



REGIONAL REFUGEE AND MIGRANT RESPONSE PLAN (RMRP) FOR EUROPE

Overview

The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) for 2017 outlines the intended operational response and financial requirements for the response to the large-scale population movements registered throughout Europe since 2015. In 2017, the response by humanitarian partners focused on the relatively static populations in most of Europe and increasing populations in Greece and Italy. The RMRP presents a set of measures that will enable the humanitarian community to contribute to the protection of refugees and vulnerable migrants, as well as the human rights of all people involved. The following report is a summary of key interventions applied across various sectors throughout the region by humanitarian partners during the fourth quarter of 2017.

Arrival trends

The number of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe in 2017 dropped 48% compared to 2016 with over 172,300 people arriving by sea last year compared to over 362,700 in 2016. Of the three sea routes, most crossed via the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy with smaller numbers crossing via the Eastern Mediterranean route to Greece and Cyprus and the Western Mediterranean route to Spain. In 2017, 29,718 refugees and migrants arrived by sea on the eastern Aegean islands and an additional 7,544² were registered at the Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) of Evros at the Greek-Turkish land border. Most arrivals by sea in 2017 were men (69%), largely due to the higher proportion of men crossing the Central Mediterranean route, while proportions of women and children were higher along the Eastern Mediterranean. Across all three routes, women comprised 13% of arrivals and children comprised 18%. In 2017, over 30,000³ children arrived in Greece, Italy and Spain, of whom over 17,000 (56%) were unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). Majority of the UASC (15,700 or 91%) arrived through the Central Mediterranean Route and were mostly from Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and The Gambia.⁴

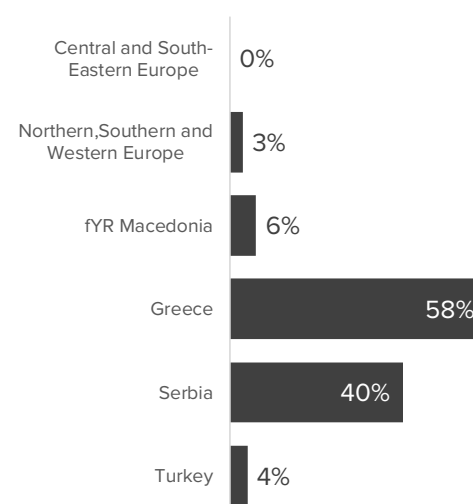
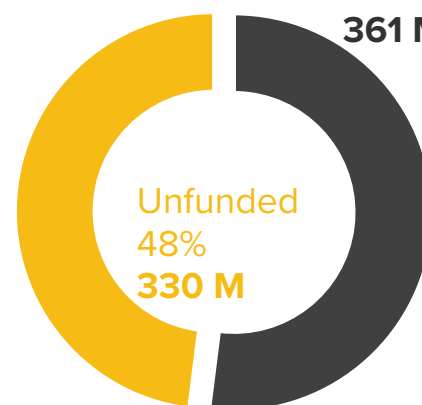
Despite the overall reduction in arrival figures by sea in 2017, irregular mixed movements continued through the Balkans and Central Europe. With tighter border restrictions, refugees and migrants often attempt to travel onwards through dangerous smuggling networks. Asylum-seekers and migrants continued to be intercepted by border authorities during their attempt to cross the region irregularly. Along several borders UNHCR continues to receive reports of forced removals without individual screening of asylum claims, including allegations of violence and abuse in some cases. Throughout the region UNHCR and partners monitor border movements and reception conditions, providing legal assistance and other forms of support.

Up to **342,000** people
Population planning figures

FUNDING (AS OF 1 FEBRUARY 2018)¹
USD 691 M

RMRP requirements

Funded
52%
361 M



35
Partners with funding

74
Number of partners

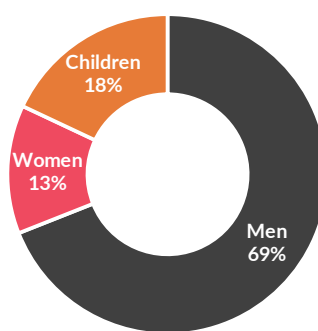
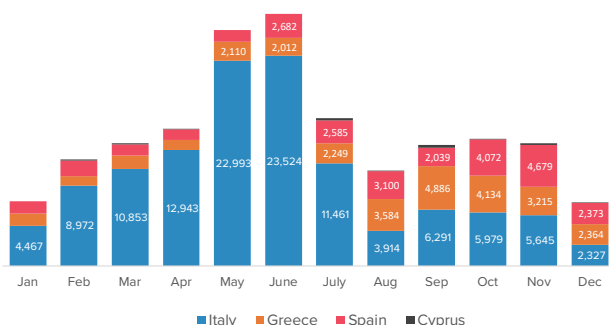
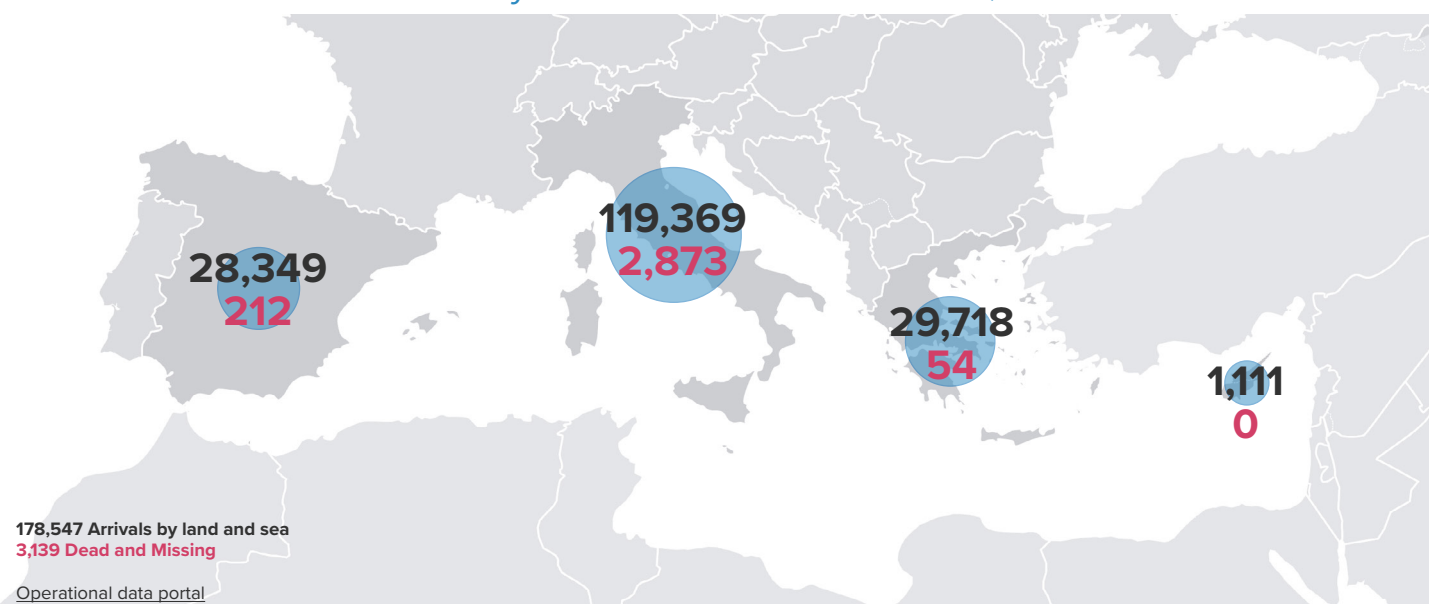
¹ Source: [RMRP Interagency Funding Snapshot - 1 February 2018](#)

² Ministry of Citizen's Protection [Press Release](#), 30 January 2018

³ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/62023>

⁴ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/61548>

Arrivals between January - December 2017: 178,547



Arrivals by land and sea

178,547 in 2017

362,376 in 2016

1,015,078 in 2015

Key achievements

Austria

During the last quarter of 2017, UNHCR and UNICEF conducted assessments and provided recommendations to stakeholders related to reception, the admission programme for Syrian refugees and asylum procedures. UNICEF scaled up capacity-building activities on child protection, including trainings to frontline workers and service providers in reception facilities. Amongst the needs assessments conducted were qualitative interviews carried out by UNHCR with resettled Syrian refugees to learn more about gender-specific aspects of the integration process to help shape concrete policy recommendations. UNHCR also launched its [mobile website](#) providing user-friendly information geared towards unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) on asylum procedures as well as provided support to the [Red Cross' website on family reunification](#). Throughout 2017, UNHCR supported the Asylum Lawyers Network which could support cases before various courts at the national and European level.

Belgium

In Belgium, UNHCR collaborated with the [Klarafestival](#) on a new project called [The Sound of Home](#) which offers music classes to unaccompanied refugee children, who are staying in Belgian centres.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, up to 200 UASC in Belgium will be given the chance to learn a musical instrument or to continue practicing and playing what they have learned before arriving to Belgium. The lessons are held at a local music academy near the

shelter to support integration and inclusion of the children in their immediate surroundings. UNHCR also partnered with two artists and the Brussels Philharmonic for an end of year project on integration and support for refugees. The project featured a musical production, the [Kate Daudy tent](#) displayed inside the concert building and the projection of the UNHCR film "[Songs for the Crossing](#)" on the façade of the Flagey building.

Bulgaria

In 2017, UNICEF continued monitoring detention facilities and identified around 500 children in need of assistance. Of those identified, over 240 UASC were provided with interpretation, legal counselling and family reunification support. As a result of strong advocacy by UNICEF and other child rights organisations, the Bulgarian government adopted legislative changes, making the detention of refugee and migrant UASC illegal. Families staying in reception and accommodation centres in Sofia and Harmanli also benefitted from Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) offered by UNICEF where over 1,000 children participated in education and recreational activities.

Croatia

UNICEF ensured continuous delivery of psychosocial support and recreational activities for all children at the Asylum Center in Zagreb, and supported regular health services for asylum-seeking women and children. For those in urban areas, UNICEF continued to support capacity-building activities for the inclusion of refugee and migrant children into formal education at various primary schools and kindergartens across the country.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Over 7,000 refugees and migrants across the country received assistance from UNHCR and partners such as the Macedonian Young Lawyers' Association, Open Gate – La Strada, City Red Cross mobile teams, Legis and Civic Development – Vaksince. Referrals and activities were also offered by UNICEF at specialised services in Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) within Transit centres. Such activities were instrumental in identifying persons with specific needs and offer them support and referrals to relevant national protection mechanisms. In partnership with MYLA legal aid and counselling on asylum was provided, as well as advocacy interventions and regular protection monitoring in all locations where refugees and migrants are present. UNFPA and UNHCR supported the drafting process. In 2017, UNICEF also supported the development of a national manual for promoting the mental health of refugee and migrant children.

Throughout 2017, the Danish Refugee Council in partnership with UNHCR provided infrastructure assistance to 10 local communities where projects are primarily motivated to strengthen understanding and social cohesion between the local population and those in need of international protection. Another project aimed to raise awareness and deepen solidarity with refugees was the publishing of “Black and White Lives”, a book of cartoons on refugee stories. In December 2017, over 2,000 copies were printed in Macedonian, Albanian and English. This activity is part of the UNHCR's project “Now a refugee – Always human”, funded by Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and implemented by partner NGOs Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution and Association for Research, Education and Development (RED Center).

During September-December 2017, IOM continued to conduct referrals related to services and as part of their regular activities, provided counselling to cases who expressed consent on assisted voluntary return (AVR). Such assistance includes interpretation and psycho-social support. IOM continues to support the operation of the two reception centers “Vinojug”-Gevgelija and “Tabanovce”-Kumanovo with providing maintenance and covering utilities, ensuring proper functioning of the transit reception centers and accommodation services.

Efforts to improve waste management in Gevgelija continued with the start of [construction on the new USD 1 million landfill](#). Flood-prevention works also progressed along the Lipkovska River in Kumanovo, in an investment that will save the municipality more than USD 3 million in future damages. Both projects are implemented by UNDP, with funding from the Government of Japan, to support the two communities most-affected by the refugee crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Germany

Together with the German Ministry of Family, UNICEF launched the revised [Minimum Protection Standards for Children, Adolescents and Women Living in Refugee Centres](#) and presented them at 7 regional conferences to support their dissemination and implementation at state, municipal and communal level. Under the joint initiative with UNICEF, the Ministry of Family Affairs is funding protection coordinators to help the 100 refugee accommodation centres supported by UNICEF to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate protection plans based on the Standards. UNICEF developed a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary training package and a toolbox to build capacity in the refugee centres and trained a pool of 50 trainers to strengthen the capacity of centres' senior management and frontline workers, reaching over 2,100 trainees. In addition, UNICEF completed a comprehensive assessment of the monitoring systems of 25 refugee centres, their service providers and supervisory

authorities. Based on the results of this assessment, UNICEF has developed a prototype of a monitoring-tool for refugee centres.

The German Red Cross (GRC) Tracing Service is, among other things, responsible for advising and supporting refugees on all matters relating to the family reunification process. From 1 September 2017 till 31 December 2017, the GRC Tracing Service has carried out a project aiming at the improvement of their support services by offering qualified training for full-time counsellors and voluntary support workers, creating training and information materials, as well as expanding their foreign-language support capacity.

Greece

To help ease the overcrowded conditions of the Aegean islands' Reception and Information Centers (RICs), UNHCR in coordination with the Government transferred 17,280 authorized asylum-seekers to continue their asylum applications to the mainland and Crete in 2017. These efforts accelerated during Q4, when 7,390 were transferred up to December.

[UNHCR's Urban Accommodation Scheme](#) provided 21,435 places in apartments and buildings to refugees and asylum-seekers in 2017 around Greece. A total of 40,867 people have benefited from the programme since November 2015. In view of the limited number of available places in shelters for unaccompanied children which at 1,100 fall short of the 3,350 UASC estimated in Greece (31 December 2017, EKKA* Statistics), UNHCR in cooperation with EKKA refer those who turn 18 from shelters to the UNHCR accommodation scheme. The young adults also receive additional support in this transitional period. In addition, UNHCR worked with national authorities to expand alternative care for older unaccompanied children through a pilot Supported Independent Living project (SIL), and through foster care in families for younger children. Furthermore, UNHCR with relevant authorities identified eligible unaccompanied children to depart from Greece to the UK in the framework of the 'Dubs Scheme' through Best Interest Determination (BID) procedures.

In 2017, UNHCR with UNFPA and KEELPNO (Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention) delivered trainings to newly recruited KEELPNO staff providing primary healthcare and conducting vulnerability assessment in the RICs of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, and Kos islands. The training focused on medical vulnerabilities, the legal framework, and the clinical management of SGBV, amongst others. UNHCR funded primary and psychosocial support services in Kara Tepe (Lesbos) and first in Souda and later Vial RIC in Chios through Medecins du Monde as well as at the polyclinic of the Municipality of Athens. UNHCR with KEELPNO concluded vaccination campaigns for children in urban accommodation and sites around Greece.

UNHCR also provides legal expertise to the Asylum Service who in 2017 supported caseworkers with on-the-job training in decision drafting and conducting interviews in over 14,100 instances. UNHCR with the Quality Department of the Asylum Service has also delivered various trainings and workshops. In 2017 UNHCR through its partners Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Ecumenical Refugee Program and METAdrasi provided legal aid on asylum procedures, family reunification, child protection, and protection of SGBV survivors and others to over 7,100 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. Additionally, some 3,400 people benefited from legal aid at the appeal stage of the asylum procedures from UNHCR-funded partners METAdrasi and GCR until the state-run legal aid scheme is fully operational.

UNICEF also focused on systems strengthening through partnership with various government institutions, including Ministries of Migration Policy, Labour and Education, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) and National Ombudsman's Office with the aim of improving the overall referral and placement system for unaccompanied children. In 2017, child protection programs for refugee women and children across the mainland were consolidated, expanded and improved in collaboration with partners, reaching some 10,000

children – including 950 UASC – 6,600 women and 556 front line workers. Children benefited from UNICEF’s non-formal education, which also included psychosocial support, school readiness, social inclusion, life skills and language acquisition in Greek, English and mother tongues. As part of this effort, UNICEF assisted the Ministry of Education in enrolling more children in public schools with technical support, coordination, sensitization, advocacy and data collection. As a result, approximately 4,600 children 5-17 years old are enrolled in public schools through regular and reception classes, representing roughly 38% of the population of this age group in the country. Enrolment is higher, 55%, for children (5-17 years old) in urban areas.

This year, UNHCR intensified efforts in building the national capacity on SGBV prevention and response and in actively identifying and referring to relevant services people at risk and SGBV survivors. UNHCR with the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of Greece developed guidelines for the protection of women and girls to guide the response of humanitarian stakeholders during reception and asylum procedures. UNHCR trained over 1,000 staff members of national and non-Governmental actors and raised awareness amongst hundreds of refugees and migrants. UNHCR further worked with national NGOs, DIOTIMA - Centre for Research on Women Issues and the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) for the provision of services to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens, and with the International Rescue Committee in Kara Tepe, Lesbos.

UNHCR in Greece provides cash assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees as part of the Greece Cash Alliance. In December, 37,600 people received assistance to meet their basic needs for the month, while a total of 55,120 have been assisted at least once since April 2017. Finally, UNHCR and the Government agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recently recognized refugees can continue to receive cash assistance and accommodation. This aims to assist their transition to self-reliance. This is all the more important with the increasing number of people recognized as refugees in Greece, nearly 10,400 in 2017.

The EU relocation program - funded by the National Program of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and implemented by IOM in partnership with the Asylum Service concluded with over 21,700 asylum-seekers transferred in an organized and safe way from Greece to other EU Member States. Following the completion of the remaining relocations, the total number is expected to reach 22,000 beneficiaries shortly.

For the period September to December 2017 and with the support of DG ECHO, IOM has been operating two Safe Zones in Lesbos and Chios through Implementing Partners with capacity to accommodate UASC. During this time, IOM organized and conducted escorts of UASC from protective custody centers to so-called “Safe Zones”. IOM with the support of DG ECHO has also provided accommodation to nearly 3,600 migrants and refugees in eight open accommodation facilities.

Ireland

The 2017 travel assistance programme, run in partnership between UNHCR, IOM and the Irish Red Cross, enabled over 150 individuals to be reunited with family members in Ireland. Of these individuals assisted to come to Ireland, majority were minors and many others had specific vulnerabilities.

Italy

UNHCR staff are present in disembarkation areas in several locations in southern Italy, delivering information on asylum procedures to new arrivals and supporting the authorities with the identification of persons with specific needs. During the

reporting period, UNHCR staff also delivered training to reception centre staff and information sessions to asylum-seekers on the relocation programme in various locations and also liaised with the authorities to ensure prompt registration of eligible individuals. UNHCR teams in northern Italy carry out missions to land border areas, monitoring the situation of persons who are not accommodated in governmental reception facilities, and liaising with the authorities to ensure that persons of concern are provided with adequate services.

Child Protection experts deployed by UNHCR carry out regular visits to AMIF-funded UASC reception facilities in various Italian regions. During the reporting period, Child Protection experts contributed to training events aimed at UASC reception centre staff and voluntary guardians, including in collaboration with the Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents and with UNHCR’s implementing partner Defense for Children. UNICEF-supported outreach teams, including on coast guard boats and through mobile teams in urban and border areas, also provided information and referred children to protection support centres. UNICEF also provided over 1,000 hygiene kits to children which were also distributed on coast guards boats.

Over 1,660 frontline workers were trained by UNICEF on child protection in emergencies. UNICEF partnered with the Ombudsperson institutions to strengthen regional and national guardianship systems. A first group of 320 guardians were trained bringing a more coordinated and inter-disciplinary approach to the guardianship system. With UNICEF support, 2,106 adolescents participated in structured education activities. UNICEF also supported vocational and apprenticeship paths for UASC in Rome. UNICEF supported the social inclusion of UASC through the establishment of individual pathways (focusing on individual support to access services and follow-up in reception centres’) and participation (increasing engagement on key issues) using tools such as the Young Pass and Orientation Guide and Handbook.

Serbia

In Serbia, over 3,500 children benefitted from child protection services and material assistance in the eleven UNICEF-supported Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) and ten Mother and Baby Corners (MBC) operated together with partners. UNICEF also helped identify and refer at-risk children, including UASC, to the appropriate services – including guardianship, police (to obtain documents to claim asylum), and health and accommodation services – through eight centres for social work. As a result of UNICEF advocacy, the Child Protection Standard Operating Procedures, developed in 2016, were fully integrated by the end of 2017 in the mandatory instructions issued by the Ministry of Labour to social welfare institutions. Activities to enhance the range of Gender-Based Violence prevention, mitigation and response services were also initiated with partners. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration to provide access to education for refugee and migrant children through coordination, system development, capacity building, and the development of a monitoring framework.

Under the strong partnership of UN agencies (UNDP, WHO, IOM and UNOPS) in the EU-funded project “Open Communities-Successful Communities”, in the last quarter of 2017 UNDP addressed the most pressing issues of migration-affected local communities and institutions. Large community infrastructure upgrades of the facilities of social welfare centers, primary health centers, schools and kindergartens receiving refugee and migrant children were carried out in various municipalities. Within USAID funded Project “Enhancing local resilience to the migration crisis” UNDP completed infrastructure interventions and hydrogeological investigations aimed at improving water supply services throughout various municipalities.

Throughout the year, UNHCR and partners supported authorities daily at 23 sites around the country, in protection monitoring, identification and addressing individual’s specific needs, referrals, interpretation, information and counselling. UNHCR’s partner, Danish

Refugee Council (DRC) provided over 119,000 healthcare services in ten government centres, including to over 700 cases of psychosocial support. Upon request of the SCRM, UNHCR conducted comprehensive distribution of over 221,400 various non-food items throughout 18 government-run centres. On 26 October, UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and partner Amity, under which UNHCR, through Amity will strengthen social welfare institutions' response to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of UASC. On 24 November, UNHCR donated specialised IT equipment (scanners, computers and cell phones etc.) worth over USD 146,000 to the Ministry of Interior in support of the Asylum Office to provide for enhanced access and effective asylum procedures.

Netherlands

In the last quarter of 2017 UNHCR resumed reception monitoring and conducted visits to seven reception centres and identified persons with specific needs. Reports and recommendations from such missions were shared with various stakeholders, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum-seekers, the Dutch Council for Refugees and, where applicable, the Nidos Foundation (guardianship organization). In December 2017, in co-operation with Boomerang, UNHCR disseminated 260,000 postcards which address stereotypes and prejudice against refugees. The postcards were on display in public spaces to help raise awareness and foster more solidarity with refugees.

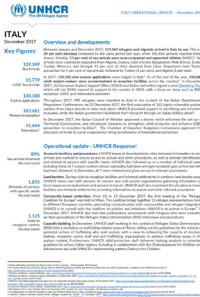
Turkey

Refugees and migrants rescued at sea by the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) received material support and protection assistance from UNHCR and IOM. Counselling services, carried out by UNHCR and partners were also provided to those rescued at sea and present in Turkey on their rights and available services. People

identified with specific needs were referred to national institutions or organizations for support including family reunification and legal counselling. During the period September-December, IOM and UNHCR provided capacity building trainings to over 300 TCG and other frontline staff on mixed migration and protection of vulnerable groups. As part of the EU and IOM agreement to strengthen the operational capacity of the TGC, Turkey has received in 2017 six search and rescue boats. The vessels, specifically designed for search and rescue operations, will increase the geographical coverage and frequency of coast guard patrols. UNHCR Turkey continued its collaboration with frontline state institutions, including Gendarmerie General Command, Directorate General of Migration Management, TCG, Turkish National Police and Turkish Land Forces, to strengthen response to apprehended/intercepted people at border locations and also inside the country. In order to facilitate the border authorities' proceedings at the border regions and help overcome language barriers, UNHCR continued its support in provision of interpreters in various languages. Humanitarian assistance coordinators were deployed to several locations with the aim to address the immediate needs of apprehended refugees and migrants. A central level coordination meeting was conducted with the participation of Gendarmerie Commandership, TCG, Land Forces and relevant line Ministries to foster coordination efforts at the national level to better respond to mixed migratory movements. UNHCR along with its partners also developed leaflets to facilitate communication of Gendarmerie personnel with refugees and migrants and include the translation of UNHCR's training manuals. A Handbook on Migration and Asylum for the Gendarmerie personnel was also launched and aims to serve as a practical guide for the Gendarmerie personnel at the field to ensure consistent implementation of standards and compliance with principles in operational engagement.



[Serbia inter-agency operational update](#)



[Italy operation update](#)



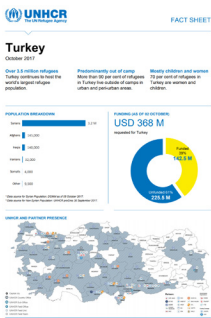
[Greece country factsheet](#)



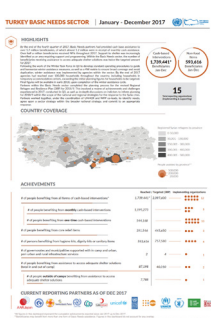
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