

EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



On 11 July 2017, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) together with the Embassy of Japan in Ukraine have opened the "Solidarity" mural in Kyiv, which was created by the Japanese artist Kensuke Miyazaki together with displaced children.

Trends and key figures

Since 01 January 2017 until 31 July 2017, 119,300 refugees and migrants have arrived by sea and land to Europe (Greece, Italy, Spain and Cyprus only, including arrivals to the Canary Islands and by land to Spain). Arrivals by sea in this period comprised of 18% children, 14% women and 68% men. In July, there was a decrease in the number of refugees and migrants entering Europe via the Central Mediterranean route to Italy (by 43%) compared to the same month last year and an increase through the Western Mediterranean route to Spain by more than triple compared to July 2016 (from 775 to 2,657). Arrivals to Spain remained, however, much smaller than those arriving via the Central Mediterranean route. Meanwhile arrivals through the Eastern Mediterranean route to Greece increased during July 2017 in comparison to last year.

Between 1 January and 31 July, 95,200 refugees and migrants had arrived in Italy by sea, including 12,700 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) (13% of sea arrivals), this level of arrivals is similar to that of 2016, with a lower level of arrivals in July 11,500 in 2017 vs. 23,600 in 2016. In Spain, 12,200 persons have arrived by sea and land between January and July 2017 compared to 5,700 in the same period last year, a 113% increase. The number of arrivals to Andalucía, in southern Spain, (7,909), is 212% higher than the same period last year (2,537). Between June and July, 5,345 arrivals were registered in Spain. An increasing number of Syrian families continue to arrive in Melilla.

As of 31 July 2017, 11,500 refugees and migrants reached Greek shores in 2017, compared to 152,600 arriving in the same period last year (a 92% reduction). Persons mainly originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (37%) and Iraq (13%). While the number of sea crossings between January and April this year was vastly lower (97%) than during

Mediterranean

119,300
arrivals in 2017¹

2,400
estimated dead/missing in 2017¹

Greece

11,500

2,110 2,012 2,249
May June July

Italy

95,200

23,074 23,524 11,461
May June July

Spain²

12,200

1,289 2,688 2,657
May June July

Cyprus

530

0 0 228
May June July

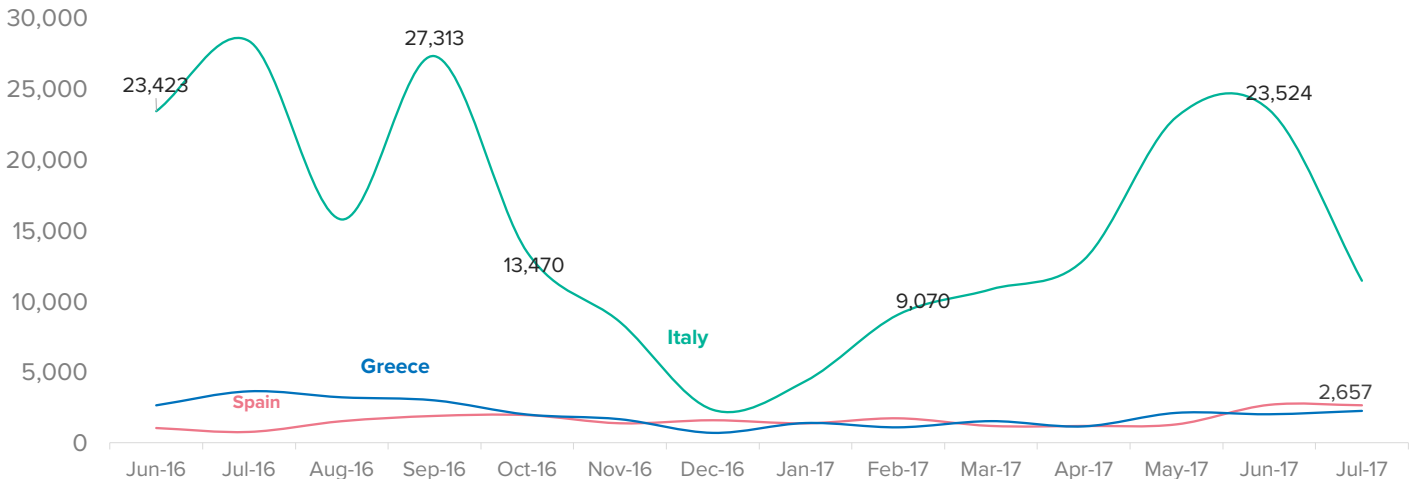
New asylum applications in EU countries³

276,500 applications in 2017
1,235,300 applications in 2016
1,325,600 applications in 2015

¹ data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 31 July 2017.

² Includes land and sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands

³ Source: Eurostats. Partial data for January to June 2017. All data is provisional and last updated 15 August 2017.

MEDITERRANEAN ARRIVALS - JANUARY to JULY 2017


the same period in 2016, the number of arrivals between May and July this year was 37% higher than in the same three-month period last year. Since May, the number of Syrian and Iraqi arrivals has been higher than for the same period last year, although still significantly lower than 2015 and early 2016, while the number of Afghans has dropped. Arrivals in July have been to Lesbos (52%), followed by Samos (22%), Chios (8%), and the South Dodecanese islands (8%). Irregular onward movement from Greece to other European countries remains a concern as people risk falling victim to traffickers and smugglers.

According to Turkish authorities, the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) rescued/intercepted 1,743 people during July. The total number of rescues/interceptions by the Turkish Coast Guard of persons mostly headed to Greece by sea reached 9,394 as of 31 July 2017 since the beginning of the year. There has been a slight decrease in interceptions by Turkish Land Forces at the western land borders of Turkey. The figures dropped down to 2,090 persons in July 2017 from 2,725 in June 2017, which represents a 23% decrease. Together with July figures, interceptions at the Greek and Bulgarian land borders increased to 13,189 persons since the beginning of the year. This figure is a major increase (83%) when compared to the first seven months of 2016.⁴

Between January and July 2017, 530 refugees and migrants arrived in Cyprus compared to 58 in the same period last year. A rising trend in Syrian nationals arriving to Cyprus has been observed; in July they make up the main nationality represented. The majority reportedly departed from Turkey and many are families. Arrivals consists of 48% men, 15% women and 36% children (of which 6.2%

are UASC).

Dead and missing: as of 31 July 2017, an estimated 2,409 people have died or gone missing while trying to reach Europe by sea, compared to 3,127 for the same period in 2016.

Relocation: [according to the European Commission \(EC\)](#), 25,438 asylum-seekers have been relocated from Greece and Italy as of 04 August 2017, including 17,514 from Greece (out of 66,400 originally foreseen, 26% of the total) and 7,924 from Italy (out of 39,600 originally foreseen, 20% of the total), respectively. Some EU Member States such as Malta (100%), Finland (90%), Ireland (76%), Latvia (67%) and Luxembourg (64%) have met or are on track to meet their legally foreseen commitments for relocation from Greece and Italy. Countries such as the Netherlands (37%), Sweden (30%), Germany (26%), Belgium (22%) and France (21%) are increasing their efforts, while others such as Croatia (8%), Bulgaria (4%), Slovakia (2%), Czech Republic (0.4%) and Austria (0%) are still required to make significant efforts. Some EFTA States such as Switzerland, Norway and Liechtenstein are voluntarily participating in the relocation scheme. Regarding the EC's latest report on relocation and resettlement, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, welcomed progress and stated in a [Tweet](#) on 26 July, "effort must continue & grow further, as visible sign of European solidarity."

Returns: In July 60 people were returned from Greece to Turkey on the basis of the [EU-TUR Statement](#). The total number of people returned under the statement is 1,289 as of 31 July 2017.

⁴ Turkish Land Forces statistics as of 31 July 2017.

1,289

Returns EU-Turkey statement ⁵

25,438

Relocated in total ⁶

from **Greece**

17,457
(26% of 66,400)

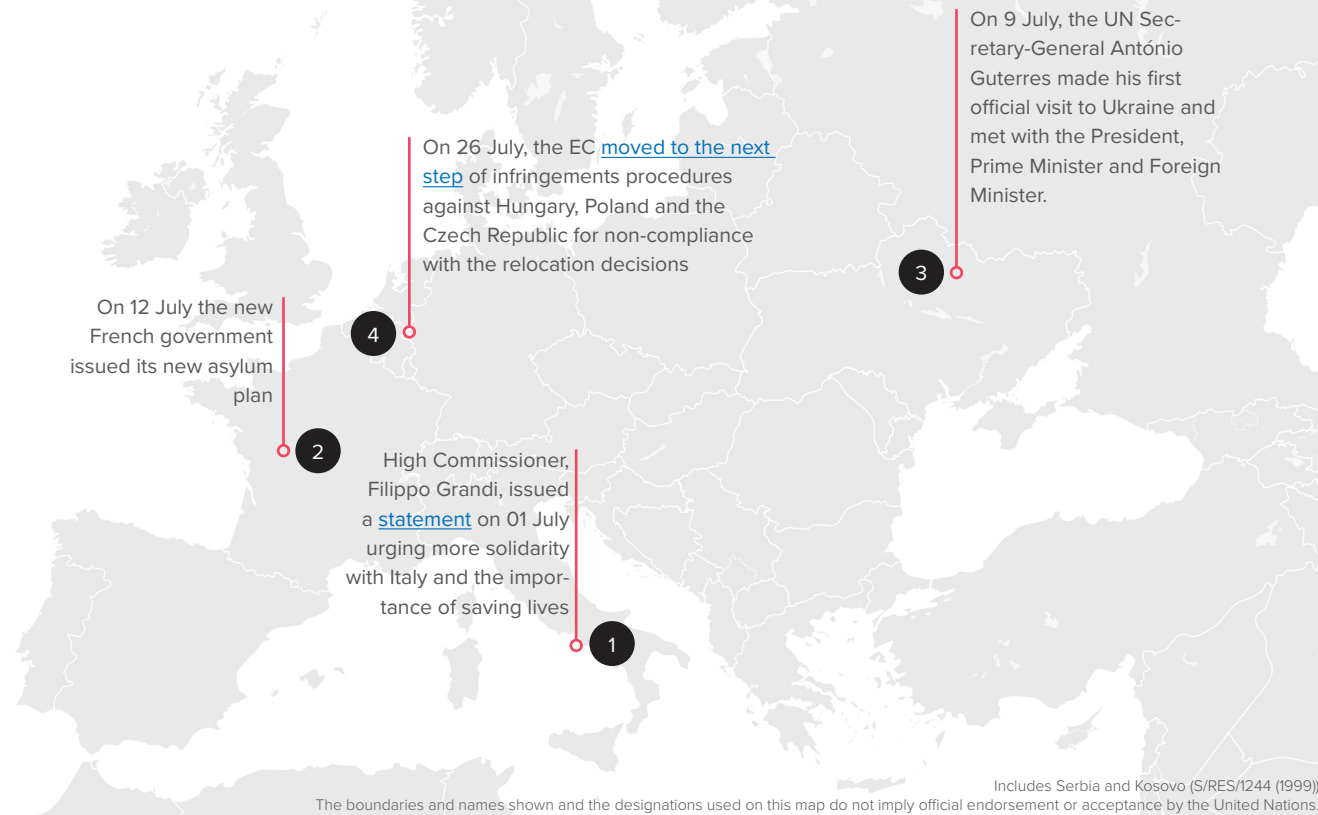
from **Italy**

7,935
(20% of 39,600)

⁵ Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 31 July 2017.

⁶ Source: [European Commission](#) as of 04 August 2017.

Key developments in Europe



The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo **1** Grandi, issued a [statement](#) on 01 July urging more solidarity with **Italy** and the importance of saving lives. He stated that, “search and rescue by all those involved, including by NGOs, the Italian Coast Guard, and government authorities, is critical.” In Italy, from 1 January to 31 July 2017, over 85,000 persons had lodged an asylum application, compared to some 61,000 in the same period last year. It is estimated that 200,000 persons are currently accommodated in reception facilities across Italy. The increase in asylum applications may further impact on the numbers of persons in reception as well as on the quality of the RSD procedure. UNHCR has shared a list of recommendations to address these challenges with the Government of Italy, including enhanced monitoring of reception facilities and a structural reform of the RSD procedure, with increased specialization and professionalization of dedicated case owners. On 25 July 2017, the [European Commission](#) (President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, Vice-President Frans Timmermans, and EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos) wrote to Italian PM Gentiloni, recognizing the pressure Italy is facing, outlining the support provided so far, and offering complementary action that could be taken.

The Italian government drafted a [code of conduct](#) to be applied to NGOs conducting SAR operations in the Mediterranean. A meeting was held at the Italian MOI on 31 July, which was attended by three NGOs (Save the Children, MSF and Jugend Rettet). Five NGOs have signed the Code of Conduct so far (MOAS, Save the Children, Proactiva Open Arms, Sea Eye and SOS Mediterranee),

while others have raised concerns over the consequence of the code of conduct in their ability to carry search and rescue operations.

Estonia and Italy have reached an agreement on how to start the EU intra-relocation procedure for asylum-seekers from Italy. The agreement was reached thanks to the Italian government’s flexibility, as Estonian officials will be able to carry out their own security checks of asylum-seekers in Italy before being relocated to Estonia.

In **Greece**, the European Commission launched the urban accommodation and cash assistance programme at a press event in Athens on 27 July. The ‘Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation’ scheme, implemented by UNHCR, provides asylum-seekers with targeted assistance and supports the Government to progressively close emergency reception sites. The number of municipalities participating in the urban accommodation scheme continues to increase with UNHCR signing its fifth a partnership agreement with Trikala in July, joining Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, and Crete.

Living conditions in the Reception and Identification Centers (RICs) on Lesbos and Samos worsened in July due mainly to procedural delays, higher arrivals, overcrowding, and gaps in some essential services. Tensions and frustration grew, increasing the risk of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and impacting the mental and physical health of an increasing number of individuals. Conditions on Chios remained difficult. UNHCR is particularly concerned with the general situation in Moria on the island of Lesbos. There, asylum-

seekers from African countries and a small number of other nationalities protested against lengthy procedures and inadequate reception conditions on 10 and 18 July. Protesters clashed with police, set fire to containers, and damaged property in the site and surrounding areas. Many of those not involved in the riots were families, unaccompanied children and other people with specific needs. Some were injured from tear gas and thrown stones and people rushed to evacuate while carrying infants and basic belongings. Police also reportedly used excessive and disproportionate force to contain the 18 July riot. UNHCR formally communicated to the Greek Government on the matter.

A group of international NGOs issued a statement on 12 July expressing concerns over the handover of responsibilities in hosting sites on the Aegean islands to the Government as of 01 August 2017. The NGOs warned of the lack of detailed planning for the provision of assistance in sites, and that this would lead to a deterioration in living conditions with diminished access to essential services for asylum seekers. Separately, Human Rights Watch warned of a silent mental health crisis on the Greek islands.

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the trend of irregular movement continued in 2017 and the number of new irregular arrivals in 2017 (as recorded by UNHCR and its partners) is 9,810, or 46 new arrivals per day on average. For July the average was 26 new arrivals per day. Of the new arrivals, 18 new applications for asylum were lodged in July, one of which by an unaccompanied child. In line with the Resolution on Migration Policy 2015 – 2020, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy drafted the Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners 2017 – 2027, and made it public for comments, following which a public hearing in the Parliament was organized. The new draft builds on the previous (2008 – 2015) national strategy, includes early integration measures, as well as a link with the European Agenda for the Integration of Third Country Nationals. The Ministry will organize consultations with all concerned stakeholders, including relevant Government institutions, civil society and concerned international organizations.

In **Serbia**, the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights issued its periodical report [Right to Asylum in the Republic of Serbia](#), containing an analysis of the practices of the competent authorities and the developments in the field of asylum in Serbia in the period April-June 2017. In July, 297 individuals registered intentions to seek asylum in Serbia. 44% were made by men, 4% by women while 51% were registered for children. Most applications were made by citizens of Afghanistan (54%). As of 31 July, 4,958 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers were counted in Serbia, of which 4,658 (94%) were accommodated in 18 government-run centres.

On 19 July the Visegrad 4 (V4) Prime Ministers (**The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia**) met in Budapest, Hungary. They were joined by the Prime Minister of Israel and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. They discussed EU policies towards the region and preventing the re-opening of the West Balkan route. Afterwards, the V4 sent a [letter](#) to the EU and another letter to Italy's PM Gentiloni.

In the **Czech Republic** a controversial amendment to the Alien and Asylum Acts limiting the judicial review of detention was passed by a final vote in the Chamber of Deputies. It awaits the signature of the President to be enacted. A constitutional complaint is currently being prepared by a legal team convened by Senators who opposed the draft amendment for breaching the Constitution.

UNHCR welcomes the latest development in **Poland** where the Mayors of the 11 largest cities signed a Declaration of Understanding on cooperation of Polish Metropolises on migration. The declaration is a path to creating an "integration cities' network". The cities are to create their own migration management and integration strategies based on the one developed by authorities from the city of Gdansk in cooperation with UNHCR. This program is seen as a positive step for integration practices.

In **Slovenia**, the Constitutional Court rejected the Ombudsperson's proposal for a temporary suspension of an Article of the Aliens Act. The Court argued there is no need for a temporary suspension, as it has not yet been activated. If activated, by the majority of the members of the National Assembly, and on the proposal of the Government it provides the opportunity to restrict access to territory and asylum procedures in case of an influx of refugees and migrants. [UNHCR issued comments](#) on the law in December 2016 raising its concern that the revised legislation could result in the expulsion of people seeking international protection, or prevent their access to territory or asylum procedures.

On 12 July the new **French government** issued its [new asylum plan](#) with five main objectives (i) act both at ² European and international levels to handle migration flux more efficiently by re-enforcing controls at EU's external borders, reforming the CEAS and strengthening EASO's role as well as demonstrating more solidarity at EU level; (ii) full right to asylum by improving applications processing and reception conditions; (iii) combating illegal immigration (credible expulsion policy, priority action on certain audiences and more effectively fighting fraud and criminal channels); (v) overhauling the integration policy (real opportunities equality for all foreigners in regular situation and better integration of refugees); and (v) facilitating access to France for highly skilled people. In July, UNHCR provided [recommendations](#) to the French government on asylum and refugee related matters.

On 20 July, the media reported that **Belgium** has concluded an agreement with Greece to resume transfers to Greece under the Dublin III Regulation, following a visit of State Secretary for Asylum and Migration Francken (Flemish Nationalist Party) to the Greek island of Kos. This arrangement only applies for those who arrived in Belgium after 15 March 2017. In return, Belgium will again send asylum experts to the Greek islands. They will be deployed through EASO.

The situation in **Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)** at the line of contact escalated again and led to casualties on both sides, including civilians on the Azerbaijani side. So far no displacement from NK has been observed. However, there are wide concerns over further escalation. The Minsk Group Co-Chairs urgently called upon both sides

to cease military activities and strongly suggested both sides return to the negotiating table.

In **Belarus**, on 01 July, the [Law on Granting of Refugee Status, Complementary Protection, Asylum and Temporary Protection to Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons](#) in the Republic of Belarus (the Law on Refugees) came into force. UNHCR welcomes the positive developments in the law, while noting that it still contains some gaps in light of the international standards, namely the application of the safe third country concept without safeguards.

On 9 July, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres made his first official visit to **Ukraine** and met with the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. During his visit, UNHCR and UNDP facilitated a meeting with IDPs who expressed their concerns. The Secretary-General called on all sides to fully respect the ceasefire and underscored the UN's support to Ukraine. A group of MPs registered the draft law no. 6692 on the payment of pensions to NGCA residents and IDPs who change their residence. The draft law would de-link pension payments from IDP status, ensuring the right to pension irrespective of the place of residence. The draft law would also provide improved statistical data on IDPs, reduce corruption, and reduce the number of verifications reducing the workload of Departments of Social Protection departments. On 11 July, the Council of the European Union adopted a decision to conclude the Association Agreement with Ukraine on behalf of the European Union. This is the final step of the ratification process enabling a closer relationship between the EU and Ukraine in all main policy areas.

EU related developments

On 01 July, Estonia took over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU for six months (July-December 2017). "A safe and secure Europe", which includes migration and asylum issues, is one of the [priorities](#) of the Estonian Presidency. UNHCR released [updated recommendations](#) to the Estonian Presidency.

On 04 July, the European Commission (EC) released an [Action Plan](#) on Measures to Support Italy, Reduce Pressure along the Central Mediterranean and Increase Solidarity. The document served as a basis for discussions at the 06-07 July [informal Justice and Home Affairs Council](#), in Tallinn, Estonia, where EU Ministers for Home Affairs discussed migration, with a focus on the situation in Italy and on returns. The Estonian Presidency's issued a [statement following the meeting](#).

On 11 July, high-level representatives of EU Member States were invited to a strategic Council meeting on asylum and migration (a joint [SCIFA-HLWG](#) meeting) in Tallinn, Estonia. Among other issues, they discussed migration, focusing the EC's [Action Plan](#) to support Italy. UNHCR and IOM were invited to deliver presentations. In that context, UNHCR highlighted the need to strengthen search and rescue operations to save lives, to better support Italy through solidarity and to address the drivers of dangerous irregular movement along the Central Mediterranean route.

Statelessness: In 2016, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security introduced an instruction for interpretation of the Citizens' Act in order for stateless children born in **Norway** to acquire Norwegian nationality. On 17 July the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security proposed to revoke the instruction and to increase the period of legal residence from three to five years, reintroducing the legal residency requirement instead of a habitual residency requirement to be eligible to apply for Norwegian citizenship. This would be a breach of Norway's international obligations under several human rights instruments. UNHCR and UNICEF have addressed this development in their joint strategy 'Every Child's Right to a Nationality in Norway' and will further advocate for necessary legal reforms. In addition, the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security proposed to increase the legal residence requirement from seven to nine years for refugees to be able to be granted Norwegian citizenship. To prevent terror, the Government proposes to deprive the citizenship of persons convicted of acts contrary to 'fundamental national interests'.

In **Bulgaria** the government approved the Regulation for the implementation of the Law on Foreigners (LoF) which regulates the modalities of the Statelessness Determination Procedure (SDP) established under the LoF in 2016. UNHCR provided recommendations on the draft regulation. While some recommendations have been included, the lack of some procedural guarantees remains of concern.

On 17 July, a Foreign Affairs Council took place in Brussels, Belgium. Among [other issues](#), EU Foreign Ministers discussed migration and refugee issues, focusing on the situation on the Central Mediterranean route. IOM and UNHCR took part in the discussions. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees notably presented UNHCR's [Supplementary Appeal](#) for the Central Mediterranean Route and the priority areas of work in line with the appeal.

On 19 July, the Council of the European Union [adopted](#) its position on the EC's [proposal](#) for a Qualification Regulation. The Council and the European Parliament will now start interinstitutional negotiations with the view to agreeing on a compromise position. Both institutions need to agree on a common position for the Regulation to be adopted.

On 26 July, the EC [moved to the next step](#) of infringements procedures against Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic for non-compliance with the relocation decisions with a reasoned opinion formally requesting them to comply with the decisions. UNHCR continues to call on Member States to increase the pace of relocation from Italy and Greece as part of their commitments under the decisions.

Syrian children fleeing war alone find a welcome [in Spain](#)

By Tim Gaynor in Motril, Spain | 27 June 2017

The regional government of Andalusia last year became the first in Spain to host unaccompanied Syrian refugee. Since September, it has welcomed eight youngsters aged 15 to 17 – six boys and two girls – all relocated from Greece. The aim was to provide a safe, nurturing environment in a residential setting with social, health, education and culture and leisure resources designed to “favour their social development” and help them feel integrated. The youngsters now share spotless rooms and attend secondary school, in a project run by the regional government of Andalusia and supported by UNHCR. 16-year-old Mahmud, who fled the slaughter and chaos in Aleppo describes their volunteer teacher, Bienvenido Ortega as, “not like a teacher, he’s like a father with his son, he’s always laughing, talking and making jokes. He’s great.” All the children interviewed said they had, in different ways, come to like their new lives. “Our task is to support them in an environment where they feel safe, to enable their social development and help them feel integrated,” says Margarita de la Rasilla, a UNHCR legal officer in Spain.

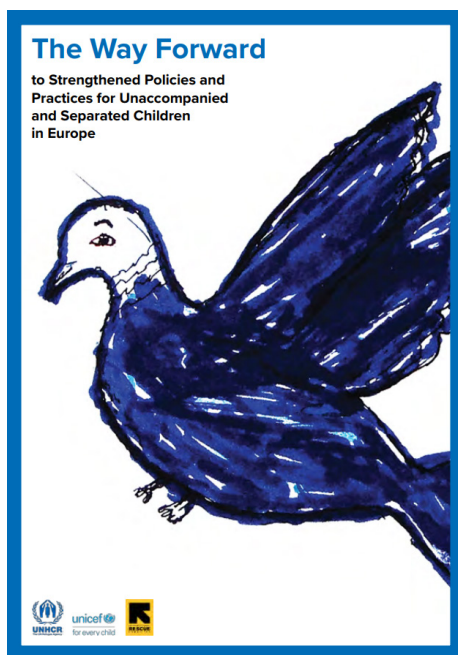


Syrian refugee Ylias* talks to Juan and the volunteers during a snack break at CONECTA.

© UNHCR/Susan Hopper

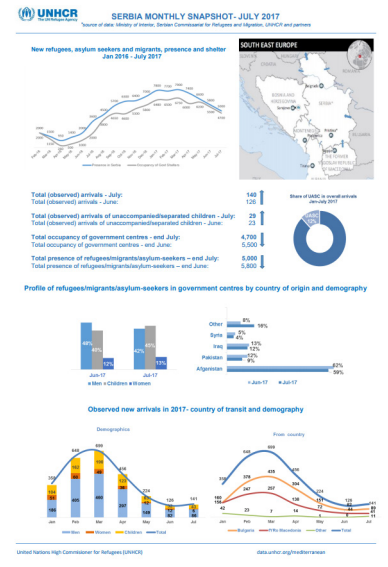
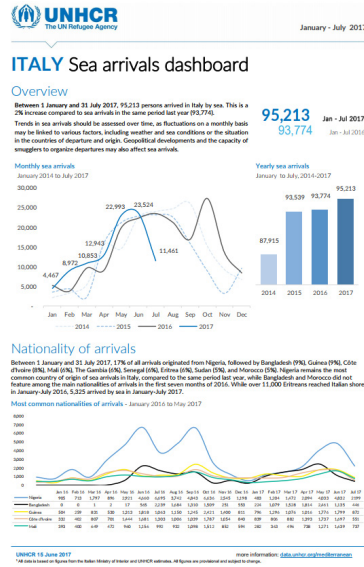
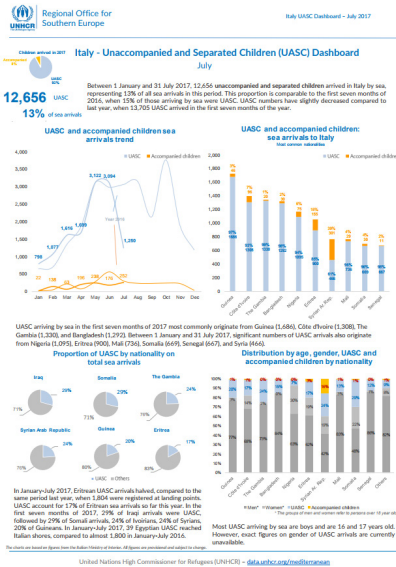
New Roadmap to improve the situation of unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children

On 10 July, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, UNICEF, and IRC, the International Rescue Committee, [issued](#) a Roadmap for [action](#) to improve the situation of refugee and migrant children arriving and staying in Europe without their parents or caregivers. “[The Way Forward to strengthened Policies and Practices](#)



[for UASC in Europe](#)” highlights the need to identify children, register them through child-friendly procedures, and build a relationship of trust with them as early as possible. The document provides recommendations developed in a broad consultative process led by the three organizations, with input from 100 practitioners, including guardians, psychologists, social workers and lawyers, as well as relevant authorities from several European states and the European Union, and refugee and migrant children across the continent. The findings show that although a solid legal framework for child protection exists in many countries, complex, costly, and bureaucratic procedures have meant that all too often the best interests of unaccompanied and separated children are not taken into account, resulting in severe consequences for their well-being and their future. “Many of these children have experienced terrible violence, sexual abuse, trafficking and emotional and psychological pressure not only during their journey but in Europe itself. They deserve better protection and care from Europe. All actions and decisions must have the child’s best interests at heart. We can all make this happen and the Roadmap shows us how,” said Diane Goodman, Deputy Director of UNHCR’s Europe Bureau.

Key documents from the web portal



ITALY Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Dashboard

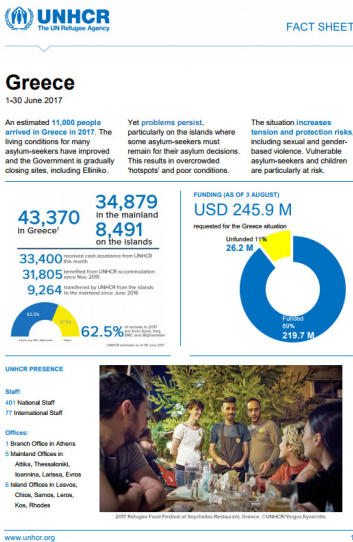
Between 1 January and 31 July 2017, 12,656 unaccompanied and separated children arrived in Italy by sea,

ITALY Sea arrivals dashboard July 2017

Between 1 January and 31 July 2017, 95,213 persons arrived in Italy by sea. This is a 2% increase compared to sea arrivals in the same period last year (93,774).

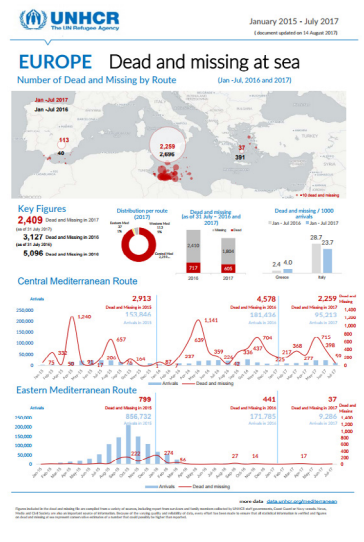
Serbia Monthly Snapshot July 2017

New refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, presence and shelter. Profile of refugees/migrants/asylum-seekers in government centres by country of origin and demography



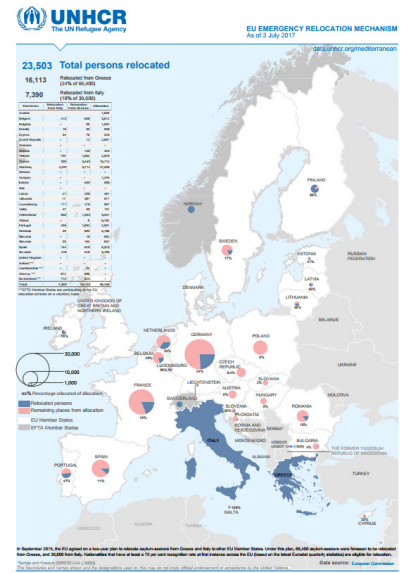
Greece Factsheet June 2017

An estimated 11,000 people arrived in Greece in 2017.



Dead and missing at sea

Between January and July 2017, 2,409 refugees and migrants were killed or are missing at sea.



Relocation in Europe

Snapshot of the number of refugees relocated within Europe, totalling 25,392 within the EU Emergency Relocation Mechanism.

Sign up for the latest information products.



Timeline overview

