

Greece

Conditions in the mainland are generally improving as the Government is closing temporary sites and people are moving into housing. **However, arrivals peaked this month when 6,000**

people arrived by sea and land. Border reception centres became critically overcrowded, conditions deteriorated and protection risks increased including of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Children and vulnerable people were at particular risk. UNHCR called for robust action to improve conditions and intensified transfers of those eligible to the mainland.

45,614 refugees and migrants in Greece¹

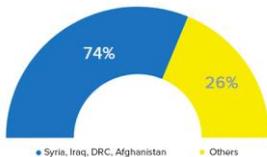
32,158 in the mainland

13,456 on the islands

32,416 eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR this month

34,875 people have so far benefited from UNHCR accommodation²

13,572 people transferred from the islands to the mainland (UNHCR supported)³



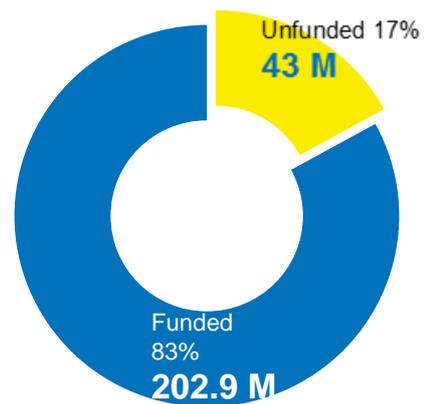
74% of arrivals in 2017 are from Syria, Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan

¹UNHCR estimates as of 30 September 2017
²Since the start of the programme in November 2015
³Between June 2016 and September 2017

FUNDING (AS OF 2 OCTOBER)

USD 245.9 M

requested for the Greece operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

398 National Staff

68 International Staff

Offices:

1 Branch Office in Athens

4 Mainland Offices in

Attika, Thessaloniki,

Ioannina, Evros

6 Island Offices in Lesbos,

Chios, Samos, Leros,

Kos, and Rhodes



© UNHCR/G.Kyvernitis A Syrian boy in the Samos island Reception and Identification Centre of Vathy. September 2017

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities through sectoral Working Groups at the national and field levels.

Main Activities

ESTIA Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can now choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods. This month, 32,416 people received cash assistance in Greece from UNHCR, and the UNHCR-funded Greece Cash Alliance partners.
- By the end of September, UNHCR had created 17,661 places to house vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation helps provide people with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services, including education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece, while the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers in Greece, funded by the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Protection

- To alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the islands, UNHCR works with the Ministry of Migration Policy to transfer eligible asylum-seekers from the islands to urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete or to sites in the mainland from where to continue their asylum applications. This month UNHCR intensified transfers in response to the increased arrivals, supporting 1,323 asylum-seekers from Lesbos (442), Chios (336), Samos (304), Kos (132), Leros (98), and other southern islands (11). A total of 13,572 people have been assisted since June 2016.
- UNHCR also provides legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. This includes legal aid on asylum proceedings and access to rights, as well as on family reunion under the Dublin Regulation to other EU Member States. Between January 2016 and August 2017, 7,000 people received legal aid.
- UNHCR supports the Greek Asylum Service by helping upon request caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. In September, UNHCR helped in over 1,200 instances.

Child Protection

- As the number of 2,850 unaccompanied children in Greece exceeds the 1,125 available places in shelters for their accommodation, children risk spending extended periods of time in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody. This unfortunately affects an increasing number of children with over 106 children in police detention and 228 at the RICs this month (EKKA Statistics). This can have serious repercussions on their protection and wellbeing.
- In response, UNHCR facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme. While this helps provide very much needed space in shelters, the young adults will still require support during this transitional period.
- In addition, UNHCR with partners are working the authorities to develop diverse alternative care arrangements. One of these is Supported Independent Living where children will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- UNHCR also provides advice and technical support to the Government and expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children to shelters.
- UNHCR coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to monitor and develop Standard Operating Procedures and minimum standards to strengthen child protection.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands and the poor conditions of some sites in the mainland translate into poor shelter allocation, a lack of privacy, and constrain safe access to WASH facilities. They thus heighten the risk for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This adds to the volatility of refugees who are already suffering from the sudden breakdown of family and community structures as a result of their forced displacement.
- UNHCR works on SGBV prevention and response by pro-actively identifying people at risk, referring them to appropriate services, and by providing legal information and counselling. UNHCR also conducts awareness raising sessions and campaigns.
- In September, UNHCR developed guidelines with the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of Greece to guide the response of humanitarian stakeholders for the protection of women and girls during reception and asylum procedures.
- Also this month, UNHCR began working through national NGOs, DIOTIMA - Centre for Research on Women Issues, the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) and Arsis for the provision of services to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens. UNHCR also works through the International Rescue Committee for the provision of services in Kara Tepe, Lesbos Island.
- UNHCR also co-chairs the SGBV Working Group with the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) and the General Secretariat on Gender Equality to coordinate the prevention and response to SGBV in Greece. The WG has developed Standard Operating Procedures, while in Thessaloniki and Lesbos, regional SGBV sub-WGs coordinate prevention and response activities locally.
- UNHCR and partners have developed referral pathways for refugee-hosting sites and urban accommodation facilities so that survivors of SGBV receive the support they need.
- Finally, UNHCR conducts trainings for state and non-state actors in Greece to strengthen the prevention and response to SGBV nationally.

Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare. UNHCR works together with the Ministry of Health and other partners and supports the National Health Operations Centre (EKEPI) chair the National Health Working Group.
- UNHCR provided technical expertise to the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, KEELPNO, in the development of the 'Vulnerability Assessment' tool. The tool aims to guide medical and psychosocial teams identify vulnerable people and their specific needs at the reception and identification centres, and refer them to appropriate services for further assistance.
- A particular problem in Greece is the lack of public mental health institutions. UNHCR is trying to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR also funds specific health services in Lesbos and Chios, as well as in Attika.
- UNHCR and KEELPNO organized a vaccination campaign for the children residing in UNHCR-funded accommodation in Attica and Northern Greece.

Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service in Greece have translated into an accelerated rate for the granting of status to those in need of international protection. As such, nearly 7,000 people were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection between January and September 2017, nearly double the 2,700 of the entire 2016.
- This translates into a pressing need to support recognized refugees transition from the assistance they received as asylum-seekers to the national programmes they are eligible for in Greece, on the same terms and conditions as Greek nationals. To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and relevant actors have agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recognized refugees can access cash assistance and accommodation.
- The Government announced the adoption of a comprehensive social integration policy for refugees and migrants as one of its priorities for the end of 2017 and UNHCR stands ready to offer its support.

Relocation and Returns

- In September, 1,146 people relocated from Greece to other EU Member States according to the Greek Asylum Service, bringing the total to 20,362 people since the start of the programme.
- Also in September, 29 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. – Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,336 people have been returned to Turkey.

Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and transportation. UNHCR ensures that this does not hinder people's access to asylum or services. In September, UNHCR provided transportation to some 5,000 people to the Asylum Service, Embassies, accommodation and sites as well as for relocation.

Partners

In September UNHCR worked through 33 partners in 9 sectors. UNHCR worked on Protection with Arsis, GCR, KSPM-ERP, METAdrasi, Praksis, Diotima, ICMC, UNOPS and DRC; on Child Protection with Arsis, Faros, Iliaktida, METAdrasi, NCDP, Nostos and Praksis; On Cash with Care, CRS, IFRC, IRC, Mercy Corps and Samaritan's Purse; On Accommodation with Arsis, Faros, Iliaktida, Nostos, Praksis, Solidarity Now, CRS, Municipality of Athens, Municipality of Andravida, Municipality of Heraklion, Municipality of Livadia, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Municipality of Trikala, Municipality of Larissa and Municipality of Nea Filadelfia; On NFI, shelter & WASH with Samaritan's Purse; On Site Management Support with DRC, Intersos, Samaritan's Purse, UNOPS and Reception and Identification Service; On Health with MDM; On Peaceful coexistence & Integration with Arsis, KEAN, Solidarity Now, Samaritan's Purse, Intersos and UNOPS; On Public awareness raising with TENet-Gr, UNOPS.

External / Donors Relations

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (200 M) | Spain (2 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M)

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