

Greece

This month land arrivals surpassed sea arrivals for the first time since 2013 when **3,600 people arrived in Evros**, and **3,000 by sea**. The increased arrivals in 2018 exceeded the

capacity of State-run sites and apartments to accommodate them. In response the authorities reactivated sites that had previously closed and plan to increase capacity further. Arrivals

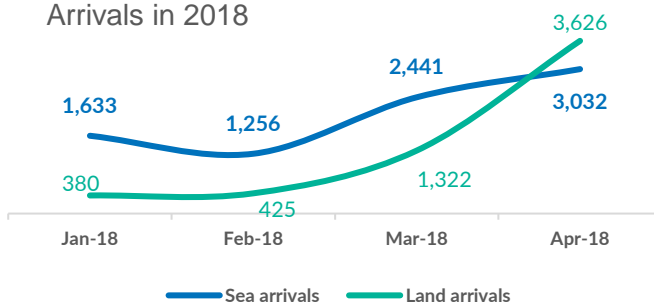
in Evros overwhelmed the reception and identification centre in the area. [UNHCR proposed response measures](#) to the authorities, and delivered **35,000 relief items**.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

54,700

13,600 on the islands and **41,100** in the mainland

Arrivals in 2018



*UNHCR estimate as of 30 April 2018 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

44,800

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 68,100 since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

1,600

people this month, and 26,200 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

21,000

people this month, and 47,300 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

398 National Staff

54 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



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Laila Saleh, a 111-year-old Syrian great-grandmother from Kobani became the oldest recognized refugee in Greece in April.

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

- This month, 44,753 people received [cash assistance](#) from UNHCR. 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.
- By the end of April UNHCR had created 24,487 places to house asylum-seekers in [rented accommodation](#), which 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 while the host population also benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 47,297 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

- UNHCR supports the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) **transfer** authorized asylum-seekers from the islands to the mainland to continue their asylum applications. This helps alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the Aegean islands. This month over 1,600 asylum-seekers were transferred from Lesbos (1,160), Chios (212), Samos (178), Leros (37) and Kos (24).
- UNHCR provides **legal aid** to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection through its partners Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Ecumenical Refugee Program (ERP) and METAdrasi. Over 3,600 people have been assisted so far in 2018.
- METAdrasi and GCR also provide legal aid at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure in the framework of UNHCR's Memorandum of Cooperation with the MoMP, with 270 people assisted so far 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 supported in over 1,200 instances.
- UNHCR provides information to refugees and asylum-seekers in Greece through the [HELP website](#) on [applying for asylum](#), on [rights and obligations](#) as well as on how to access services when [living in Greece](#).

Child Protection

- The 3,150 unaccompanied children in Greece exceed the 1,101 places in shelters (Source: National Centre of Social Solidarity (EKKA), 30 April 2018). As a result, children risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody in police stations.
- UNHCR helps identify children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors.
- 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 works together with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to develop procedures that ensure that at least the minimum standards for child protection are in place.
- UNHCR and partners are working with the authorities to diversify alternative care arrangements. This includes family-based foster care for younger children, and **Supported Independent Living (SIL)** for adolescents over 16 years old, now in its pilot phase in Crete. Children in SIL are 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.
- 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, 15 children have departed with seven more expected to depart shortly.
- UNHCR facilitated through partner METAdrasi the transfer of 329 unaccompanied children from the islands' RICs and detention centres to the mainland since January.
- 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

- Poor shelter allocation and a lack of privacy as a result of overcrowding in island reception centres and some mainland sites compromise safe access to WASH facilities. This increases the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- UNHCR and partners have developed standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual violence. They have also developed referral pathways that direct survivors to the support they need.
- On the islands UNHCR identifies survivors and people at risk, offers legal information and counselling and refers them to appropriate services also through partners Médecins du Monde (MdM) and GCR. However, the limited services in some of the RICs mean that survivors cannot always access them on time.
- In the mainland, UNHCR works to prevent and respond to sexual violence through national NGOs, the DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, GCR and Arsis in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens and Thessaloniki.

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 learning Greek as a 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.

Health

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Health, KEELPNO and other partners to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare.
- The limited public mental health institutions in Greece are a particular problem and UNHCR with partners work to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR collaborates with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY on a pilot project to provide long-term support to 30 people in accommodation and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care.
- 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 have translated into an accelerated pace for the granting of international protection to those in need. In 2017, 10,364 people received refugee status or subsidiary protection, 20 per cent more people than 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.
- To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and 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 April 2018, 3,536 beneficiaries of international protection were accommodated in apartments of UNHCR's Scheme, and 6,973 received cash assistance.

Relocation and Returns

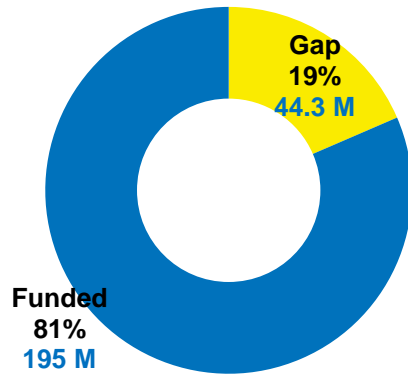
- Relocation concluded in September 2017 with 22,000 people having departed from Greece to other EU Member States.
- This month, 18 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,601 people have been [returned](#) to Turkey.

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 April.

Partners

In April, UNHCR worked through 34 partners: on Accommodation with ARSIS, Iliaktida, Intersos, NOSTOS, Praxis, Solidarity Now, Catholic Relief Services, Terre des Hommes, 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 Praxis; 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 8 MAY 2018)**USD 239.3 M** requested for the Greece operation**Donors****Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds**

Sweden 98.2 M | Norway 42.5 M | Netherlands 39.1 M | United Kingdom 31.7 M | Denmark 25.5 M | Private donors Spain 19 M | Australia 18.9 M | Switzerland 15.2 M | Italy 11.2 M

Thanks to the major donors of regional /sub-regional funds

United States of America 28.7 M | Private donors Spain 7.2 M | Private donors Australia 3.8 M | European Union | Italy | Norway | Sweden | Private donors

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (195 M)

CONTACTS

Eleni Biza, Associate Reporting Officer, Greece,
BIZA@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 216 200 7809, Cell +30 695 558 5567

Michail Agorastakis, Information Management Associate, Greece,
AGORASTA@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 216 200 7946, Cell +30 695 1941546

LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation - UNHCR Greece - Twitter - Facebook – Britain's Prince Charles and Duchess of Cornwall meet refugees on Crete \(Video\)](#)