

Weekly Report



Key Figures

Mediterranean
358,923

arrivals by sea in 2016*

4,913

dead/missing in 2016*

Trends of Sea Arrivals

In the week of 12 to 18 December, 278 refugees and migrants crossed the sea to Greece from Turkey – a decrease from the 698 that crossed the previous week. So far in December, 1,100 people have arrived – an average of 61 per day in comparison to the 66 per day on average that arrived in November. While Lesbos continues to be the primary arrival site each month in 2016, so far in December 384 people have arrived to Samos (52) and Chios (332). As of 18 December, 172,885 refugees and migrants have crossed the sea to Greece since 01 January 2016 – 47% from the Syrian Arab Republic, 25% from Afghanistan and 15% from Iraq. Of these, 42% were men, 21% women and 37% children.

In the same week, 4,225 refugees and migrants arrived by sea in Italy – a substantial increase from the 1,859 that arrived the previous week – with no arrivals taking place for two days of the week. The majority had departed from Libya but one boat with 154 refugees and migrants had arrived from Turkey. As of 18 December, 6,461 refugees and migrants had arrived this month in Italy – an average of 359 per day compared to 453 per day on average in November–nearing the 9,637 who arrived in the month of December 2015. Thus far in 2016, 179,469 refugees and migrants had arrived by sea in Italy thus surpassing the 153,842 that arrived in 2015 and the 170,100 that arrived in 2014. In 2016, so far 21% of arrivals have been from Nigeria, 11% from Eritrea and 7% each from Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and The Gambia. Between 01 January and 30 November 2016, 24,659 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) arrived to Italy by sea, compared to 12,360 in the whole of 2015, according to the latest Ministry of Interior data). According to UNHCR estimates, approximately 639 UASC have reached Italian shores so far in December.

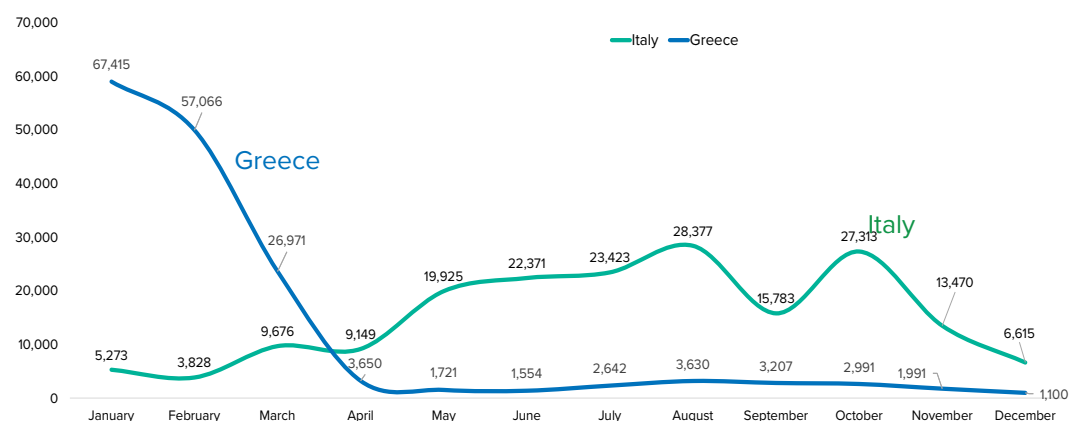
Key Developments

Situation in Greece

With winter setting in, UNHCR and partners are working continuously in order to prepare, adapt and upgrade existing shelter and reception facilities to endure colder temperatures. Prior to the winterization plan most facilities were exposed to cold and adverse weather conditions, but efforts to supply emergency shelters and equip existing facilities with heating have improved conditions at some sites. By the end of the reporting period, 32 out of 54 sites have been provided with heaters or upgraded with proper electricity and heating systems, including 12 sites by UNHCR, out of the 15 assigned for winterization to the UN Refugee Agency by the Greek authorities. Furthermore, a total of seven sites had been closed – or the population has been moved to better accommodation, and winter blankets and clothing were also distributed by UNHCR and partners. Despite ongoing efforts, some sites and particularly the warehouses in the proximity of Thessaloniki remain unsuitable for winter. UNHCR is providing all possible support to the authorities and the competent organizations assigned to implement winterization plans in those sites in order to find solutions, including by moving the refugees and migrants to accommodation in apartments and hotels. Improving living conditions for asylum-seekers and migrants continues to be the number one priority for humanitarian actors in Greece. It is also still a major challenge.

On the mainland, irregular movement of groups attempting to leave designated sites independently was once again observed during the reporting period. One of the reasons for such irregular movement is site improvements which has attracted individuals to winterized sites from those non-winterized. During the week, some 80

Average Arrivals to Greece and Italy per Month January to 18 December 2016



* data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 21 December 2016

Key Figures

Greece

278

Total Weekly Arrivals to Greek Islands

12 December - 18 December

40

Daily Average Arrivals to Greek Islands

12 December - 18 December

Italy

4,225

Total Weekly Arrivals to Italy

12 December - 18 December

604

Daily Average Arrivals to Italy

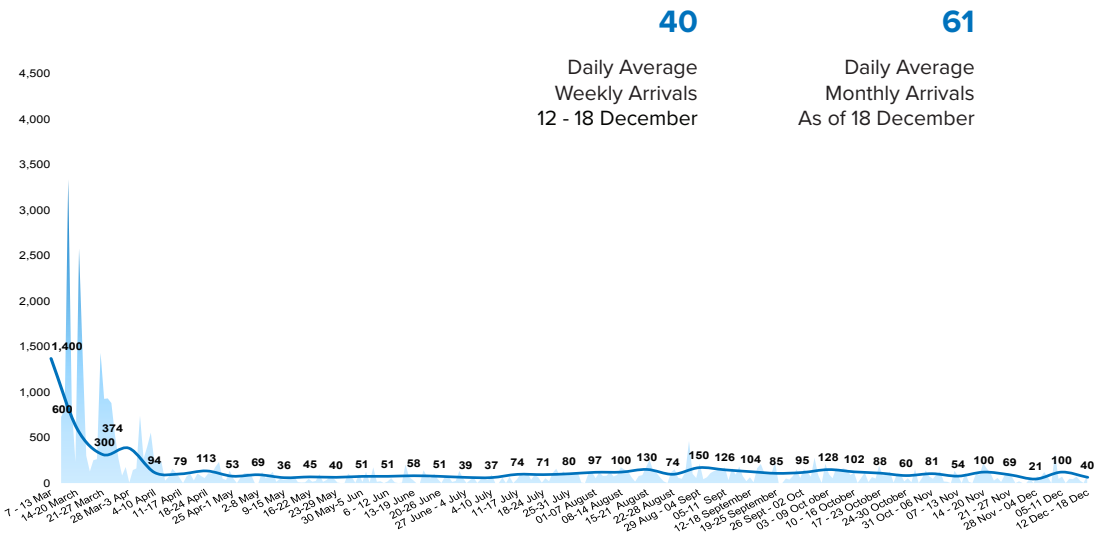
12 November - 18 December

people arrived on their own to Ritsona, a winterized site in Central Greece, which has contributed to the site reaching maximum capacity. UNHCR has coordinated communication between IOM, the community, authorities and other actors to inform people at ill-equipped sites of options for alternative accommodation, official transfers and winterization plans. UNHCR continues to assist with the transfer of people from sites unsuitable for winter to adequate accommodations on the mainland. During the week, 115 Syrians and one Iraqi family were transferred, in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP), from sites in northern Greece

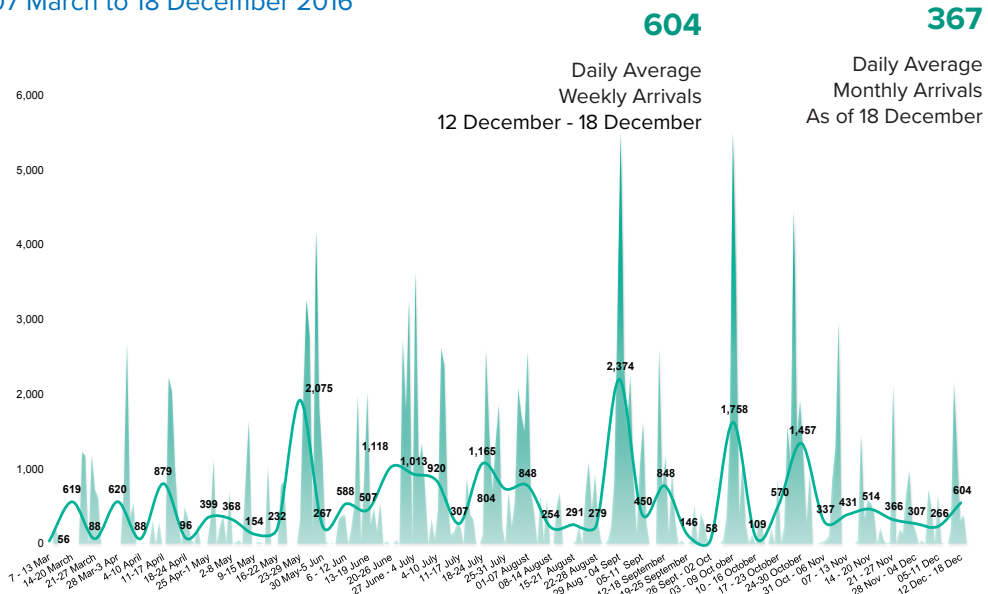
to two hotels in Ligia, Preveza, managed by Oxfam. Additionally, the last group of 332 people were transferred from Cherso to hotels in Thessaloniki area.

UNHCR, through its partner, continued to expand the accommodation capacity in support of the relocation programme candidates and asylum-seekers with specific needs. The accommodation capacity in support of the Greek Government through the relocation scheme funded by the European Union established a total of 132 places during the reporting, reaching 20,338 places (102% of the aimed 20,000) by the end of the reporting period.

Daily and Weekly Average Arrivals to Greece
07 March to 18 December 2016



Daily and Weekly Average Arrivals to Italy
07 March to 18 December 2016



The project has benefitted a total of 22,110 persons of concern so far.

On 12 December, the National Commission for Human Rights [published](#) its recommendations to the Greek government, highlighting the necessity to create medium-sized sites inside the urban areas, replacing tents where they exist, as well as reinforcing health and free legal aid services.

To support Greek authorities, UNHCR has provided 52 lawyers to provide assistance for asylum-seekers whose cases are in the appeals stage. The Danish Refugee Council and UNHCR have been intensifying efforts to involve local organizations, such as METAdrasi and Aitima, which are familiar with the Greek legal system and can provide expertise on the local context. UNHCR remains dedicated to delivering protection assistance and monitoring the needs of asylum-seekers, particularly those with specific needs such as UASC. The chairs of the Child Protection Working Groups, including UNHCR and Save the Children, held an Orientation Day on Best Interest Determination (BID) for staff from different local organizations.

In Chios, UNHCR and METAdrasi are following up the case of a three-year old toddler, who was abused by a 31-year-old Syrian claiming to be his father. Following the incident which took place on 13 December the alleged father was arrested and charged with violence against the boy and the boy has received assistance and care by UNHCR and partner METAdrasi. The relevant Greek authorities have provided proper guardianship while pathways for family reunification with the boy's mother in Turkey are under discussion.

From 20 March to 11 December, authorities have recorded 21,769 expressions of intention to apply for asylum on

the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Rhodes, Kos and Lesbos, and these are steadily increasing every week. Those fully registered by the Asylum Service (AS), amount to 10,181, while 2,214 appeals have also been submitted at second instance.

Update on Returns from Greece to Turkey

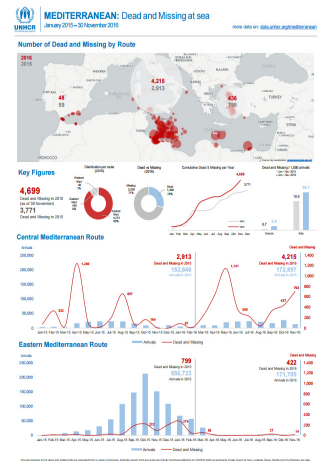
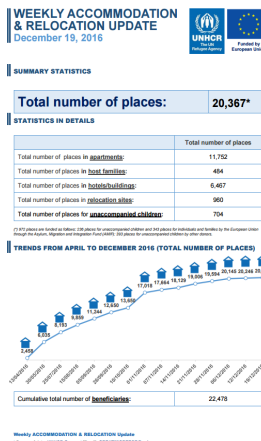
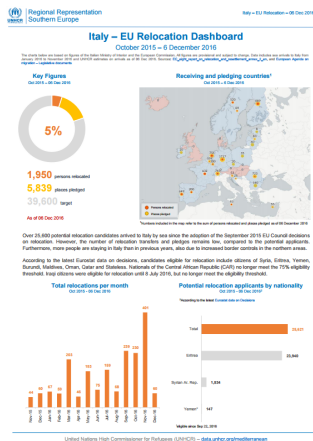
A return operation was carried out from Greece to Turkey within the scope of the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 during the reporting period. According to Greek authorities, 29 non-Syrians (10 Pakistanis, one Iraqi, eight Moroccans, two Afghans, three Iranians, one Bangladeshi, four Algerians) were returned from Mytilene, Lesbos to Dikili on 12 December 2016. For 18 of them, negative decisions had been issued at the second instance on their asylum claims. Nine of them had not expressed a wish to be granted international protection and two had withdrawn their asylum claim. They were returned on a boat chartered by the European Border Guard and Coastguard Agency – Frontex.

The total number of readmissions to Turkey from Greece under the EU-Turkey Statement is 777 as of 18 December.

Situation in Serbia

The estimated number of refugees and migrants present in Serbia was close to 7,000 according to available data from authorities, UNHCR and partners. Of those present in the country, 80% are accommodated in fourteen governmental facilities, while the remainder were counted sleeping rough in Belgrade city centre or at the border with Hungary. Newly-registered asylum-seekers continued to be referred to the Presevo Reception Centre (RC) as all Asylum Centres (AC) and Transit Centres (TC) remained fully occupied. In support of access to better accommodation and services as well as the decongesting of Belgrade city centre, UNHCR and partners assisted newly-registered asylum-seekers with transport from

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Belgrade to Presevo RC.

With winter bringing very cold temperatures to Serbia, UNHCR and partners distributed over 210 UNHCR blankets, 200 winter boots, 190 winter jackets and many other items of winter clothing and underwear for children and adults across the country to better protect people from the elements. UNHCR alongside partners continued providing protection assistance, legal counselling on asylum in Serbia, and support for coordination between authorities and humanitarian agencies.

[Situation at the Serbia-Hungary Border](#)

In the areas outside the transit zones, 119 people (54 in Röske and 65 in Tompa) waited for admission to Hungary staying in makeshift tents and relying on assistance provided by UNHCR, partners, NGOs, government authorities and local aid groups from both Serbia and Hungary. While the number of people in the waiting areas slightly decreased compared to the previous week (126), the waiting period for families to access the transit zones ranges between two and a half to six and a half months, along with two and a half months for UASC and six and a half months for single men. In addition to waiting in various reception facilities in Serbia, families spend up to 11 days in makeshift tents prior to being admitted into the transit zones. Last week, 93 asylum-seekers entered Hungary through the two transit zones where the daily admission rate remains 10 people per day per transit zone with no admissions over the weekends. In addition, the Hungarian Police reported 78 apprehensions for irregular entry, while 366 people were prevented from irregularly crossing the border from Serbia and another 218 people were intercepted inside Hungary and escorted back to the other side of the border control fence at the Serbian border.

Inside the transit zones, UNHCR provides asylum-seekers with information and counselling on their rights and obligations in relation to the border, Dublin procedures and the implications of the safe third country principle. In coordination with protection colleagues and partners in Serbia and Hungary, UNHCR also makes referrals for admission to the transit zones for asylum-seekers with specific needs and for those who miss their turn to enter due to reasons beyond their control.

Following a ruling on 09 December by a Szeged based court, Hungary annulled the Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) Dublin decision to return an asylum-seeker to Greece, setting back Hungarian efforts to return asylum-seekers to Greece. The OIN subsequently decided that as of 15 December, no asylum procedure in the transit zones shall be suspended

based on EURODAC matches in Greece. Instead, the safe third country concept relevant to Serbia shall be applied.

[Update on Relocation](#)

During the week, 318 persons were relocated from Italy to Germany (248), Luxembourg (21) and the Netherlands (49), bringing the total relocated from Italy to 2,350 (6% of the 39,600 target). No UASC have been relocated from Italy yet. ([latest EC data, 19 December](#)).

A total of 737 asylum-seekers were relocated from Greece during the week to France (323), Germany (232), Ireland (131), Portugal (31) and Latvia (20). As of 19 December, 7,006 asylum-seekers have been relocated from Greece representing only 10.5% of the September 2017 target. There was 580 new pledges from Germany (500) and Ireland (80). In support of the relocation program, UNHCR in Athens assisted 461 relocation candidates by providing them with accommodation and 452 received transportation services during the reporting period.

[EU Related Developments](#)

At the [12 December Foreign Affairs Council](#), EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs discussed migration ahead of the 15 December European Council. They took stock of the progress made in the [Partnership Framework](#) also discussed the implementation of the [Valletta commitments](#).

On 14 December, the European Commission (EC) released its [Second Progress Report](#) on the implementation of the [Partnership Framework](#). The report states however that the Partnership Framework has not yet been used to its full potential, and commits to further efforts.

Migration was one of the issues on the agenda of the [15 December European Council](#). In their [conclusions](#), EU Leaders envisaged the possible extension of the [Partnership Framework](#) to more countries. They reiterated their commitments to the full implementation of the [EU-Turkey Statement](#), and recalled the importance of allocating sufficient resources to EU agencies. EU Leaders also underlined the need to enhance support for the Libyan coastguard to contribute to the fight against smuggling and save lives. Finally, the European Council called for intensified efforts on relocation and resettlement.

On 15-16 December, Ministers of the Interior of EU and Western Balkan countries met in Brdo, Slovenia, for the [EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Conference](#). Among other issues, they discussed operational cooperation in the field of migration and border management.

Timeline Overview

Highlights

