



This chapter provides a summary of the general environment in which UNHCR operated in Europe in 2014. It presents the main challenges and constraints that affected the organization's operational response, and also sums up the year's achievements across the region.

Details of the largest operations in the region and its subregions in 2014 are presented on the *Global Focus* website at <http://reporting.unhcr.org>.

A Syrian refugee embraces her younger son in the harbour of Lavrio, Greece.



EUROPE

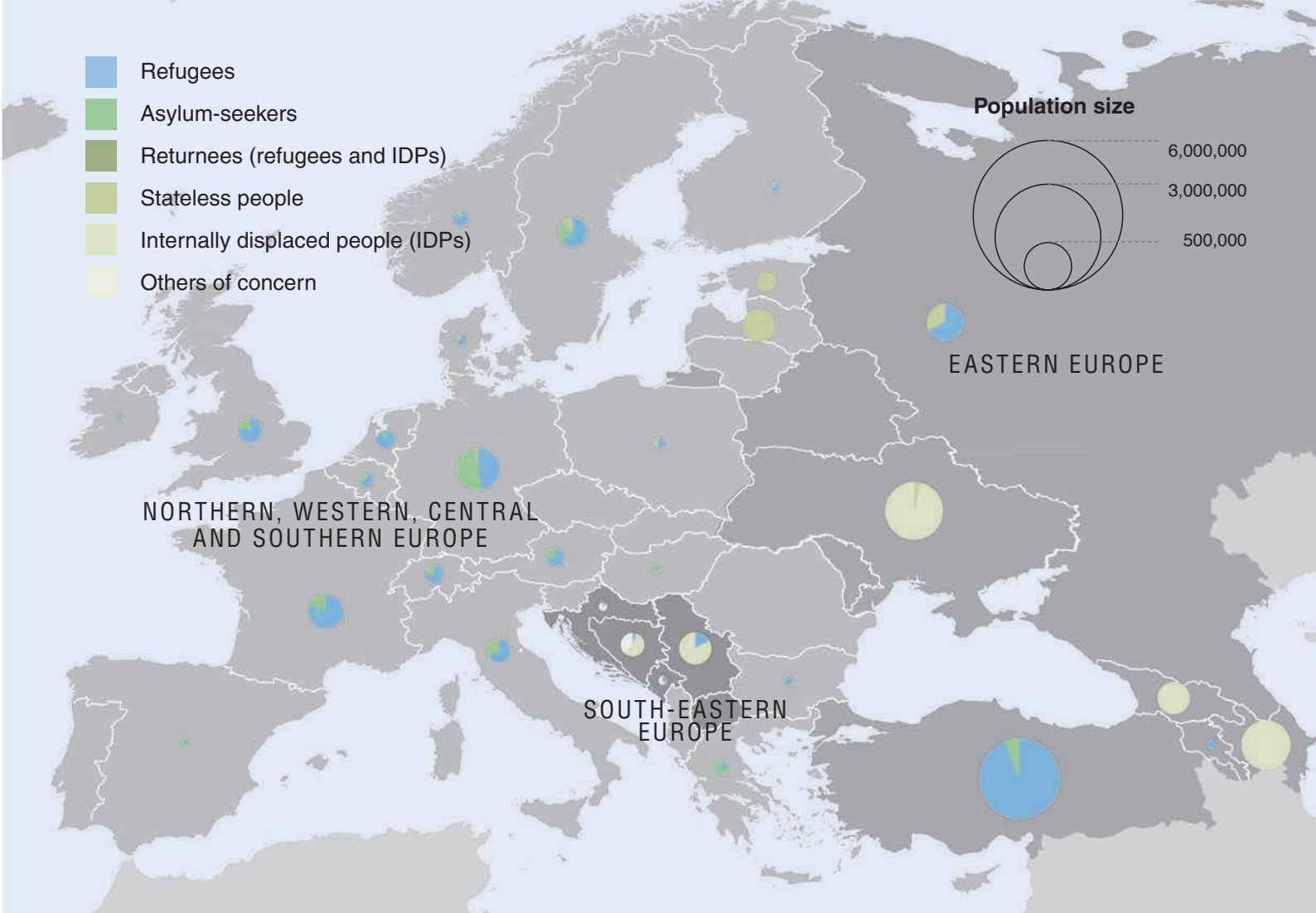
UNHCR / A. DAMATO

| WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

- The number of people of concern to UNHCR in Europe rose significantly in 2014.
- By the end of the year, Turkey had registered more than 1.7 million Syrian refugees and had received around 87,800 non-Syrian asylum-seekers. During 2014, the Russian Federation received more than 235,000 applications for refugee status and temporary asylum, primarily from Ukraine (98.7 per cent), with smaller numbers from Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria).
- The 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) together recorded more than 570,800 asylum claims, a 44 per cent increase from 2013 (396,700). Five countries received almost 70 per cent of all applications – Germany (173,100), Sweden (75,100), Italy (63,100), France (59,000) and Hungary (41,400).
- The largest number of asylum applications (120,600) came from Syrian nationals, who accounted for 22 per cent of all new applications in the European Union. Other top countries of origin included Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)) (54,600), Afghanistan (38,100) and Eritrea (36,300). The number of asylum applications in South-Eastern Europe also rose from 10,000 in 2013 to more than 20,000 last year. The majority of these claims were registered in Serbia.
- During the year, in addition to hosting 1.7 million Syrian refugees (including 229,000 in camps), Turkey also saw the arrival of tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees fleeing increasing violence in Iraq. UNHCR continued to provide policy and technical support to the Government of Turkey, including through advocacy, coordination and capacity-building efforts in areas such as registration, access to territory, documentation, legal counselling and management of urban refugee caseloads.
- In Ukraine, the number of people internally displaced reached 823,000 at the end of 2014. In 2014, the humanitarian situation of people living in non-government-controlled areas worsened due to the conflict, a lack of adequate housing, unemployment, and insufficient access to health services, education and other social assistance. Restrictions on the movement of people and goods across the “front lines” have also significantly affected civilians. Although a new law on internally displaced people (IDPs) was adopted in October 2014, it had not yet been fully implemented, and the registration of IDPs remained a concern.
- In 2014, significant numbers of Ukrainians crossed an international border in search of safety. Of around 342,000 Ukrainians outside the country at the end of 2014, almost 235,000 had sought some form of protection in the Russian Federation, 2,220 in Germany, 2,200 in Poland and some 2,000 in Italy, while others enjoyed alternative forms of legal stay.



- As widely reported in the media, the movement of refugees and migrants across the Mediterranean Sea towards Europe continued to take a terrible toll on human lives. Some 3,500 people died or were reported missing in the Mediterranean in 2014, compared to 600 in 2013. The number of people arriving by sea almost quadrupled, from 60,000 in 2013 to more than 218,000 in 2014, half of whom were from Eritrea and Syria. Most of the 170,100 people who disembarked in Italy were rescued by the Italian



Navy operation *Mare Nostrum*. UNHCR repeatedly expressed concern about the termination of *Mare Nostrum*, in the absence of a similar European search-and-rescue operation to replace it. The organization also recognized the valuable search and rescue efforts carried out by commercial vessels.

- The Office remained concerned about reports of asylum-seekers being forced back or prevented from accessing territory and procedures in some European countries. UNHCR called for these practices to cease immediately, and for reported incidents to be fully investigated. It also called on States of disembarkation to significantly improve the systematic identification of people with international protection needs rescued at sea as well as reception conditions. The Office encouraged the comprehensive use of the Dublin Regulation to facilitate the

transfer of some asylum-seekers to other EU countries, including for the purpose of family unity.

- The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) could significantly advance the regional and international protection framework. While progress has been made towards its implementation, concrete measures will be required to translate the CEAS into a true system of shared responsibility and solidarity, based on trust among EU Member States.
- Following a temporary halt of transfers to Bulgaria under the Dublin Regulation in 2014, Bulgaria acted to redress certain systemic deficiencies in its reception conditions and asylum procedures, with the support of UNHCR, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the European Commission, individual EU Member States, and international

and national civil society actors. By April 2014, transfers to Bulgaria had resumed, but UNHCR cautioned that there may be reasons precluding the transfer of certain groups or individuals to this country.

- Greece made progress in reforming its asylum system, but UNHCR recommended that States continue to refrain from returning asylum-seekers to Greece under the Dublin Regulation until remaining shortcomings could be addressed with the continued support of EU Member States and institutions.
- In spite of increased awareness of the problem of statelessness, more than 600,000 people throughout Europe continued to live without a nationality. The wide range of obstacles that hinder the acquisition of a nationality may be of a legal, administrative and/or practical nature.

| CONSTRAINTS |

UNHCR has limited operational involvement in most European countries, with the notable exception of the emergency response in Ukraine; constraints were therefore primarily linked to limited resources and capacity of government and non-governmental partners. In a number of States, the main challenges in 2014 remained: a lack of political will, restrictive asylum policies and anti-foreigner rhetoric in public discourse, a weak economic outlook, unprecedented numbers of asylum applications, and irregular movement to and through European countries. Such trends also undermined the development of comprehensive integration programmes.

In Ukraine, security concerns in conflict zones and a lack of access to non-government-controlled areas remained serious constraints throughout the year. These concerns largely prevented UNHCR and partners from identifying and responding to the immediate humanitarian needs of affected populations.

While a number of countries have launched alternative ad hoc admission programmes in response to the Syrian refugee situation in the region, the challenge was to ensure that these serve as viable alternatives to dangerous irregular movements, especially in the current political and security context in Europe.

| ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT |

UNHCR's 2014 priorities in Europe were to: ensure access to territory and asylum procedures; improve the quality of asylum systems, including for people with specific needs; prevent loss of life at sea; secure durable solutions, including by preventing and resolving situations of statelessness; and strengthen the Office's external relations and resource mobilization support.

UNHCR repeatedly expressed concern over the dramatic situation in the Mediterranean Sea and called for a comprehensive and urgent response from EU Member States to prioritize the saving of lives. Through the Central Mediterranean Sea Initiative, UNHCR proposed guidance for joint European action based on the principles of solidarity, responsibility-sharing and protection for those fleeing persecution and violence. The Office has stressed the need for a joint European search-and-rescue effort, and for the provision of credible legal alternatives to dangerous irregular movements. Such alternatives may include enhanced resettlement opportunities, humanitarian admission programmes, private sponsorship schemes, greater access to family reunification, and student and employment visas for refugees.

In 2014, the organization bolstered its advocacy efforts to support asylum-seekers' access to territory and quality asylum procedures, including to adequate reception conditions. The Office published a report, *Syrian Refugees in Europe: What Europe can do to Ensure Protection and Solidarity*, urging European countries to do more to help Syrian refugees who are in growing numbers seeking safety in Europe. The report highlighted gaps and practices that concern UNHCR and encouraged States to adopt measures in solidarity with Syria's neighbouring countries, which are hosting the vast majority of Syrian refugees.

A positive development in 2014 was the increasing number of Syrians who were granted refugee status when compared with the number granted subsidiary protection, reversing the previous trend. In Europe, 19 countries had regular resettlement programmes, while several – Austria, Belarus, Liechtenstein and Poland – pledged to resettle and grant humanitarian admissions to Syrians. In partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the International Catholic Migration Commission, UNHCR continued to coordinate an EU-funded resettlement project that promotes increased and

improved resettlement to Europe, including emergency resettlement under the framework of the European Resettlement Network.

UNHCR also urged States to increase resettlement and other forms of admission for Syrian refugees towards the multi-annual goal of 130,000 places by the end of 2016. While this goal has not yet been reached, significant progress had been achieved by the end of 2014. More than 67,700 places had been made available by 26 countries, of which 19 were European (15 EU Member States, plus Belarus, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) having made more than 45,800 places available through various schemes.

The Office worked closely with the EU border agency Frontex, both bilaterally and as the Chair of the Frontex Consultative Forum. This included supporting the Vega Children initiative to enhance the detection and protection of child victims of smuggling and trafficking at EU airports.

UNHCR continued working with national stakeholders on relevant legislation and comprehensive national integration plans. Advocacy efforts emphasized the need for access to adequate housing and family reunification, while limited integration prospects, destitution, intolerance and xenophobia were core concerns in a number of countries.

In South-Eastern Europe, UNHCR promoted the development of protection-sensitive asylum and migration systems, including border monitoring mechanisms, with Governments and other stakeholders. By the end of the year there had been limited progress, and significant concerns remained regarding reports of pushbacks, delays in processing cases, low recognition rates, and a lack of effective local integration mechanisms – all of which contributed to the high rate of onward movement. In Eastern Europe, UNHCR remained concerned about a lack of access to territory and asylum procedures for some nationalities.

UNHCR worked with national authorities, EU bodies and civil society on the transposition and implementation phase of the CEAS, including through improved practical cooperation with EASO. A follow-up study to the *Credibility Assessment in EU Asylum Systems Project* (CREDO 2) will be widely disseminated in 2015.

The Asylum Systems Quality Initiative in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus

has enhanced the quality of refugee status determination procedures. The initiative is now being pursued in UNHCR's regular programmes in the subregion, with coordination provided by the newly established Regional Protection Support Unit for Eastern Europe, based in Tbilisi, Georgia.

In 2014, UNHCR made several interventions before the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Of particular importance were submissions on the necessity of discretion to avoid persecution and on the assessment of claims based on sexual orientation. In a ground-breaking judgement, the CJEU concluded that the methods, including the use of a “test,” for assessing the credibility of asylum claims made on the grounds of homosexuality must comply with the Charter of Human Rights of the European Union. In another case addressing standards for access to subsidiary protection within the EU, the CJEU held that it is not necessary for a conflict to be characterized as an “armed conflict” within the meaning of international humanitarian law. The ECHR also delivered two important judgments regarding family reunification for refugees, highlighting the importance of assessing visa requests in a timely manner and taking into account other evidence of family ties.

UNHCR continued to advocate for alternatives to detention in law and practice, particularly in countries that routinely detain asylum-seekers. UNHCR welcomed the participation of Hungary, Lithuania, Malta and the United Kingdom as focus countries for the implementation of its global *Beyond Detention* strategy.

In 2014, with UNICEF, the organization launched a new publication, *Safe and Sound: What States can do to ensure respect for the best interests of unaccompanied and separated children in Europe*. The report was presented at events in Finland, Hungary and Ireland, which raised awareness and provided training opportunities.

As part of the Sarajevo Process, implementation of the Regional Housing Programme (RHP) continued in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. UNHCR and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe continued to promote transparent and fair implementation of the RHP, in particular

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR's requirements in the region have fluctuated between USD 200 million and USD 487 million over the past five years. While the initial 2014 budget for the region amounted to USD 343.3 million, it was increased to some USD 487 million during the year, mainly because of additional requirements for Turkey to address the impact of hosting the large numbers of refugees fleeing the crises in Syria and Iraq, and for the emergency responses in Bulgaria and Ukraine.

In 2014, voluntary contributions allocated to the region covered just 31 per cent of the budget requirements. Expenditure stood at USD 209.3 million.

The brunt of the funding shortfall was borne by operations in Southern and South-Eastern Europe; notably in Bosnia, Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)) and Serbia, and where planned shelter projects for vulnerable IDPs, including Roma, could not be initiated.

In Turkey, UNHCR was unable to respond adequately to the needs of many people of concern, in particular, survivors of torture and rape, disabled people, people with medical needs, women at risk and unaccompanied minors: UNHCR's partner network could only reach 23 "satellite cities" (cities where non-European asylum-seekers can settle), extending coverage to just 62 per cent of people of concern to UNHCR.

regarding the identification of beneficiaries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Office focused on the implementation of the three-year EU-funded multi-stakeholder project on the Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement and supported solutions for IDPs. After issuing recommendations in April 2014, UNHCR offered support to States with the implementation of recommendations related to cessation and durable solutions for refugees from Croatia.

UNHCR also provided assistance to Governments in seeking durable solutions for people displaced from Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)). In Serbia, it supported the development of a durable solutions strategy for some 90,000 vulnerable displaced people. UNHCR also continued to promote the voluntary return and reintegration of minority groups of displaced people willing to return from Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In Georgia, UNHCR advocated for improved access to livelihoods and government-run housing solutions for some 90,000 IDPs in need. In Azerbaijan, it advocated a rights-based approach to government housing and assistance projects for IDPs.

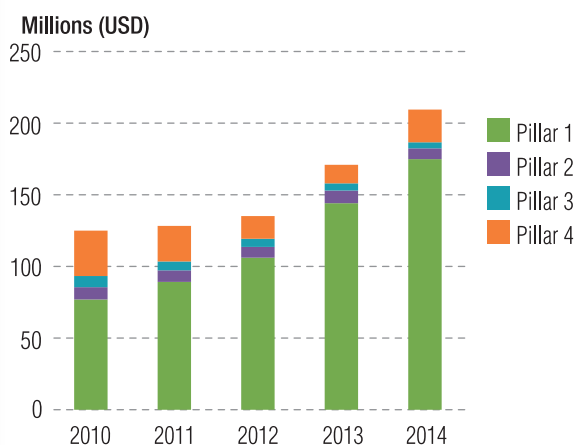
Significant positive developments during the year were the entry into force of Turkey's Law on Foreigners and International Protection in April 2014, followed by the issuance of the Temporary Protection Regulation in October 2014 by the Council of Ministers. Through the Temporary Protection Regulation, refugees and stateless people from Syria obtained a legal status and

gained access to education, health services and livelihood opportunities.

The organization worked with the Ukrainian Government, local authorities and NGOs to identify and respond to IDPs' immediate and long-term needs in the areas of protection monitoring, shelter and non-food item distribution. It also advocated for the establishment of appropriate legislative frameworks, resulting in the adoption of an IDP law and registration procedures. The inter-agency cluster approach was activated in December 2014 in response to the protection and assistance needs of IDPs. At the end of the year, UNHCR also adopted the Strategy to Protect and Assist Persons Affected by the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine, outlining UNHCR's strategic objectives and interventions in this regard.

Of the 10 States that acceded to either one or both conventions on statelessness in 2014, two were European countries – Belgium and Georgia – which became Parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. In the context of the launch of UNHCR's 10-year global campaign to end statelessness in November 2014, Governments were encouraged to undertake additional measures to eradicate statelessness by preventing and resolving the situation of stateless people and those of undetermined nationality, such as former citizens of the Soviet Union. People throughout South-Eastern Europe who lack civil registration documents or a nationality were also identified and protected through strengthened cooperation between UNHCR and Governments. ■

EXPENDITURE IN EUROPE | 2010-2014



BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE IN EUROPE | USD

<i>Operation</i>		Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	Total
EASTERN EUROPE						
Armenia	Budget	5,134,888	109,000	0	0	5,243,888
	Expenditure	2,711,796	53,681	0	0	2,765,477
Azerbaijan	Budget	4,391,120	321,299	0	1,131,082	5,843,501
	Expenditure	2,804,110	61,350	0	535,514	3,400,974
Georgia	Budget	4,122,939	578,014	0	9,692,035	14,392,988
	Expenditure	2,957,200	369,179	0	4,850,017	8,176,396
Russian Federation	Budget	6,394,989	691,280	0	0	7,086,269
	Expenditure	4,277,548	534,247	0	0	4,811,795
Turkey	Budget	318,353,653	44,000	0	0	318,397,653
	Expenditure	95,809,759	0	0	0	95,809,759
Ukraine Regional Office ¹	Budget	10,255,502	1,480,597	0	10,593,000	22,329,099
	Expenditure	6,376,375	265,657	0	7,970,156	14,612,188
Subtotal	Budget	348,653,091	3,224,190	0	21,416,117	373,293,398
	Expenditure	114,936,788	1,284,114	0	13,355,687	129,576,589
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Budget	2,845,352	1,079,518	0	5,620,483	9,545,353
	Expenditure	1,900,852	657,322	0	4,876,788	7,434,962
Croatia	Budget	1,418,495	481,922	1,758,961	0	3,659,378
	Expenditure	891,617	297,192	1,307,772	0	2,496,581
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	Budget	2,340,555	1,171,493	3,836,667	219,107	7,567,822
	Expenditure	949,923	984,970	2,904,335	0	4,839,228
Montenegro	Budget	4,372,948	238,937	0	0	4,611,885
	Expenditure	2,120,449	168,646	0	0	2,289,095
Serbia	Budget	2,779,804	1,382,441	0	12,445,465	16,607,710
	Expenditure	1,879,596	943,922	0	4,658,624	7,482,142
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Budget	3,182,542	466,226	0	0	3,648,768
	Expenditure	1,707,086	282,595	0	0	1,989,681
Subtotal	Budget	16,939,696	4,820,537	5,595,628	18,285,055	45,640,916
	Expenditure	9,449,523	3,334,647	4,212,107	9,535,412	26,531,689

<i>Operation</i>		Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	Total
NORTHERN, WESTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE						
Belgium Regional Office ²	Budget	13,443,270	1,504,165	0	0	14,947,435
	Expenditure	12,066,253	1,404,974	0	0	13,471,227
Hungary Regional Office ³	Budget	15,739,643	1,004,580	0	0	16,744,223
	Expenditure	12,164,314	696,974	0	0	12,861,288
Italy Regional Office ⁴	Budget	24,785,375	235,718	0	0	25,021,093
	Expenditure	19,823,649	137,489	0	0	19,961,138
Sweden Regional Office ⁵	Budget	4,602,827	935,927	0	0	5,538,754
	Expenditure	2,093,330	495,096	0	0	2,588,426
Regional activities	Budget	5,682,970	130,204	0	0	5,813,174
	Expenditure	4,166,238	122,376	0	0	4,288,614
Subtotal	Budget	64,254,085	3,810,594	0	0	68,064,679
	Expenditure	50,313,784	2,856,909	0	0	53,170,693
Total Europe	Budget	429,846,872	11,855,321	5,595,628	39,701,172	486,998,993
	Expenditure	174,700,095	7,475,670	4,212,107	22,891,099	209,278,971

¹ Includes activities in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova

² Includes activities in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the Liaison Office in Switzerland and the United Kingdom

³ Includes activities in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

⁴ Includes activities in Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Spain

⁵ Includes activities in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO EUROPE | USD

<i>Donor</i>	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Armenia					98,712.00	98,712.00
Austria				635,324.02	58,368.94	693,692.96
Azerbaijan	6,945.62					6,945.62
Belgium	96,675.63					96,675.63
Canada				358,422.94		358,422.94
Central Emergency Response Fund				1,074,576.00		1,074,576.00
Croatia					48,633.20	48,633.20
Czech Republic				47,393.36	36,750.86	84,144.22
Denmark	3,332,777.87					3,332,777.87
Estonia				211,198.91		211,198.91
European Union	14,129,945.79		1,103,909.53	5,214,567.88		20,448,423.20
Finland	3,717,472.12			658,761.53		4,376,233.65
France	1,013,592.00					1,013,592.00
Georgia				25,000.00		25,000.00
Germany	1,000,000.00			1,336,898.40	551,724.14	2,888,622.53
Hungary					205,078.30	205,078.30
International Organization for Migration	134,892.26					134,892.26
Ireland	205,453.95					205,453.95
Italy	3,391,022.91				234,739.72	3,625,762.63
Japan	4,000,000.00			150,000.00		4,150,000.00
Kuwait	5,000,000.00					5,000,000.00
Latvia				62,422.36		62,422.36
Lithuania				63,433.67		63,433.67
Luxembourg					10,325.00	10,325.00
Malta				62,266.50		62,266.50
Montenegro					86,122.43	86,122.43
Netherlands				1,261,180.05		1,261,180.05
Norway	196,174.60			319,542.67		515,717.27
Poland				250,149.22	74,140.56	324,289.78
Private donors in Belarus	19,670.77					19,670.77
Private donors in Germany				329,380.76		329,380.76
Private donors in Japan				195,194.47		195,194.47
Private donors in Switzerland				3,706.45		3,706.45
Qatar	7,472,404.50					7,472,404.50
Republic of Korea				300,000.00		300,000.00
Romania					149,096.34	149,096.34
Russian Federation		200,000.00		100,000.00	200,000.00	500,000.00
Spain	493,647.39				410,477.09	904,124.48
Sweden				2,022,653.72		2,022,653.72
Switzerland	1,040,582.73			1,671,502.35		2,712,085.08
United Kingdom	714,285.71			1,182,432.43		1,896,718.15
United Nations Development Programme	55,934.00					55,934.00
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security				39,350.93		39,350.93
United States of America	51,800,000.00			2,850,000.00	29,400,000.00	84,050,000.00
Total	97,821,477.84	200,000.00	1,103,909.53	20,425,358.61	31,564,168.58	151,114,914.56

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the “New or additional activities – mandate-related” (NAM) Reserve