

# ITALY

## UNHCR UPDATE #10

December 2016

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

**8,428**

Persons arriving by sea in December 2016.

**181,436**

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

**25,846**

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

**5,096**

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

**123,482**

Asylum applications in 2016, including from sea and other arrivals.<sup>2</sup>

**45%**

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

**176,554**

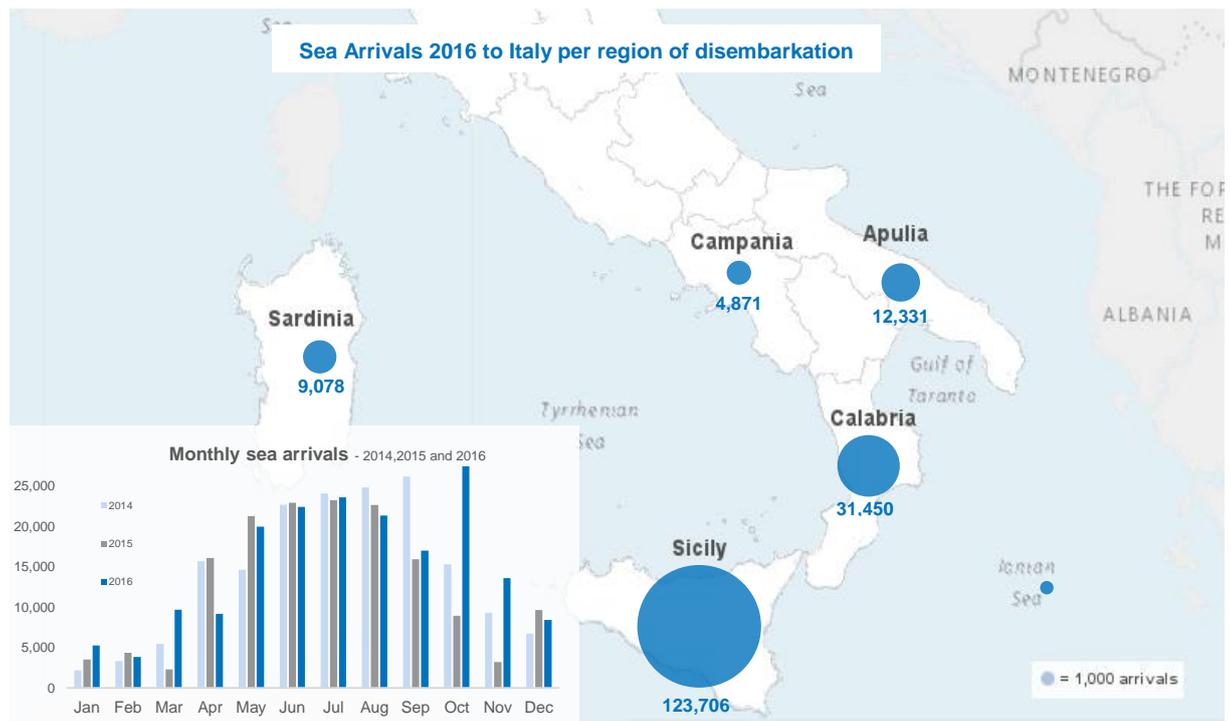
Persons accommodated in reception centres.<sup>2</sup>

**2,654**

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

### HIGHLIGHTS

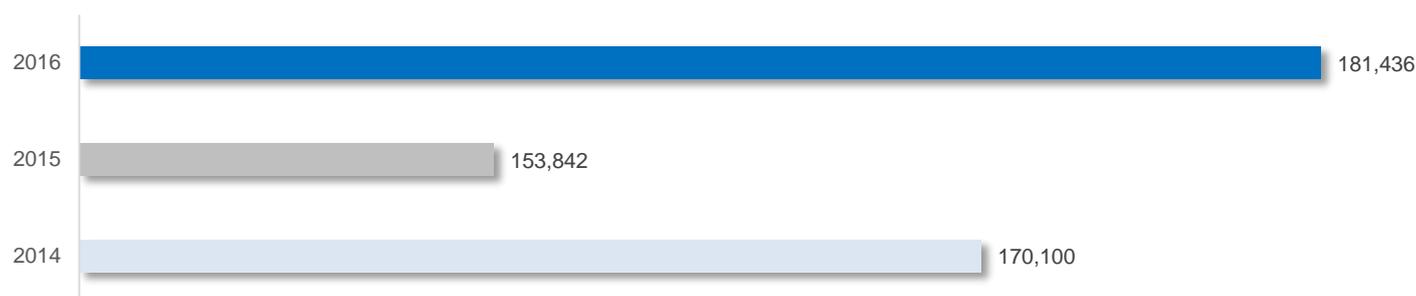
- 8,428 refugees and migrants arrived to Italy by sea in December 2016, compared to 9,637 sea arrivals in December 2015. Main nationalities among sea arrivals are Nigerian, Eritrean, Guinean, Ivoirian and Gambian.
- In 2016, the total number of sea arrivals reached 181,436, an 18% increase compared with 2015 (153,842).
- In 2016, 25,846 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) arrived to Italy by sea. This corresponds to 14% of all sea arrivals in 2016, up from last year's 7%.
- At the end of December 2016, 176,554 asylum-seekers were accommodated in reception centres across Italy, 78% of whom were accommodated in temporary facilities.
- In December 2016, 737 asylum-seekers departed within the intra-European relocation scheme to Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. Since the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation, 2,654 persons (6.7% of the 39,600 target) have been relocated from Italy.



<sup>1</sup> Sources: UNHCR, Ministry of Interior, Eurostat, European Commission (EC).

<sup>2</sup> Unless stated otherwise, figures reflect the period between 1 January and 31 December 2016.

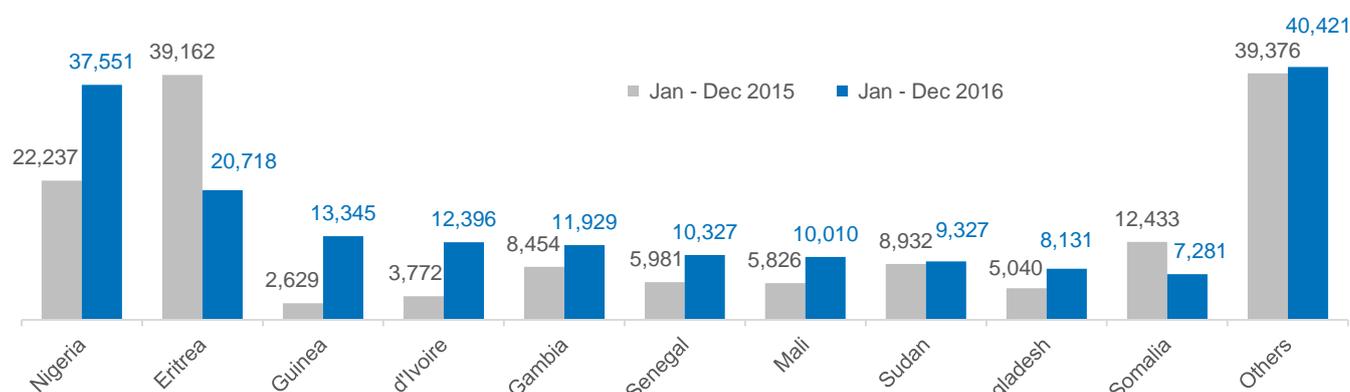
**Figure 1. Sea arrivals** | January – December, 2014, 2015 and 2016



In December 2016, 8,428 persons arrived to Italy by sea. This is a slight decrease compared to the same period of last year, when 9,637 persons had reached Italian shores. Consistently with trends registered in recent years, December arrivals are lower than those registered during the previous month, when over 13,000 persons had arrived by sea. 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, but increasing arrivals in October and a consistent number of persons crossing the sea in November represented a new development. Fluctuations on a monthly basis may be linked to various factors including weather and sea conditions as well as the situation in the country of departure and the capacity of smugglers to organize departures.

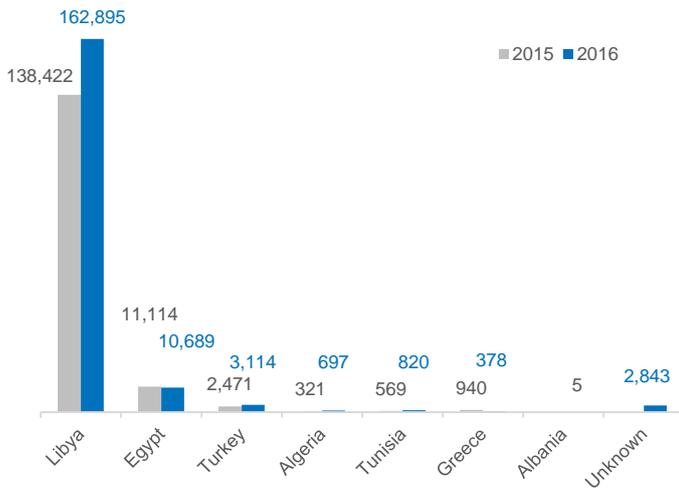
In 2016, 181,436 persons arrived to Italy by sea, an 18% increase compared to sea arrivals in 2015. They arrived in the main ports of southern Italy: 29% of them arrived in the four operational hotspots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani), while the others arrived in other sea ports. UNHCR staff is present during all phases of disembarkation procedures, both at hotspots and non-hotspot sites in several locations in southern Italy. UNHCR field teams (24 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- December, 2015 and 2016



Individuals arriving by sea in 2016 mainly originate from Nigeria (21%), Eritrea (11%), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, The Gambia (7% each), Senegal, Mali (6% each), Sudan, (5%), Bangladesh and Somalia (4% each). Although significant arrivals of Nigerian nationals were reported also in 2015 – when Nigerians represented the second most common nationality among sea arrivals - the numbers of Nigerian nationals reaching Italian shores have increased by 68% compared to last year. Eritreans are the next most common nationality of sea arrivals in 2016. However, their numbers have almost halved compared to 2015: while 39,162 Eritreans were registered at landing points in 2015, 20,718 reached Italian shores this year. In December, 542 new arrivals originated from Eritrea. Arrivals from Somalia decreased by 41% this year, compared to last year: in 2015, Somalis were the third most common nationality among sea arrivals, with over 12,000 persons reaching Italian shores during the year. In 2016, 7,281 Somalis arrived. The number of Syrian nationals arriving by sea also decreased in 2016: 1,200 reached Italian shores in 2016, accounting for 0.6% of the total. On the other hand, arrivals of nationals from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, The Gambia, Senegal and Mali increased considerably compared to 2015. According to 3Q 2016 Eurostat data, around 45% 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.

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



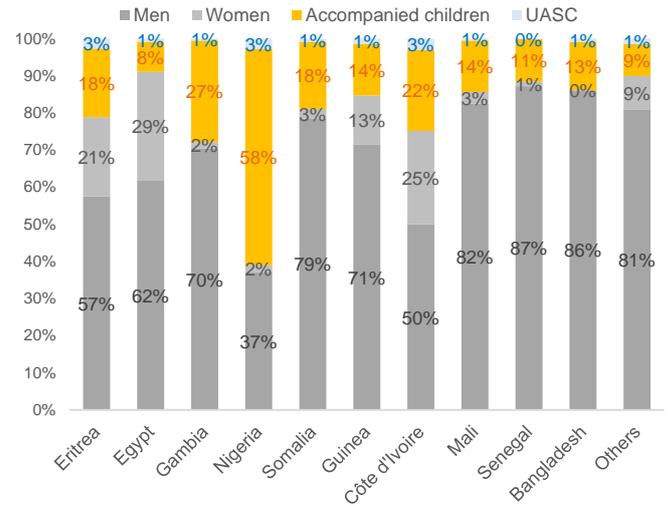
The vast **majority of sea arrivals continue to leave from Libya** (approximately 90%). New arrivals report instances of abuse, including kidnapping and torture, which had occurred en-route through the Sahara desert and in Libya. Only 5.9% of individuals arriving to Italy by sea in 2016 had departed instead from Egypt, despite new arrivals reporting that this route is considered safer. Less arrivals were registered of boats departing from Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia and Greece.

Consistent with the above trend, Libya remained the main country of departure in December, with Sabratha being the most common departure point. 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.

During the month, there was a slight increase of autonomous arrivals on the coasts of Sardinia and western Sicily: most persons reaching shore autonomously in these areas originated from Algeria and Tunisia. Furthermore, two autonomous sea arrivals involving mainly Afghani and Pakistani nationals who had departed from Turkey occurred in December. Finally, two groups of Iraqi and Syrian nationals were intercepted by the authorities at the Trieste port, in northern Italy: both groups had travelled hiding inside containers, on board of cargo ships departed from Turkey.

Numerous tragedies at sea occurred throughout the year. In 2016, 5,096 lives have been lost at sea since the beginning of the year, with the total of dead or missing persons having significantly surpassed the total of 2015 (3,771). Numerous tragedies at sea occurred also in December, with over 177 persons reported dead or missing during the month. The higher death toll in the Mediterranean is likely due to increasing recourse to unseaworthy dinghies which are being loaded with higher numbers of people. Many persons also drowned after the boat they were travelling on embarked water and/or capsized as a consequence of faults or difficult sea conditions. Many died also as a result of fuel burns or asphyxiation.

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

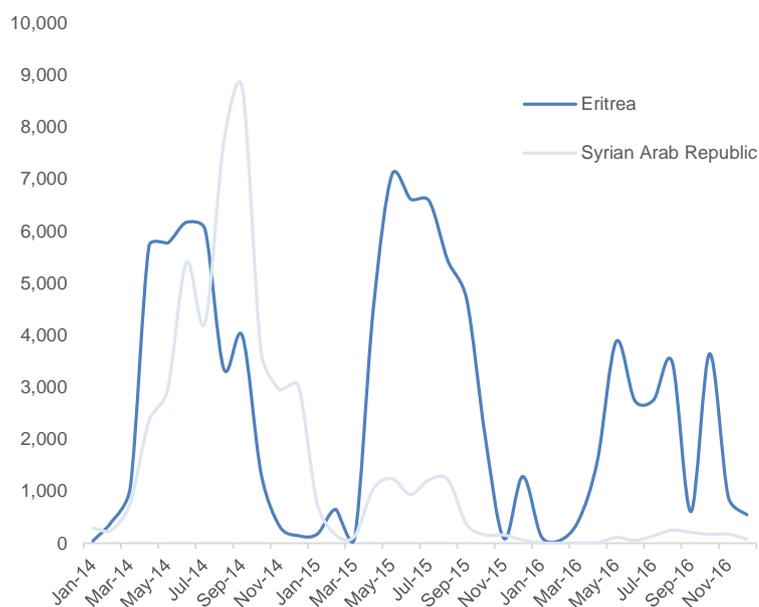


Like in previous years, men continue to represent the vast majority (71%) among sea arrivals, while adult women account for 13% of the total. Accompanied children only represent 1.3% of the total. The decrease in the proportion of adult men (from 75% in 2015 to 71% in 2016) and accompanied children (from 2.7% to 1.3%) is offset by the increasing arrivals of UASC. Unaccompanied children represent 14% of all sea arrivals registered since the beginning of this year, compared to 7% in 2015. In the whole of 2016, 25,846 UASC arrived to Italy by sea, compared to 12,360 registered at landing points in 2016. This corresponds to a 109% increase compared to last year.

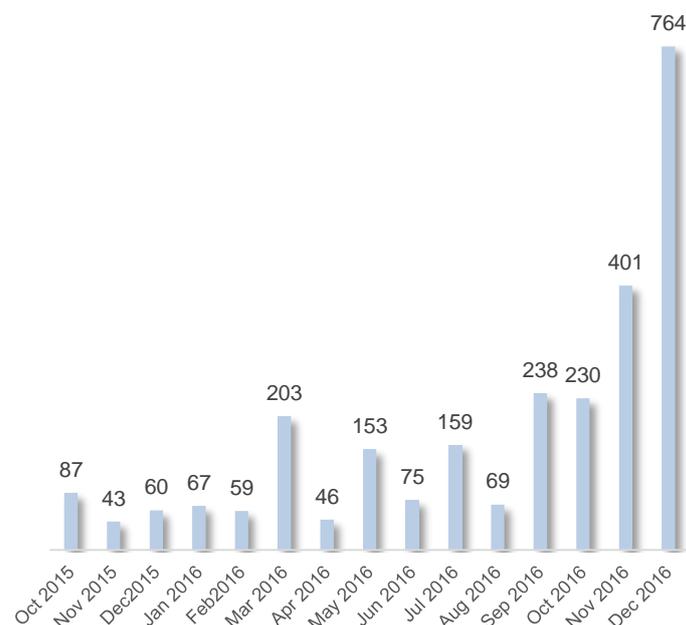
Gender and age profiles vary significantly among different national groups. Significantly more women have arrived this year from Nigeria, Somalia, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Eritrea (29%, 25%, 25%, 24% and 21% of arrivals from each country respectively). The number of Nigerian women reaching Italian shores in 2016 (11,009) almost doubled, compared to numbers registered in 2015 (5,633). Women account for only 13% of Ivoirian 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. The total number of Eritrean UASC arrived in 2016 (3,832) is comparable to last year (3,092), but they now account for 18% of all Eritrean sea arrivals, up from last year's 8%.

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.

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



**Figure 6. Persons relocated in Italy under the EU relocation scheme**  
| October 2015 – December 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. Out of the six hotspots originally foreseen in the Road Map developed by the Italian Ministry of Interior, four (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani) are currently operational, with a total capacity of approximately 1,600 places. Further hotspots are planned and may be operational in the future.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Road Map, three official regional hubs (Bari, Crotone and Villa Sikanìa) have been set up and host relocation candidates, with a total official capacity of over 2,200 places. Other facilities also host relocation candidates. 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 and they are being implemented as a pilot document. UNHCR monitors the implementation of the SOPs and is suggesting required amendments.

In close cooperation with EASO, UNHCR provides potential relocation candidates with counselling service and information. Throughout the year, citizens of Syria and Eritrea have been eligible for relocation. Furthermore, citizens of the Central African Republic (CAR) were eligible for relocation until 30 September, but did not subsequently 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. Nationals of Yemen and Burundi were eligible for relocation until end March 2016 and 8 July 2016, respectively; both groups were again eligible candidates after 30 September 2016, following publication of 2Q Eurostat data.

During the month of December, 764 asylum-seekers were relocated to Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. Between the adoption of the September 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation and the end of November 2016, a total of 2,654 persons were relocated from Italy: although December has recorded the highest number of monthly relocations so far, this is still only 6.7% of the 39,600 target to be met by the end of September 2017. Since the adoption of the relocation scheme, Italy received some 5,839 pledges from participating European countries<sup>4</sup>, while almost 27,000 potential candidates reached Italian shores during the same period.

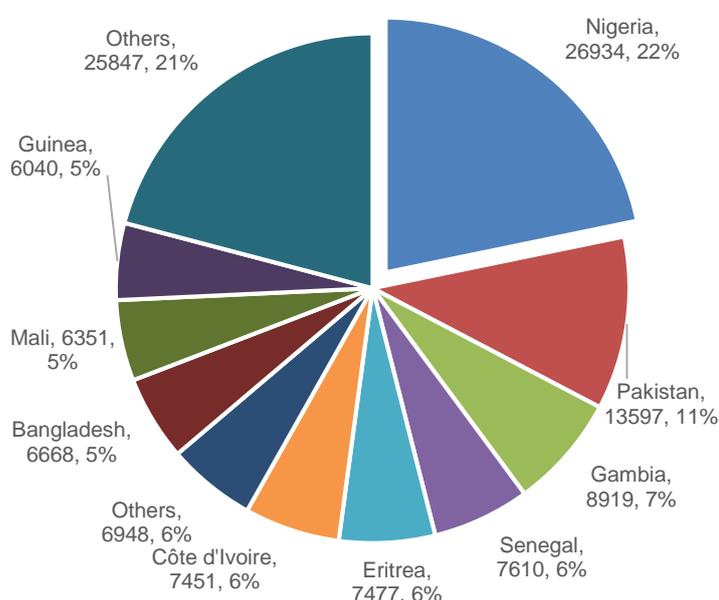
<sup>3</sup> For further information, please refer to EASO, *EASO Operating Plan in Italy*, 21 December 2016, available at <https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20161214%20EASO%20OP%20Italy.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Latest European Commission data: 6 December 2016.

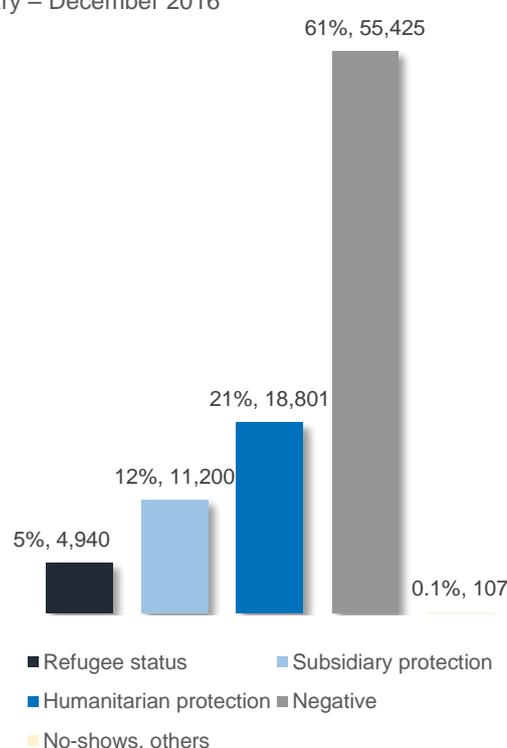
UNHCR is calling on States to increase pledges, including for unaccompanied and separated children, speed up the registration and transfers of candidates, and for more nationalities fleeing war and persecution to have access to the scheme. In 2016, UNHCR liaised with the Ministry of Interior to enhance 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 – December 2016<sup>3</sup>



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



The increasing number of people staying in Italy compared to previous years has impacted on both the asylum and the reception systems. In 2016, 123,842 persons lodged an asylum application in Italy. This is a considerable increase compared to previous years: in 2015, a total of 83,970 asylum claims were submitted, while in 2014 63,456 applications were lodged. Asylum seekers' most common countries of origin are Nigeria, Pakistan, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Eritrea, Mali, Bangladesh.

In 2016, over 90,000 claims were determined by Territorial Commissions across the national territory: 5% of asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees, while 12% were granted subsidiary protection and 21% were given humanitarian protection.

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, continued in 2016. A Code of Conduct for staff working in the RSD procedure and guidelines for the referral of victims of trafficking were jointly drafted by UNHCR and the National Commission for the Right of Asylum. The UNHCR quality monitoring team has also prepared recommendations to improve the asylum system and ensure enhanced quality. 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.

Figure 9. Trends in reception | 2013 – 31 December 2016

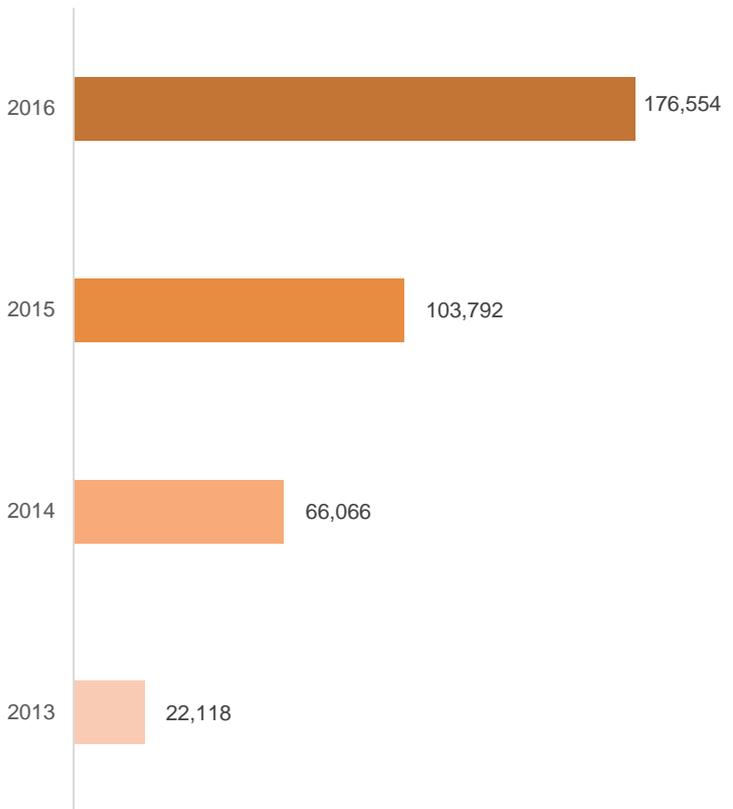
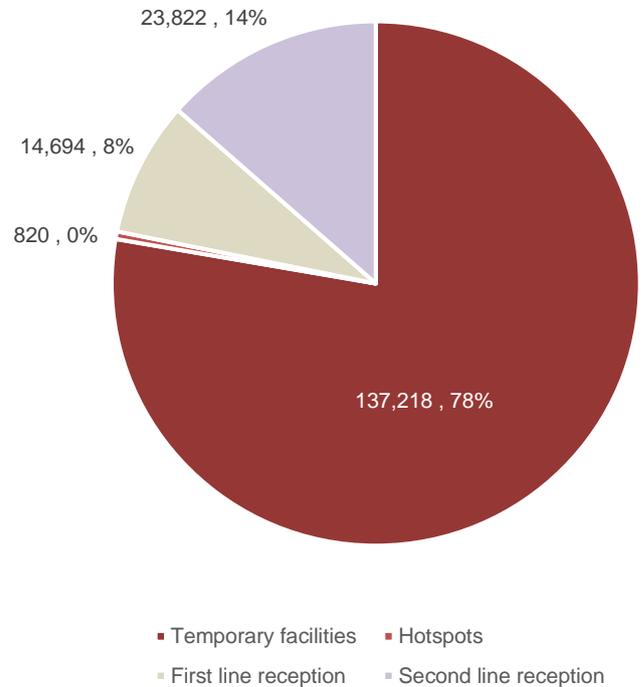


Figure 10. People accommodated in Italy by type of facility on 31 December 2016



On 31 December 2016, 176,554 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 temporary reception centres. On 31 December 2016, 137,218 persons (78% of the total) were accommodated in temporary facilities, while 14,694 (8%) were in first line reception centres. Furthermore, 23,822 persons (13%) were in second line reception facilities. Finally, 820 persons (0.5%) were in the four operational hotspots<sup>5</sup>. In close cooperation with Italian authorities, UNHCR teams regularly carry out visits to temporary reception centres in Italy, monitoring reception conditions and advocating for their compliance with national and EU standards.

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

<sup>5</sup> These figures reflect the situation on 31 December 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.