

Europe



Shadi shops at a supermarket in Geneva, Switzerland. Alongside a group of fellow Syrian refugee volunteers, he hand delivers food and supplies to vulnerable people who are shielding from the coronavirus.

© UNHCR/Elisabet Diaz Sanmartin

WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Ensuring access to territory, asylum procedures and adequate reception

The European Commission's "Pact on asylum and migration", presented in September 2020, offers an opportunity to establish a common and principled approach to asylum and migration in Europe. Ensuring access to territory and asylum procedures will remain central tenets of UNHCR's work. The Office will notably continue to advocate safe access to territory for arrivals at sea through a predictable regional disembarkation mechanism; support the implementation

of fair and efficient asylum procedures; and offer information and guidance to an estimated 108,000 asylum-seekers through various digital tools and outreach activities. UNHCR will also provide technical expertise, capacity-building and quality support to national asylum authorities. Focus will be placed on adequate and safe reception capacity and conditions, including for persons with specific needs and health risks. UNHCR will support national authorities in the early identification of people at heightened risk to ensure reception and access to asylum procedures, as relevant.

.../...

Consequences of COVID-19 on planning, preparedness and response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR adjusted to ensure business continuity across the region. This included advising and supporting government counterparts and partners, for example, through its compilation of practical recommendations and good practices on continuation of access to territory, registration and documentation, safe reception and asylum procedures. UNHCR also reprioritized programmes to support national public health responses and social protection through targeted cash assistance based on needs.

Given the continued prevalence of COVID-19, UNHCR's planning for 2021 focuses on continuity in provision of protection and assistance, building on good practices from 2020. While many countries in Europe have strong capacities and inclusion policies to address the needs of people of concern, there are subregions where gaps persist. The Office will support national authorities to establish and implement preparedness and response plans, ensure access to territory, strengthen fair and effective asylum procedures, and enhance reception capacity. Where needed, UNHCR will also support strengthening of public health measures, including water and sanitation and quarantine and isolation areas, while continuing outreach and communication with communities.

Working closely with partners and local civil society, UNHCR will advocate the inclusion of people of concern in national COVID-19 preparedness and response plans—including as health workers in support of the national response—and assist governments and municipal actors in ensuring access to public health and protection-related information via linguistically- and culturally-appropriate means.

MAJOR SITUATIONS AND OPERATIONS IN EUROPE IN 2021



UKRAINE

Over 2.4 million internally displaced and conflict-affected people will face protection challenges in Ukraine in 2021, with many needing to regularly cross the contact line for family reasons, or to access services such as pensions. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted such movements, limited access by humanitarian convoys, and increased pressure on health infrastructure in non-government-controlled areas. UNHCR will continue protection and shelter in support of IDPs and conflict-affected individuals, with a focus on those residing in non-government-controlled areas and around the contact line, along with efforts to prevent statelessness and support fair and efficient asylum procedures. UNHCR will work with local authorities and strengthen partnerships with development actors, while providing assistance to vulnerable families and individuals with heightened protection risks.

5,150
REFUGEES IN UKRAINE
720,000
IDPs
1.7 million
OTHERS OF CONCERN



MEDITERRANEAN AND CANARY ISLANDS ROUTES

Between January and July 2020, almost 39,000 individuals arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands, a 20% decrease compared to the same period in 2019 due in part to COVID-19 restrictions. In the same period, an estimated 430 people died or went missing at sea, while there were credible reports of pushbacks, delayed rescues, and ships being refused permission to dock for extensive periods. In 2021, UNHCR will advocate a comprehensive and predictable response to mixed movements across the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands, including a predictable regional disembarkation mechanism, and support States in enhancing reception capacity and conditions, strengthening asylum procedures, and ensuring effective return procedures for those found not to be in need of international protection.

349,000
REFUGEES
(ITALY, MALTA AND SPAIN)



TURKEY

As of mid-2020, Turkey hosted close to 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers, including 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to an already difficult situation for refugees and their hosts, increased pressure on public services, and challenged social cohesion. In 2021, UNHCR will continue to support Turkey in the implementation of its comprehensive legal framework. UNHCR will support access to fair and efficient national protection processes, with its work with Turkish authorities on continuous registration remaining a priority. UNHCR will strengthen protection for refugees with specific needs, with a focus on children and women at risk, and promote durable solutions and self-reliance while increasing its engagement with local and national authorities to promote social cohesion.

4 million
REFUGEES IN TURKEY



GREECE

As of mid-2020, Greece hosted some 121,000 asylum-seekers. Despite welcome transfers from the heavily overcrowded reception and identification centres on the Aegean islands to the mainland, the COVID-19 pandemic is compounding health risks. In 2021, UNHCR will advocate the further decongestion of centres while working with national authorities to establish screening, isolation and quarantine procedures and facilities. Protection services will continue to be supported nationwide—including legal aid, capacity-building for asylum authorities and child protection activities. UNHCR will continue to work with the Government to transition responsibility for the cash (ESTIA) programme, while furthering integration initiatives targeting recognized refugees.

170,000
REFUGEES IN GREECE
3,000
OTHERS OF CONCERN



SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

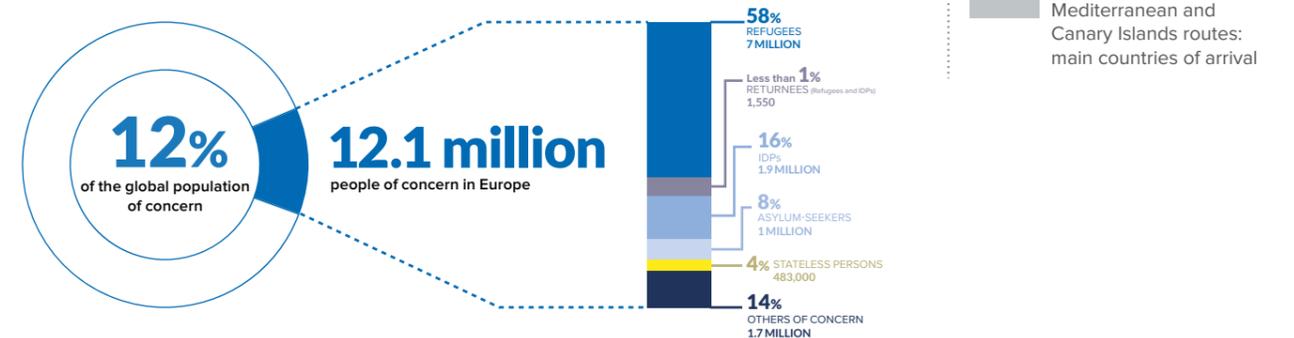
South-East Europe has seen a significant increase in mixed movements, including individuals with international protection needs who have often transited through other countries with the aim of reaching western or northern European Union countries. As EU Member States have strengthened their border control mechanisms, an increasing number have remained in South-East Europe. UNHCR will support improved protection and response capacity in the subregion, with an emphasis on access to territory and asylum procedures, registration and asylum system development. Through partnerships, UNHCR will also support the inclusion of refugees in national systems, as well as effective return procedures for those found not to be in need of international protection. UNHCR will assist the estimated 5,960 persons at risk of statelessness in the region, addressing documentation and data challenges.

25,000
REFUGEES (MAINLY IN SERBIA AND KOSOVO (S/RES/1244 (1999))
222,000
IDPs IN THE SUBREGION
125,000
PEOPLE ASSISTED AS PART OF MIXED MOVEMENTS

In the wake of COVID-19, States have harnessed new technologies and other innovations to maintain access to asylum while safeguarding public health. Cities and towns have taken concrete actions to ensure inclusion while, across Europe, refugees and asylum-seekers have stood in solidarity with their hosts, contributing their skills and ingenuity to collective, community public health responses. As Europe renews its dialogue on the future management of migration, asylum, solidarity, integration and inclusion, UNHCR will continue to work with States to ensure respect for core protection principles, identify pragmatic solutions, and address issues of ongoing concern, including access to territory, rescue at sea, detention and reception conditions.



2021 PLANNING FIGURES FOR PEOPLE OF CONCERN in Europe



.../...

Building and maintaining effective community-based protection

UNHCR will prioritize efforts to strengthen two-way communication and engagement with communities, and to facilitate the participation of people of concern in decision-making and policy fora. Engagement with outreach volunteers, networks and refugee-led organizations will be strengthened based on a starter kit, developed through a joint UNV-UNHCR partnership, and other promising practices in the region. Capacity-building initiatives to strengthen community-based protection, particularly child protection and the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, will target governments and partners. Facilitating access to national services, specifically for persons at heightened risk, and inclusion of people of concern in government plans will remain key, particularly in the field of education given large numbers of children of concern are reportedly out of school.

Securing solutions for refugees and internally displaced people

UNHCR will strengthen linkages between refugees and asylum-seekers and key actors working towards their integration. The COVID-19 pandemic allowed refugees to demonstrate solidarity with host communities and as the public health emergency deepened, several States publicly invited refugee health practitioners to join the response. UNHCR will continue capitalizing on these good practices in 2021.

Europe's commitment to resettlement will remain essential, with some 420,000 people of concern, mostly in Turkey, remaining in need of resettlement in the region in 2021. Given that resettlement needs will far exceed available places, resettlement will continue to be prioritized for those most at risk, serving as an important demonstration of international responsibility-sharing.

The Office will also advocate a reduction in barriers to family reunification and the development of other complementary pathways for admission, building on State-led initiatives set up in response to the Syria crisis. This includes expanding community-based private sponsorship programmes, student scholarship schemes, labour migration schemes and humanitarian visas, with a view to providing alternatives to perilous irregular journeys.

UNHCR will prioritize IDP's access to national services and enhance the capacity of authorities, notably through its coordination of the protection cluster and provision of legal assistance. In Ukraine, UNHCR will prioritize the repair of homes damaged by the conflict in non-government-controlled areas; while also deploying targeted advocacy and assistance to support residents in these areas to exercise their rights to pensions, documentation and birth registration. UNHCR will monitor the protection situation at contact line check points and assist in improving conditions there. UNHCR will advocate solutions for IDPs and support them to organize community groups and engage effectively with local authorities.

Preventing, addressing and resolving statelessness

Improving the identification and protection of stateless persons in Europe will continue to be a priority for UNHCR, including by supporting dedicated determination procedures and advocating access to naturalization. UNHCR will particularly advocate measures to prevent and reduce childhood statelessness, including by closing gaps in nationality laws and improving access to civil registration and documentation. UNHCR will continue capacity-building for decision-makers and officials and increase outreach to affected communities, in collaboration with partners.

The Office will also engage with regional actors such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. Building on the 2015 Council conclusions on statelessness, UNHCR will advocate the European Union's enhanced involvement in addressing statelessness, including through the European Migration Network's Platform on Statelessness. The Office will support States and other stakeholders to meet their commitments from the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and the Global Refugee Forum, including accession to the statelessness conventions (Belarus and Iceland) and establishing or improving determination procedures (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Montenegro, Portugal and Spain). It will also pursue progress in addressing statelessness in countries that have not made any formal pledges.

Strengthening evidence-based external engagement

Addressing negative rhetoric and narratives about refugees, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, will remain a key priority—particularly with discussions on the “Pact on migration and asylum” likely to place refugee and migrant issues high on policy and political agendas across Europe in 2021. Drawing on strengthened capacity in data management and analysis, the Office will develop evidence-based advocacy to address misperceptions about people of concern. Partnerships will also be strengthened to ensure joint and complementary advocacy efforts and mobilize resources.

UNHCR will advocate the inclusion of people of concern in relevant national laws and policies, as well as the application of international protection standards by partners, including the European Union and its agencies (EASO, FRONTEX), the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. As a co-chair of the Issue-based coalition on large movements of people, displacement and resilience for the Europe and Central Asia region, UNHCR will work with Resident Coordinators and UN country teams to ensure the specific needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants and stateless persons are taken into account when incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into national policies and frameworks across Europe.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

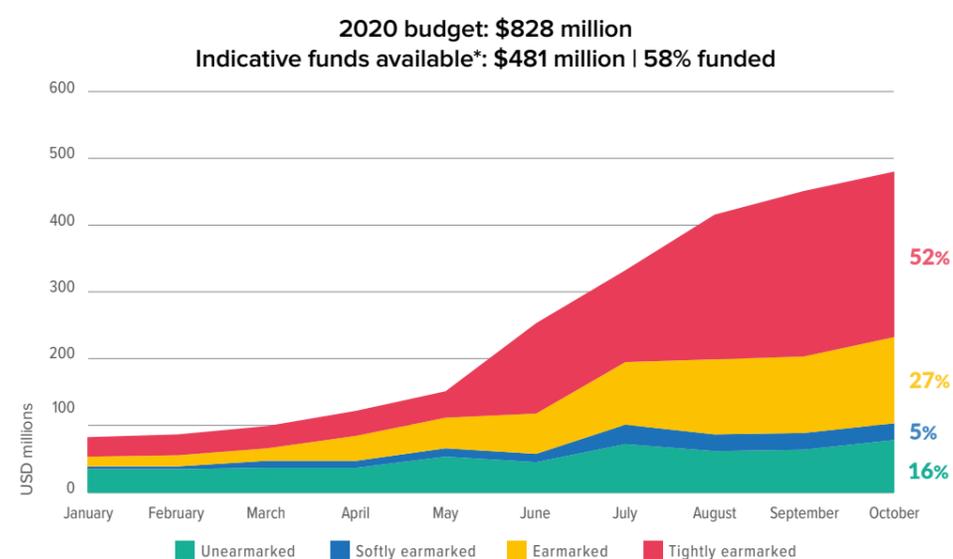
Implications of underfunding

Additional funds were needed in 2020 to urgently support COVID-19 preparedness and response activities and to meet the unforeseen additional needs of some 11.4 million people of concern the Office had anticipated would require assistance. UNHCR demonstrated flexibility and reallocated available funds to implement critical activities in the region, impacting its ability to carry its regular programmes. Against this background, if insufficient funding continues into 2021, UNHCR will not be able to deliver on several key priorities. Flexible funding will be crucial to allow the Office to adapt to what will remain an uncertain environment.

A strict prioritization exercise has been conducted to identify the main areas of focus in Europe during the first half of 2021. This will include enhancing life-saving support for people of concern; supporting the inclusion of people of concern in national COVID-19 responses; strengthening community-based protection, child protection and support to survivors of gender-based violence; and working with States to enhance asylum infrastructure and reception conditions and foster socioeconomic inclusion. However, a lack of funding for activities in refugee-receiving countries may constrain UNHCR's activities related to local integration, along with capacity-building initiatives to strengthen, and ensure the quality of, national asylum systems in Europe.

2020 EARMARKING AND TIMELINESS OF FUNDING FOR EUROPE

As of 1 October 2020



* Indicative funds available include carry-over from prior years and an indicative allocation of unearmarked and softly earmarked funds based on the prioritized budget.

BUDGETS FOR EUROPE | USD

OPERATION	ALL PILLARS	PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4	TOTAL
	2020 Current budget (as of 30 June 2020)	2021 proposed budget*				
		Refugee programme	Stateless programme	Reintegration projects	IDP projects	
EUROPE						
Regional Bureau for Europe ¹	13,523,535	13,049,253	-	-	-	13,049,253
Regional activities for Europe ¹	11,579,562	11,975,002	240,000	-	-	12,215,002
Other operations in Europe	4,590,785	4,518,394	72,392	-	-	4,590,785
SUBTOTAL	29,693,883	29,542,649	312,392	-	-	29,855,041
EASTERN EUROPE						
Armenia	3,659,360	3,510,799	123,443	-	-	3,634,242
Azerbaijan	4,065,316	2,616,940	95,715	-	970,321	3,682,976
Belarus	1,940,000	1,895,000	45,000	-	-	1,940,000
Georgia	6,089,375	3,149,572	371,413	-	2,611,248	6,132,232
Russian Federation	6,434,620	5,364,223	817,907	-	-	6,182,130
Turkey	369,482,805	315,821,143	5,000	-	-	315,826,143
Ukraine	29,751,676	5,162,710	908,838	-	22,293,624	28,365,173
SUBTOTAL	421,423,153	337,520,387	2,367,316	-	25,875,193	365,762,896
NORTHERN, WESTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE						
Belgium Multi-Country Office ²	12,495,627	12,113,085	391,983	-	-	12,505,068
Cyprus	2,932,064	2,883,066	4,000	-	-	2,887,066
France	3,787,225	3,487,351	226,991	-	-	3,714,342
Germany	2,297,959	2,117,540	38,265	-	-	2,155,805
Greece	275,438,883	214,714,264	75,000	-	-	214,789,264
Hungary Regional Office ³	12,918,111	12,387,893	420,247	236,860	-	13,045,000
Italy Multi-Country Office ⁴	18,176,476	17,987,160	189,316	-	-	18,176,476
Malta	1,319,082	1,314,082	5,000	-	-	1,319,082
Spain Multi-Country Office ⁵	5,588,613	5,557,393	31,220	-	-	5,588,613
Sweden Multi-Country Office ⁶	5,328,745	4,678,745	650,000	-	-	5,328,745
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3,097,328	2,389,773	403,002	-	-	2,792,775
SUBTOTAL	343,380,113	279,630,351	2,435,024	236,860	-	282,302,235
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE						
Albania	3,147,190	3,034,322	184,484	-	-	3,218,806
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10,037,331	9,371,024	614,113	-	-	9,985,137
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	3,468,704	2,695,033	779,388	-	-	3,474,422
Montenegro	2,508,001	1,914,712	197,715	-	-	2,112,427
North Macedonia	4,551,269	3,950,428	321,248	-	-	4,271,677
Serbia	9,383,360	6,222,388	2,137,118	-	-	8,359,506
SUBTOTAL	33,095,854	27,187,907	4,234,067	-	-	31,421,974
TOTAL	827,593,003	673,881,295	9,348,798	236,860	25,875,193	709,342,146

¹ Regional Bureau and regional activities covers the whole Europe region.

² Coordinates activities in Belgium, Ireland, Malta (EASO), the Netherlands, Poland (FRONTEX) and also covers Luxembourg.

³ Coordinates activities in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and also covers the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia and Slovenia.

⁴ Coordinates activities in Italy and also covers the Holy See and San Marino.

⁵ Coordinates activities in Spain and also covers Andorra and Portugal.

⁶ Coordinates activities in Denmark, Lithuania and Sweden and also covers Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia and Norway.

* Note: budget appropriations are those approved by the UNHCR Executive Committee at its 71st session in October 2020. They are based on a budget cut-off date of 15 June 2020. Any subsequent revisions to budgets will be reflected as they are processed. Updated budget information is made available to Member States through regular updates on budgets and funding to the UNHCR Standing Committee. Information on the 2021 budgets will also be updated online on a monthly basis on Global Focus (<https://reporting.unhcr.org>).