

# ITALY – SEA ARRIVALS

## UNHCR UPDATE #9

November 2016

### KEY FIGURES<sup>1</sup>

**13,581**

Persons arriving by sea in November 2016.

**173,008**

Persons arriving by sea in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

**24,659**

Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) arrived by sea in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

**4,699**

Dead and missing at sea in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

**47%**

Average EU protection rate of top nationalities arriving by sea in Italy<sup>2</sup>.

**176,671**

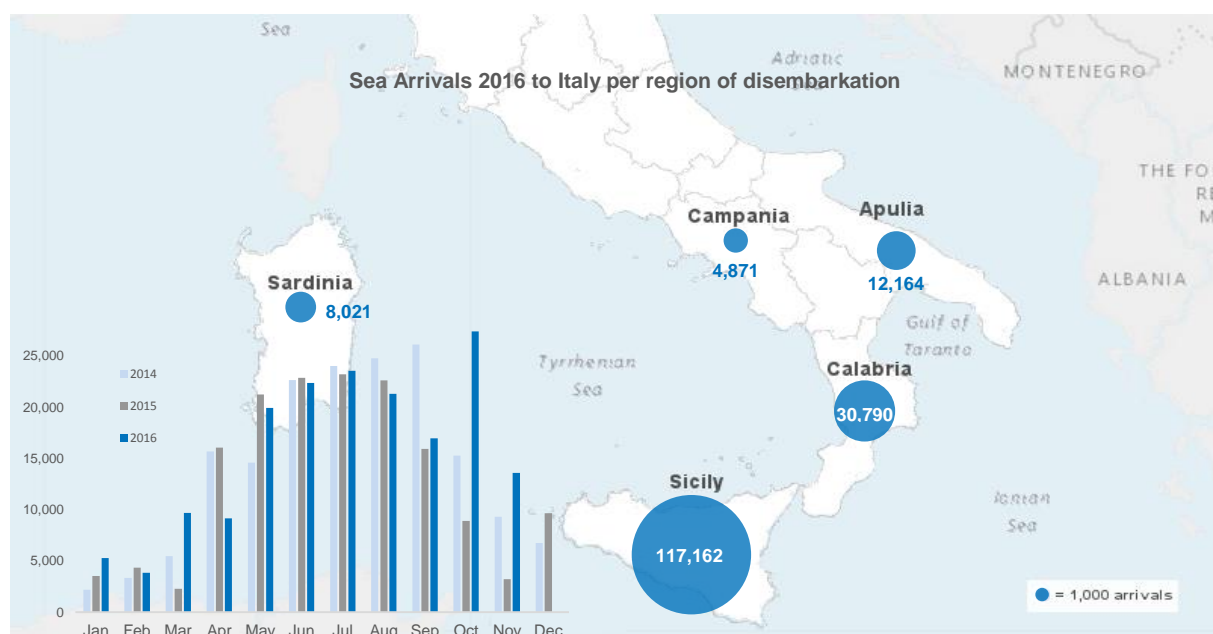
Persons accommodated in reception centres<sup>2</sup>.

**1,853**

Asylum-seekers relocated from Italy under the EU relocation scheme<sup>2</sup>.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 13,581 refugees and migrants arrived to Italy by sea in November 2016. This number constitutes a decrease compared to sea arrivals in October 2016 (27,384), but remains considerably higher than sea arrivals in the same period of 2015, when 3,218 reached the Italian shores. Main nationalities among sea arrivals are Nigerian, Eritrean, Ivorian, Guinean and Gambian.
- By the end of November 2016, the total number of sea arrivals reached 173,008, a 20% increase compared with the first eleven months of 2015 (144,205).
- Between 1 January and 30 November, 24,659 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) arrived to Italy by sea. This corresponds to 14% of all sea arrivals in the first eleven months of the year, significantly higher than 2015 (7%).
- At the end of November 2016, 176,671 asylum-seekers were accommodated in reception centres across Italy, 78% of whom were accommodated in temporary facilities.
- In November 2016, 401 asylum-seekers were relocated to Finland, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland, within the EU relocation scheme. Since the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation, only 1,853 persons (4.7% of the 39,600 target) have been relocated from Italy.

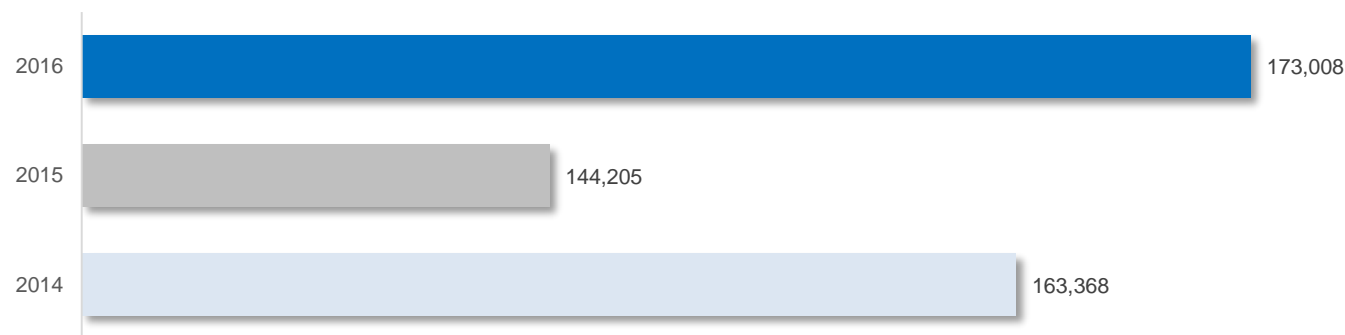


<sup>1</sup> Sources: UNHCR, Ministry of Interior, Eurostat, EC. Unless stated otherwise, figures reflect the period up to 30 November.

<sup>2</sup> Between 1 January and 30 November 2016.

# SEA ARRIVALS TO ITALY

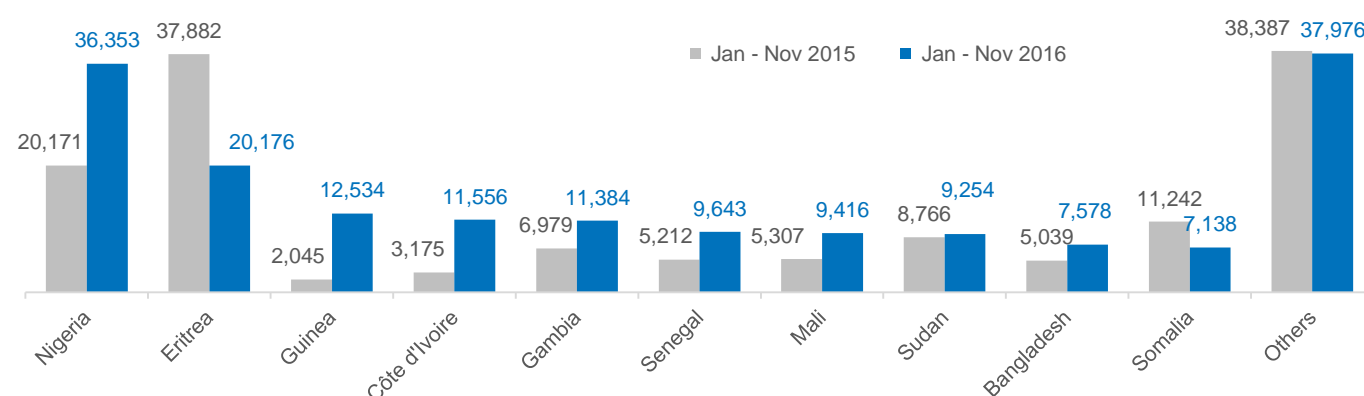
**Figure 1. Sea arrivals** | January – November, 2014, 2015 and 2016



In November 2016, 13,581 persons arrived to Italy by sea. This is a decrease compared to the previous month, when over 27,000 persons had reached Italian shores, but remains elevated compared to arrivals in November 2015 (3,218). While arrival trends in the first nine months of 2016 have been consistent with previous years, with a surge from spring onwards and a peak in the summer months, increasing arrivals in October and a consistent number of persons crossing the sea in November represent a new development. Fluctuations on a monthly basis may be linked to various factors including favourable weather and sea conditions as well as the situation in the country of departure and the capacity of smugglers to organize departures.

Until the end of November 2016, 173,008 persons arrived to Italy by sea, a 20% increase compared to sea arrivals during the same period of 2015. They arrived in the main ports of southern Italy: approximately 28% of them arrived in the four operational hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani), while the others arrived in other sea ports. UNHCR staff is present during all phases of disembarkation procedures, both at hotspots and non-hotspot sites in several locations in southern Italy. UNHCR field teams (25 staff) render support to the authorities, delivering information on international protection and the EU relocation scheme, as well as identifying people with specific needs. Upon disembarkation, UNHCR staff provide new arrivals with leaflets on international protection and later conduct face-to-face information provision sessions. Preliminary information is delivered immediately after new arrivals are pre-identified, while in-depth information is provided once those individuals have been registered.

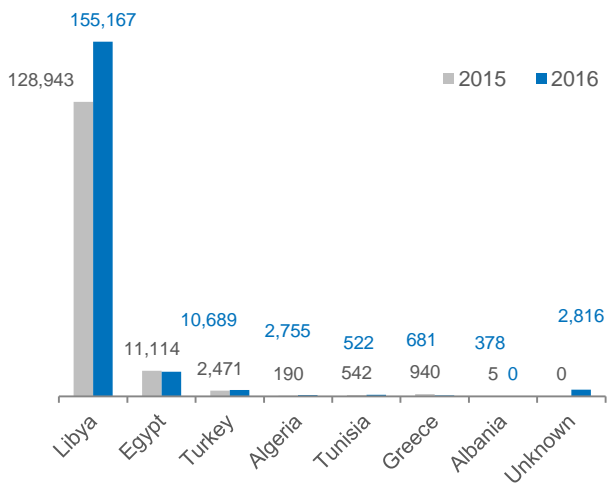
**Figure 2. Top 10 nationalities of sea arrivals** | January- November, 2015 and 2016



Individuals arriving by sea between January and November 2016 mainly originate from Nigeria (21%), Eritrea (12%), Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia (7% each), Senegal (6%), Mali, Sudan, Bangladesh (5% each) and Somalia (4%). Arrivals from Nigeria in January-November 2016 have increased by 80% compared to the first eleven months of last year and Nigeria is the most common country of origin among sea arrivals to Italy this year. During the month of November, 2,544 Nigerians reached Italian shores. Eritreans continue to be the next most common nationality of sea arrivals in 2016. However, their numbers have almost halved compared to the first eleven months of 2015. In November 2016, approximately 880 Eritreans arrived to Italy by sea, which is a considerable drop compared to the previous month, when over 3,600 sea arrivals originated from Eritrea. Between January and November, arrivals of nationals from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, The Gambia, Senegal and Mali increased compared to the same period of last year, while arrivals from Somalia decreased by 36%. The number of Syrian nationals arriving by sea remains low: 174 reached Italian shores in the month of November and just 1,100 arrived by sea since the beginning of the year (0.6% of the total). According to 3Q 2016 EUROSTAT, around 47% of all sea arrivals to Italy since the beginning of the year would be entitled to a form of protection if the average EU recognition rates were applied.

# Hotspot and Relocation

**Figure 3. Sea arrivals by country of departure | January – November, 2015 and 2016**



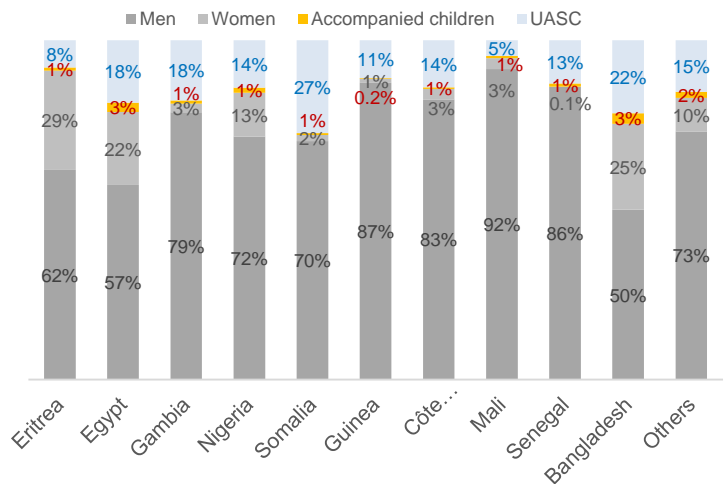
The vast **majority of sea arrivals continue to leave from Libya** (approximately 88%). Consistent with this trend, Libya remained the main country of departure in November, with Sabratha remaining the most common departure point. Only 6% of individuals arriving by sea to Italy between January and November had departed instead from Egypt. New arrivals continued to report instances of abuse, including kidnapping and torture, which had occurred en-route through the Sahara desert and in Libya.

Most new arrivals reached Italian shores following SAR operations conducted at sea by various actors, including the Italian Navy, the Italian Coast Guard, vessels by other countries and NGOs. Furthermore, autonomous sea arrivals occurred throughout the month, with relatively small groups of people reaching southern Italy having departed mainly from Turkey, but also, to a lesser extent, from Greece, Tunisia and Algeria. Arrivals were intercepted by the authorities off the Italian coast and then transferred to port sites where they underwent disembarkation procedures. During the month of November, most autonomous sea arrivals from Turkey originated from Iraq (mainly of Kurdish origins), and also Iran, Afghanistan and Syria. At the beginning of the month, an arrival of Iraqi, Syrian and Iranian nationals was also reported at the Trieste port, in northern Italy: they had reportedly travelled on board of a ship from Turkey and were locked inside a container for at least 4 days.

Numerous tragedies at sea occurred in November, with over 720 persons reported dead or missing. The higher death toll in the Mediterranean is due to increasing recourse to unseaworthy dinghies which are being loaded with higher numbers of people. By the end of November, nearly 4,700 lives had been lost at sea since the beginning of the year—more than the total for the whole of 2015.

Like in previous years, men continue to represent the vast majority (71%) among sea arrivals, while adult women account for 13% of the total. Accompanied children only represent 1.3% of the total. The decrease in the proportion of adult men (from 75% in January-November 2015 to 71%

**Figure 4. Top 10 nationalities of UASC sea arrivals: breakdown by age and gender | January – November 2016\***

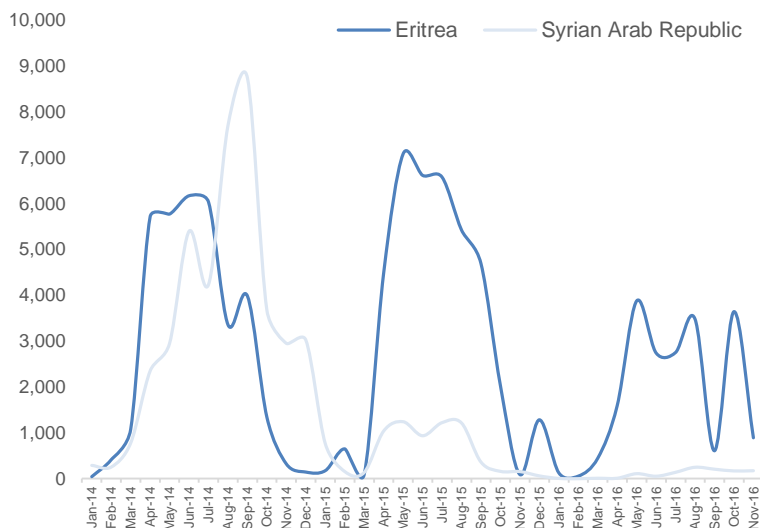


in the first eleven months of 2016) and accompanied children (from 2.8% to 1.3%) is offset by the increasing arrivals of UASC. Unaccompanied children represent 14% of all sea arrivals since the beginning of this year, compared to 7% during the same period in 2015. Between January and November 2016, 24,659 UASC arrived in Italy, 1,800 of whom reached Italian shores in the month of November alone. Gender and age profiles vary significantly among different national groups. Significantly more women have arrived this year from Nigeria, Somalia, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Eritrea (29%, 25%, 25%, 24% and 22% of arrivals from each country respectively). Sea arrivals from other countries of origin are predominately men. Women account for only 13% of Ivorian arrivals and less than 3% of this year's arrivals from Guinea, Mali, The Gambia, Senegal and Bangladesh. In 2016, UASC originate most commonly from Eritrea, The Gambia and Nigeria. While no Eritrean UASC arrived in November 2015, 145 reached Italian shores this month. So far this year, Eritrean UASC account for 18% of all Eritrean sea arrivals, up from last year's 8%. The total number of Eritrean UASC that have arrived so far this year is comparable to last year, but the proportion of Eritrean arrivals that are UASC has increased to 18% in 2016.

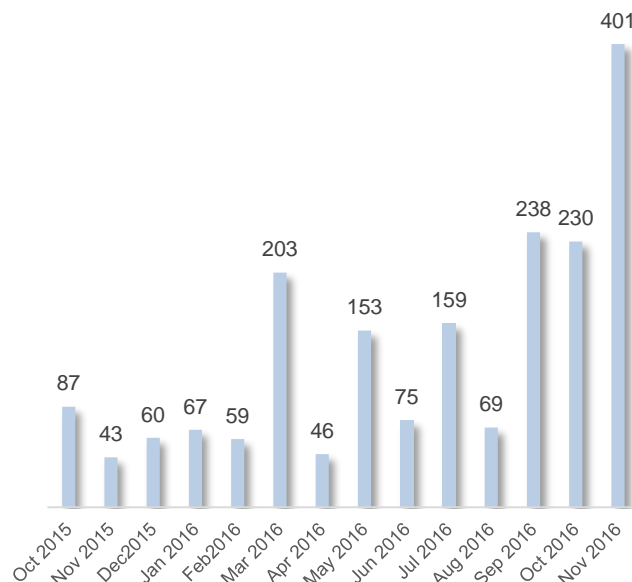
During post disembarkation procedures, UNHCR staff support authorities with the identification of persons with specific needs, particularly persons with medical conditions, pregnant women and unaccompanied children, victims of trauma and survivors of torture or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UNHCR continues to work to strengthen the authorities' capacity to identify these persons with specific needs. Two UNHCR child protection experts currently work with the authorities to promote good practices on best interest assessment and determination. UNHCR staff also support information provision for UASC at arrival points and in reception facilities.

# ASYLUM PROCEDURES

**Figure 5. Monthly sea arrivals to Italy. Relocation nationalities** | January 2014 – November 2016



**Figure 6. Persons relocated in Italy under the EU relocation scheme** | October 2015 – November 2016



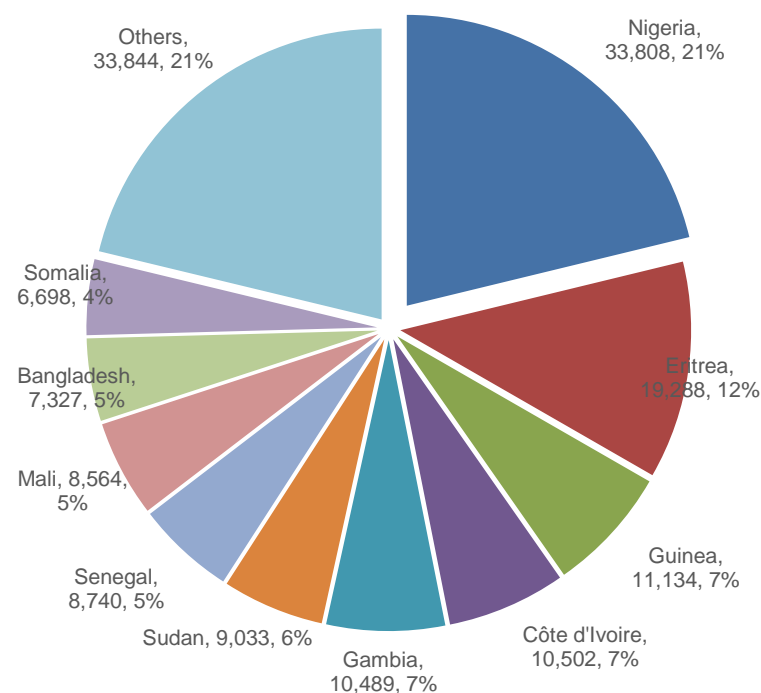
The hotspot approach foresees that new arrivals are identified and fingerprinted, with a view to strengthen the authorities' capacity to identify all persons reaching Italian shores. Four hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani) are currently operational in Italy, with a total official capacity of over 1,400 places. Furthermore three regional hubs (Bari, Crotone and Villa Sikania) have been set up and host relocation candidates, with a total official capacity of over 2,200 places. Representatives of the European border agency Frontex, EASO (European Asylum Support Office), Europol and Eurojust are providing operational support to the Italian authorities in the hotspots. In 2016, UNHCR participated in an ad hoc Ministry of Interior's working group supporting the Italian authorities in the drafting of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be applied by competent authorities in the hotspots with the aim to ensure that access to the territory and to the asylum procedure are granted in accordance with national and international standards. The SOPs were published in May 2016: UNHCR monitors their implementation in the hotspots and advocates for their application also in other disembarkation sites.

In close cooperation with EASO, UNHCR provides potential relocation candidates with counselling service and information. As of 22 September 2016, candidates eligible for relocation include citizens of Syria, Eritrea, Burundi, Mozambique, Bahrain, Bhutan, Qatar and Yemen. Nationals of the Central African Republic (CAR) no longer meet the 75% recognition rate threshold provided for by the September 2015 EU Council Decisions. Iraqi citizens were also eligible for relocation until 8 July 2016, but no longer meet the eligibility threshold. Based on the latest available EU data, the average recognition rate for CAR nationals has fallen to 69%, while 61% of Iraqis are now recognized international protection across the EU. During the month of November, 401 asylum-seekers were relocated to Finland, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland. Between the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation and the end of November 2016, a total of 1,853 persons were relocated from Italy: this is still only 4.7% of the 39,600 target to be met by the end of September 2017. Since the adoption of the relocation scheme, Italy received some 5,500 pledges from participating European countries, while over 25,000 potential candidates reached Italian shores during the same period.

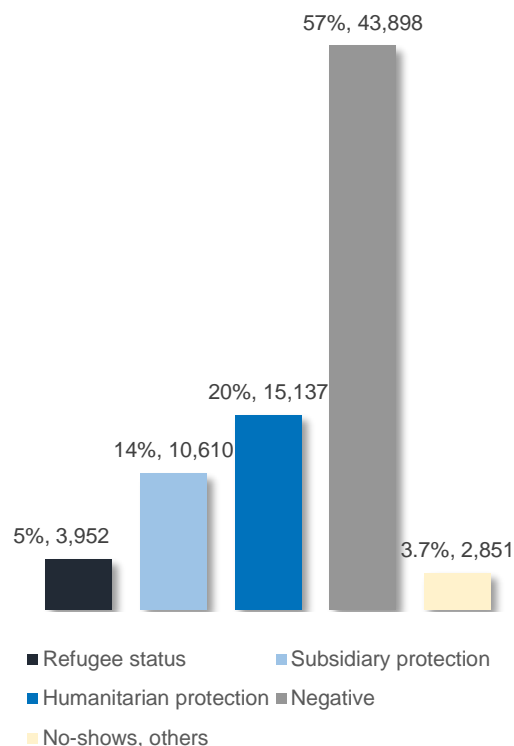
UNHCR is calling on States to increase pledges, including for unaccompanied and separated children, speed up the registration and transfers of candidates, and for more nationalities fleeing war and persecution to have access to the scheme. During the month of November, UNHCR liaised with the Ministry of Interior to enhance efforts towards implementing UASC relocation. Effective relocation is important to help increase solidarity and promote the sharing of responsibilities in Europe, ensuring the better management of population movements and helping to address irregular secondary movement and reliance on smuggler networks. This is particularly vital given the increasing number of people staying in Italy compared to previous years, due to increasing recourse to identification and fingerprinting procedures in accordance with the Dublin Regulation, the implementation of the hotspot approach, and increased controls at the borders with France, Switzerland and Austria, making onward departures across Italy's northern borders more difficult. UNHCR has also deployed a team to northern Italy, where it monitors the potential impact of readmission agreements implemented at the northern borders on access to the international protection procedure, focusing in particular on people with specific needs, such as UASC. Furthermore, the team conducts capacity building activities with a view to assist the authorities in providing information to persons in transit with regard to the asylum and relocation procedures.

# ASYLUM PROCEDURES

**Figure 7. Asylum seekers by nationality | January – October 2016<sup>3</sup>**



**Figure 8. Outcome of RSD decisions in Italy | January – September 2016**



**Between January and October 2016, over 98,400 persons lodged an asylum application in Italy** (compared to 83,970 applications in the whole of 2015), while almost 76,000 applications were determined by Territorial Commissions across the national territory. Asylum seekers' most common countries of origin are Nigeria, Pakistan, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Eritrea, Mali, Guinea, Bangladesh and Ghana. So far in 2016, 5% of asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees, while 14% were granted subsidiary protection. Humanitarian protection was given to 20% of all applicants<sup>3</sup>.

UNHCR participates in first instance Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures, with staff members posted in the 48 operational decentralized Territorial Eligibility Commissions and providing advice on the use of eligibility criteria, procedural standards and country of origin information. Both the quality monitoring project and the trafficking project, developed, in cooperation with UNHCR, by the National Commission on the Right of Asylum, continue in 2016. Together with the Ministry of Interior and the National Commission for the Right of Asylum, UNHCR continues to be involved in the working group on the reform of the asylum procedure, which was set up in October 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Latest Mol data: 31 October 2016. For further details on asylum procedures, please refer to UNHCR Update Italy – Sea Arrivals #8, available [here](#).

# RECEPTION

Figure 9. Trends in reception | 2013 – 30 November 2016

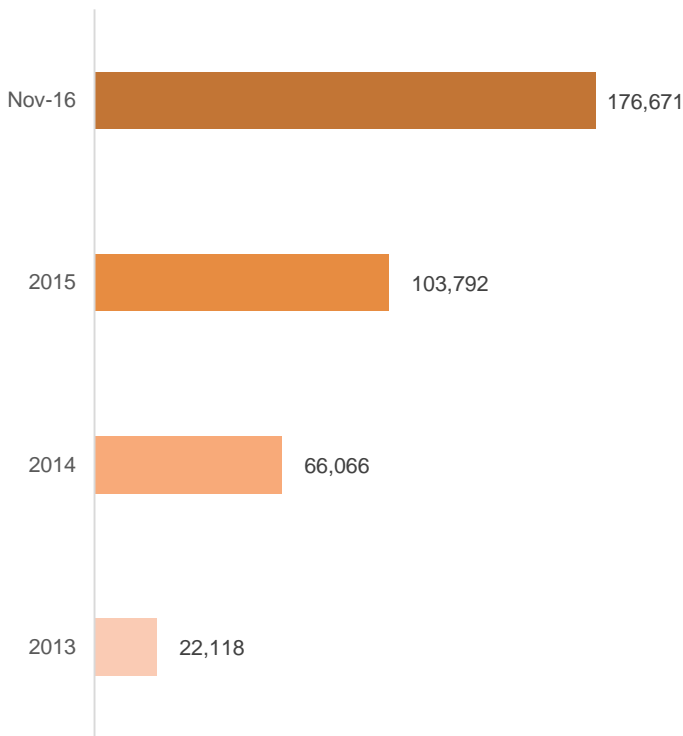
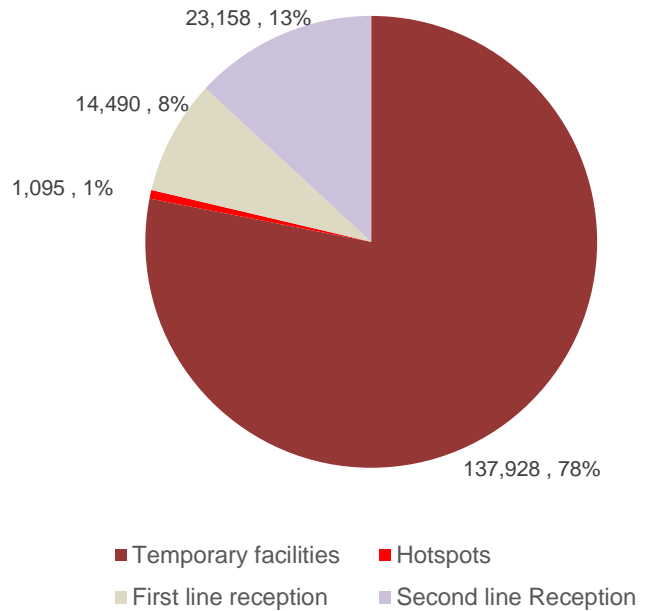


Figure 10. People accommodated in Italy by type of facility on 30 November 2016



On 30 November 2016, 176,671 persons were accommodated in reception centres across Italy. Italian law provides for a 3-tier reception system, composed of: (1) first assistance facilities (so called CPSA) and hotspots; (2) first-line reception facilities, including first reception centres (so called CPA) and regional hubs; (3) second-line reception facilities (so called SPRAR centres, run by the National Association of Italian Municipalities). If no places are available in first-line or second-line reception centres, the law stipulates for persons to be accommodated in temporary facilities, also known as extraordinary reception centres, or CAS. Persons remain in first assistance centres and hotspots only for the purposes of undergoing identification and fingerprinting procedures, before being transferred to first-line or second-line reception centres.

The vast majority of persons are currently accommodated in extraordinary reception centres. On 30 November 2016, 137,928 persons (78% of the total) were accommodated in temporary facilities, while 14,490 (8%) were in first line reception centres. Furthermore, 23,158 persons (13%) were in second line reception facilities (latest available data, as of 18 November 2016). Finally, 1,095 persons (0.6%) were in the four operational hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani)<sup>4</sup>.

The government is reportedly working on a plan to gradually move to a system favouring ordinary reception over extraordinary reception, providing financial incentives to municipalities willing to adhere to SPRAR.

**Contacts:**

Carlotta Sami, Senior Regional Public Information Officer, [sami@unhcr.org](mailto:sami@unhcr.org), Tel: +39 06 80212316, Cell +39 3356794746  
Iosto Ibba, Public Information Unit, [ibba@unhcr.org](mailto:ibba@unhcr.org), Tel: +30 0680212326, Cell +39 33 16355 517

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

<sup>4</sup> These figures reflect the situation on 30 November 2016 and are subject to constant change. Please note that Mol data do not statistically capture the reception capacity of transit facilities opened by local authorities in the northern border areas (e.g. Como, Ventimiglia) in order to provide basic services to refugees and migrants in transit.