

# Greece

There was a significant increase of arrivals this month when **1,480 people arrived at the Evros land border, and 2,440 in the Aegean islands.** The increase surpassed the border

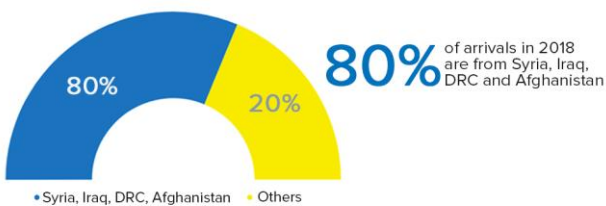
centers' capacity to accommodate new arrivals, leading to overcrowding, poor conditions and increased protection risks. As State-run sites and UNHCR apartments through municipalities

and NGOs are at full capacity, the Government is working to increase accommodation places and support. This includes temporarily re-opening formerly closed sites.

**51,000** refugees and migrants in Greece<sup>1</sup>

**39,500** in the mainland

**11,500** on the islands



<sup>1</sup> UNHCR estimates as of 31 March 2018 of those who arrived and remained since the 2015 – 2016 mass flow

**41,800**

eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR in March 2018. **64,332** people have received cash assistance at least once since the programme started in April 2017.

**22,400**

people benefited from urban accommodation this month, while **44,800** people have benefited so far since the start of the programme in November 2015.

**620**

people were transferred this month from the islands to the mainland with UNHCR's support, while **24,600** people have so far been transferred since June 2016.

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

408 National Staff

55 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

3 Mainland Offices in Attika, Thessaloniki, Ioannina

6 Island Offices in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, and Rhodes



A refugee child in the Reception and Identification Centre of Vathy, Samos.

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## Working with Partners

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

## Main Activities

### Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can 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, 41,803 people received cash assistance from UNHCR.
- By the end of March UNHCR had created 22,382 places to house asylum-seekers in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation provides people with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services and education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece. Additionally, the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 44,819 people have benefited from UNHCR's accommodation in Greece since November 2015.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities in several Municipalities 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 Aegean islands, UNHCR continued to support the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) transfer authorized asylum-seekers to State-run sites or urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete to pursue their asylum applications.
- This month UNHCR supported the MoMP transfer 622 asylum-seekers from Lesbos (321), Samos (152), Chios (111), Kos (33) and Leros (5). A total of 24,559 people have been assisted with transfers from the islands to the mainland since June 2016.
- UNHCR continued to provide legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. By March 2018, the Greek Council for Refugees, Ecumenical Refugee Program and METAdrasi had provided legal assistance in the form of counselling and representation to nearly 3,600 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in sites, urban areas as well as in detention. The legal aid covers asylum procedures, family reunification, child protection, protection of SGBV survivors, other relevant administrative procedures and access to rights.
- METAdrasi and GCR provide legal assistance at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure in the framework of UNHCR's Memorandum of Cooperation with the MoMP. Over 5,840 appellants benefited from free legal assistance at second instance between

15 July 2016 and March 2018, of whom 3,600 in 2017 and 270 in 2018. UNHCR supports the Asylum Service by helping upon request caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. This month UNHCR assisted in over 1,000 instances.

### Child Protection

- The 3,010 unaccompanied children in Greece exceed the number of available places in shelters which stand at 1,102 (Source: National Centre of Social Solidarity (EKKA), 31 March 2018). As a result, children risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody in police stations.
- In response, UNHCR and partners are working with the authorities to develop diverse alternative care arrangements. This includes family-based foster care for younger children, and Supported Independent Living (SIL) for older adolescents where they will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- UNHCR also facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme. This helps free much needed space in shelters and also ensures support to the young adults during this transitional period which is often challenging and represents particular risks and concerns.
- UNHCR provides advice and technical support to the Government and expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children to shelters. It also coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to monitor and develop Standard Operating Procedures to ensure minimum standards for child protection.
- Additionally, UNHCR supports the MoMP, the General Secretariat for the Welfare of Asylum-seekers, the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, and the General Secretariat for Welfare through the (EKKA) on the transfer of eligible unaccompanied children from Greece to the UK within the framework of the 'Dubs Scheme'. So far, 14 children have departed in the framework of the Scheme and seven more are expected to depart shortly.
- UNHCR facilitated through partner METAdrasi the transfer of 320 unaccompanied children from the islands' RICs and detention centres to the mainland since January.
- UNHCR supports the identification of children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors.
- Finally, UNHCR coordinates and works with partners to enhance the protection of children at risk in the island RICs through legal aid, psychosocial support and case management as well as through child and youth-friendly spaces.

### Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands translate into poor shelter allocation. This leads to a lack of privacy and compromises safe access to WASH facilities, thus heightening the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- UNHCR refers women at risk or survivors of violence to State services and shelters where available, or urban accommodation. However, the lack of interpretation in State services limits refugees' access to them.

- UNHCR and partners have developed standard operating procedures for SGBV-prevention and response and referral pathways for different locations hosting refugees so that survivors receive the support they need.
- On the islands UNHCR works by identifying survivors and people at risk, offering legal information and counselling and referring them to appropriate services also through partners MdM and GCR. Limited services in some of the RICs however means that timely access to them is not always possible. [UNHCR called](#) for further measures to mitigate the risk of SGBV on the islands and to improve response.
- In the mainland, UNHCR works through national NGOs, the DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, GCR and Arsis to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens and Thessaloniki.
- UNHCR also raises awareness and conducts trainings for national and non-Governmental actors.

### Education

- Refugee and asylum-seeking children in urban accommodation can attend regular school classes together with Greek nationals. Additionally, special reception classes in primary and secondary education called Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP) facilitate their learning Greek as foreign language.
- Children in sites mostly attend afternoon classes that aim to facilitate their entry in the public school system.
- UNHCR supports non-formal education on the islands, where formal education is not yet available for most children.
- UNHCR's sensitization activities for the local society contribute to a safe school environment.

### Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare, working closely with the Ministry of Health, KEELPNO and other partners. A particular problem are the limited public mental health institutions in Greece. To that end, UNHCR works with partners to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR began collaborating with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY, on a pilot project in Athens. The project will provide long-term support to 30 people in accommodation and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care. It also includes the mapping of mental health services and development of referral pathways for refugees and asylum-seekers with serious conditions, as well as the capacity building of relevant State authorities and NGOs.
- UNHCR funds primary and psychosocial support services in Lesvos and Chios, and mental health services in Attika where psychiatrists and psychologists provide services at the polyclinic of the municipality of Athens.

### 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. In

2017, 10,364 people received refugee status or subsidiary protection, which is 20 per cent more people than in the entire period between June 2013 and December 2016 (8,732). By the end of March 2018, 2,900 people received international protection.

- The increased number of recognized refugees translates into a pressing need to support their 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, on a case-by-case basis. In March 2018, some 3,274 beneficiaries of international protection were provided accommodation in apartments through UNHCR's Scheme, and 6,100 received cash assistance.

### Relocation and Returns

- This month, the final candidates of the relocation programme which concluded in September 2017 departed from Greece to other EU Member States. In total, 21,999 people departed from Greece.
- This month, 29 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,583 people have been returned to Turkey.

### Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation. UNHCR ensures this does not hinder people's access to the Asylum Service or other services and provided transportation to some 4,700 people around Greece in March.

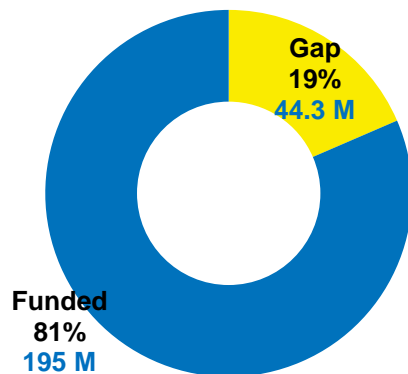
### Partners

In March, UNHCR worked through 33 partners: on Accommodation with ARSIS, Iliaktida, Intersos, NOSTOS, Praksis, Solidarity Now, Catholic Relief Services and the Local Authorities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa and Tripoli; on Cash Assistance with Catholic Relief Services, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Mercy Corps; on Legal Aid with the Ecumenical Refugee Program, METAdrasi and the Greek Council for Refugees; on Child Protection with ARSIS, METAdrasi, Network for Children's Rights, and Praksis; on PwSN with ARSIS, Doctors of the World, the National Confederation of Disabled People and the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY); on Prevention and Response to SGBV with Diotima; on Peaceful Coexistence and Integration with Solidarity Now, ARSIS, Faros, the Greek Council for Refugees, Intersos, and KEAN; on Site Management Support (SMS) with the International Rescue Committee; on Interpretation Services and Messaging with METAdrasi; on Awareness Raising with the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet); on Capacity Building with the Reception and Identification Service; and on the Deployment of Affiliate Workforce with UNOPS and the International Catholic Migration Commission.

FUNDING (AS OF 10 APRIL 2018)

**USD 239.3 M**

requested for the Greece operation



## Donors

### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds

United States of America (124 M) | Sweden (98 M) | Norway (43 M) | Netherlands (39 M) | United Kingdom (32 M) | Denmark (25 M) | Private donors of Spain (19 M) | Australia (19 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Italy (11 M)

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European Union (195 M)

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