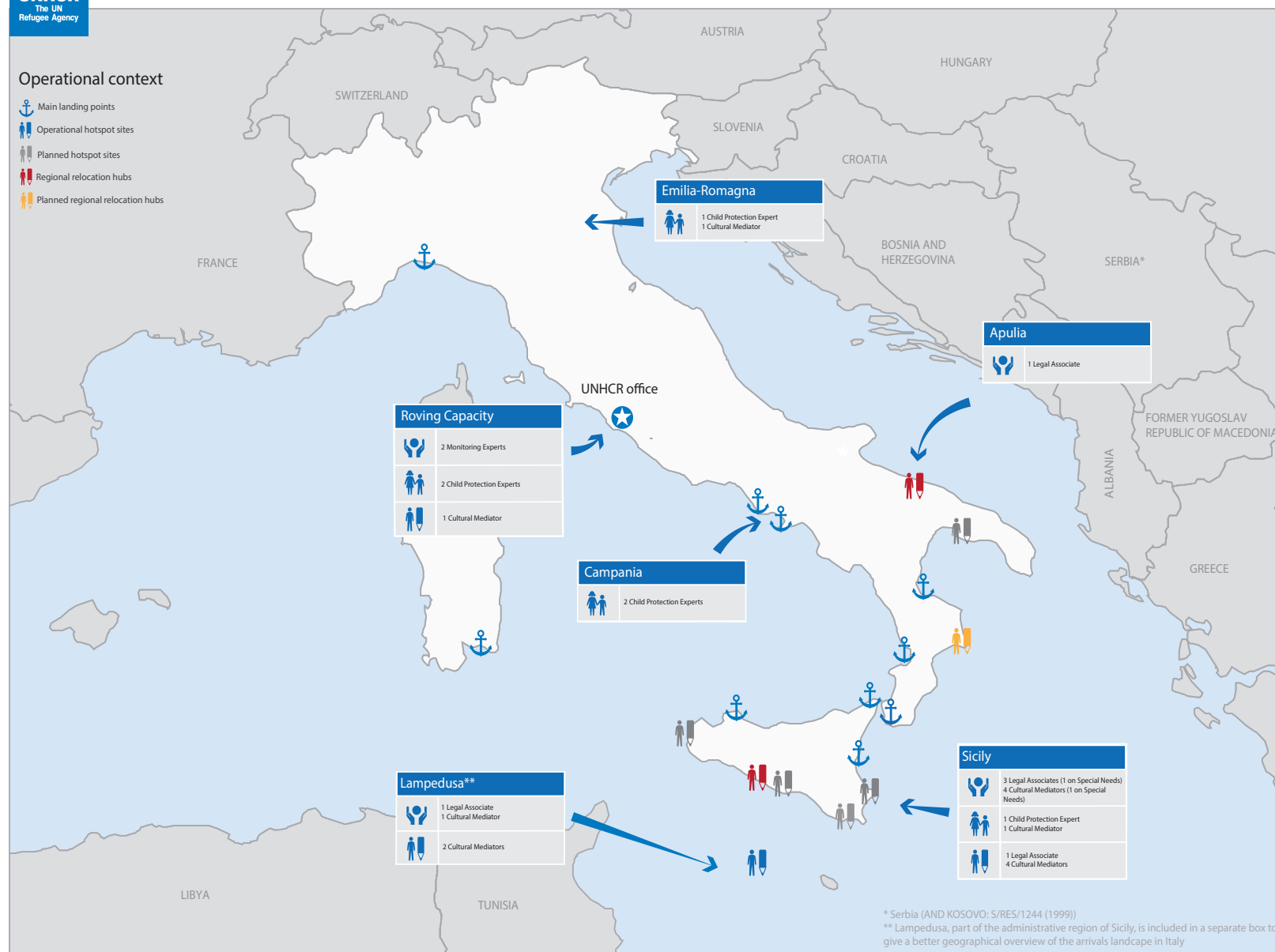
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 Links: [Regional web portal](#) [UNHCR Italy webpage](#) [Twitter: @UNHCRItalia](#) [Facebook UNHCRItalia](#)

 Sources: UNHCR, Ministry of Interior, Eurostat, EC - **unless indicated otherwise, figures included reflect the period up to 30 November.**

Operational context

-  Main landing points
-  Operational hotspot sites
-  Planned hotspot sites
-  Regional relocation hubs
-  Planned regional relocation hubs



UNHCR response to sea arrivals

UNHCR advises key governmental counterparts on policy formulations and legislative developments, through its participation in the National Coordination Group. UNHCR participates in first instance refugee status determination procedures, which are conducted by the the decentralised Territorial Eligibility Commissions. Direct participation of more than 40 staff allows UNHCR to continue to monitor the asylum-procedure and to contribute to ensuring adequate protection levels and pursue efforts to improve procedural standards. Additionally, UNHCR provides technical support to the authorities in ensuring the quality, fairness and efficiency of the procedure.

Access to Territory

UNHCR has ten staff positioned at key arrival points to support authorities with the provision of information on international protection and to identify persons with specific needs and refer them to specialised services. This is conducted in partnership with IOM. UNHCR also monitors conditions in first and second line reception facilities.

Relocation

UNHCR carries out information activities in hotspot sites and regional relocation hubs as well as in reception facilities and informal transit sites nationwide. UNHCR operates in close cooperation with EU Agencies, under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Interior.

Child Protection

Six UNHCR child protection experts work with authorities to promote good practices on Best Interest Assessment and Determination and support legal information services for UASC in first reception structures.



Co-funded by the European Union

11 landings assisted in November 2015

2,863 sea arrivals (89% of the total) benefitted from information session on international protection and asylum in November 2015

15 sea arrivals with specific needs referred to specialised services in November 2015

370 information sessions on relocations supported in November 2015

78 monitoring visits to reception facilities conducted in November 2015

1,600+ unaccompanied and separated children impacted by technical support of UNHCR child protection experts by November 2015