

This chapter provides a summary of the general environment in which UNHCR is operating in Europe, and the organization's planned responses in 2015. Mention is made of major challenges, such as the impact of the major emergencies in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) on the Turkey operation, the situation in Ukraine, as well as ongoing protection problems related to irregular maritime movements, which will continue to have a significant impact on UNHCR's work in 2015.

Details of operations plans and budgets for 2015 are provided in the subregional and country chapters which are published in the digital version of the Global Appeal 2015 Update at www.unhcr.org. This Global Appeal will soon be complemented by further information on the redesigned Global Focus website which is being launched at the end of the year.

| WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

- The number of people seeking refugee status has continued to climb in the first half of 2014, driven by the wars in Syria and Iraq, as well as conflict and instability in Afghanistan, Eritrea and elsewhere.

- Thirty-eight European countries recorded 264,000 asylum applications, an increase of 24 per cent compared to the same period of 2013 (see *UNHCR Asylum Trends 2013*): 216,300 of these applications were made in the 28 European Union (EU) Member States. The top five EU countries to receive asylum applications were Germany, France, Sweden, Italy and the United Kingdom. In comparison, the Russian Federation registered an additional 168,000 people

seeking protection from conflict in Ukraine; and Turkey has received more than half a million asylum-seekers and refugees from Syria, Iraq and other countries.

- Large-scale displacements in Ukraine have called for urgent responses to growing humanitarian needs. As of mid-September, the number of IDPs in Ukraine stood at over 275,000. External displacement is also on the rise. In addition to over 168,000 people who are applying for asylum in the Russian Federation, a further 148,847 have applied for other forms of legal stay. More than 6,000 Ukrainians have sought asylum in other European countries.

EUROPE



Asylum-seekers rescued at sea by the Italian Navy.

UNHCR / A. D'AMATO

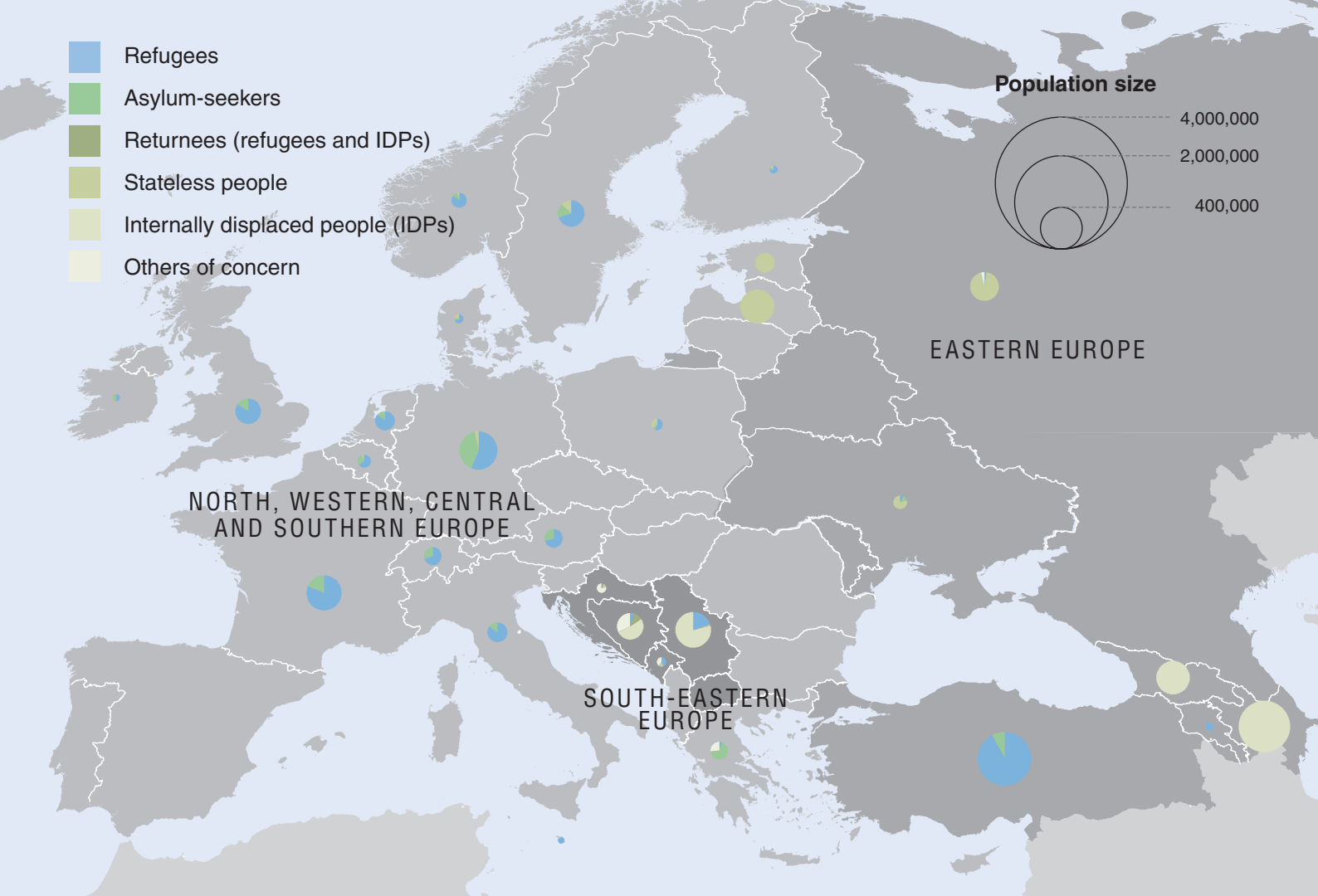
- Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Turkey has responded to the influx of refugees by declaring a temporary protection regime for Syrian asylum-seekers and setting up 22 camps, with two more under construction. It is estimated that over 1 million Syrian refugees were being hosted in Turkey as of August 2014, some 217,000 of whom are accommodated in the camps. Growing numbers of Syrians are also fleeing to other countries in the region, many risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean. In addition to Syrian refugees, there are increasing arrivals in Europe from Afghanistan and Iraq. In Turkey alone, over 81,000 people from Iraq had arrived by the end of August 2014, as well as some 10,000 asylum-seekers from other countries.
- Since 2013, the region has witnessed a sharp increase in the numbers of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean. In the first seven months of 2014, over 87,000 people arrived in Italy by sea, with the two largest groups coming from Eritrea and Syria. In an effort to reduce the risks of such journeys, in October 2013 the Italian Government launched the Mare Nostrum Operation, which has rescued over 100,000 people. Increases in arrivals have also been recorded in Greece and Spain.
- UNHCR continues to be greatly concerned by forcible returns or barriers placed by some countries preventing the entry of asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as cases of abduction and extradition involving asylum-seekers and refugees. Among those seeking protection in Europe are large numbers of unaccompanied and separated children. In Italy and Malta alone, some 10,000 unaccompanied and separated children have arrived this year during the first nine months of the year. Asylum systems in many countries are still not fully in conformity with international standards: poor reception conditions, status determination procedures, low recognition rates, as well as lack of access to durable solutions, are particular challenges.
- Implementation of the Regional Housing Programme continues in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, in an attempt to provide sustainable housing for all 74,000 vulnerable refugees, returnees and IDPs from the 1991–1995 conflicts, many of whom continue to reside in inadequate, temporary accommodation or collective centres. In parallel, UNHCR has recommended the cessation of refugee status for Croatian refugees by December 2014. In cases where local integration or repatriation processes are still underway, this deadline may be extended until 2017.
- The number of European States parties to the two UN Statelessness Conventions has continued to rise, with the accessions of Montenegro, Belgium and Georgia to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. However, the lack of adequate identification and protection mechanisms in the region means that many of the estimated 670,000 stateless people in Europe remain undocumented, and are deprived of basic rights while awaiting the acquisition or confirmation of a nationality.

| STRATEGY |

○ *Preventing loss of life at sea*

UNHCR will continue to work with States in the region for more concerted European action to prevent the loss of lives at sea. This work will be guided by the Central Mediterranean Sea Initiative (CMSI) it has developed, which includes actions within the European Union, in transit or

first asylum countries, and in countries of origin. The CMSI seeks to strengthen cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including the European Commission, the European Asylum Support Office, Frontex, EU Member States, the International Maritime Organization, the International Organization for Migration, civil society and other partners.



● *Building and maintaining effective asylum and protection systems*

Following national and regional initiatives, UNHCR and key stakeholders will continue to promote protection-sensitive asylum systems that are consistent with European and international standards, and offer technical advice to governments. Adequate reception conditions and procedures that are capable of responding to the specific needs of asylum-seekers are essential components of a quality asylum system, including for separated and unaccompanied children arriving in large numbers. UNHCR will continue to work to ensure dignified reception standards, and promote the *Safe&Sound* guidance, developed jointly with UNICEF, on how States can ensure respect for the best interests of unaccompanied and separated children in Europe.

Comments on national draft legislation, notably the transposition into national laws within the European Union of the asylum *acquis*, comparative analyses and engagement in judicial processes will allow

UNHCR to contribute to setting legal standards at national and regional levels. This will also include the implementation of quality mechanisms, such as the Asylum Systems Quality Initiative in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, as well as participation in some asylum procedures. In 2015, UNHCR will pursue its efforts to identify cases for judicial engagement with national and European courts, and will continue to support capacity-building initiatives for judges and other legal practitioners. Close cooperation with national authorities will continue for this purpose.

A forthcoming review of the protection situation of Afghans in Europe, which UNHCR is undertaking together with concerned Governments, will be the basis for a more coherent protection strategy for this group.

● *Securing durable solutions*

Even though 22 out of 48 countries contribute to UNHCR's resettlement efforts in some capacity, the number of

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The budget for Europe in 2015 is set at USD 480.5 million which represents a two-and-half fold increase compared to five years ago (2009).

After a significant rise of the budget in 2010, reflecting UNHCR's decision to bring the long-standing displacement chapter in South-Eastern Europe to a close, financial requirements declined in 2011, reflecting the progressive downscaling of operations in general. The Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe subregion has seen a budget increase as the numbers of asylum-seekers keep growing, particularly in Northern and Southern Europe. Eastern Europe is the subregion with the most dramatic budget fluctuation in the past five years: the regional budget increased from USD 125.7 million in 2010 to USD 365.7 million in 2015, mainly due to the impact in Turkey of the crisis in Syria. On the basis of current influxes of Syrian and Iraqi refugees, the number of people of concern is expected to reach 5.3 million in 2015.

In 2014, the ExCom-approved budget, set at USD 343.3 million, was insufficient for UNHCR and partners to respond to the ever-increasing needs of the refugees seeking asylum in Turkey. A supplementary budget was therefore established through the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6) amounting to USD 285 million. Supplementary budgets for 2014 were also established for the Iraqi refugees escaping into Turkey (USD 6.3 million) and for people displaced by the situation in Ukraine (USD 11.3 million).

With little prospect of a resolution of the situations in Iraq and Syria, it is likely that additional requirements for refugees from these countries arriving in Europe will be presented in 2015.

resettlement places in the region remains limited, with quotas and reception and integration capacity varying widely. Special attention will be devoted to the resettlement and humanitarian admission of Syrian refugees.

UNHCR will continue managing the Emergency Transit Centres in Timisoara (Romania) and Humenné (Slovakia). The search for durable solutions for displaced people in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe will continue, with a focus on return and local integration, including through the Regional Housing Programme.

In Eastern Europe, UNHCR will work in close partnership with Governments, humanitarian actors and other stakeholders on addressing protracted internal displacement situations. These activities will include assisting in the revision of relevant national legislation, technical assistance, capacity building, protection monitoring, provision of legal aid and limited direct assistance to particularly vulnerable people of concern. A special focus will be placed on supporting local integration, self-reliance and voluntary returns for IDPs.

○ *Preventing and resolving statelessness*

UNHCR's newly introduced 10-year Campaign to End Statelessness will serve to advocate for further accessions to the two Statelessness Conventions, and to encourage the adoption of action plans at national level to end statelessness. These plans should include amending and implementing legislation to prevent statelessness at birth or later in life. States will also be urged to confirm or ensure the acquisition of nationality by people known to be stateless or whose nationality is undetermined, for example through improved civil registration practices. UNHCR will advocate for the establishment of a formal mechanism to identify and protect stateless people among migrant populations, and conduct outreach and public awareness-raising activities. Collaboration throughout the region with civil society organizations and the European Network on Statelessness will be essential. Among the European countries that have not acceded to either of the two Statelessness Conventions are Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Malta, Poland and the Russian Federation.

| CHALLENGES |

The economic situation in the region is having an impact on the capacity and readiness of many countries to strengthen their protection systems. Austerity measures have also hit civil-society organizations that provide services to asylum-seekers and refugees. Xenophobia and intolerance have led to incidents of discrimination and violence. States have responded by curbing irregular movements, including tighter border controls and detention and penalization of those entering illegally.

In some countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, lack of adequate attention to the national asylum systems can leave them dysfunctional or below international standards. Recognition rates often remain low and some countries increasingly resort to

complementary forms of protection instead of according Convention status.

The impact of the conflict in Syria, and increasingly in Iraq, will continue to be felt in the region, first and foremost in Turkey but also in terms of irregular movements to other European countries. There is a considerable risk that more lives will be lost as countries intensify their border control measures, forcing refugees and asylum-seekers to resort increasingly to irregular means in their search for safety.

The lack of awareness of issues of statelessness among stakeholders, and the inadequacy of data on the number of stateless people in the region will continue to impede efforts to address the situation of these people effectively. ■

BUDGETS FOR EUROPE | USD

Operation	2014	2015				Total
	Revised budget (as of 30 June 2014)	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	
EASTERN EUROPE						
Armenia	5,255,334	6,122,127	102,341	0	0	6,224,468
Azerbaijan	5,851,001	4,324,490	328,525	0	1,196,986	5,850,001
Georgia	14,351,540	5,458,157	556,293	0	8,330,304	14,344,755
Russian Federation	7,092,269	5,722,246	358,406	0	0	6,080,652
Turkey	306,553,430	320,091,960	70,000	0	0	320,161,960
Ukraine Regional Office ¹	13,930,322	12,020,312	1,010,001	0	0	13,030,313
Subtotal	353,033,895	353,739,292	2,425,566	0	9,527,290	365,692,148
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9,507,353	2,312,335	799,029	0	9,738,635	12,850,000
Croatia ²	3,659,377	0	0	0	0	0
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	7,624,823	1,944,161	1,230,293	5,793,306	215,612	9,183,372
Montenegro	4,620,706	4,330,016	192,020	0	0	4,522,036
Serbia	16,585,990	2,568,713	1,198,094	0	12,801,434	16,568,241
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,656,268	3,175,699	379,627	0	0	3,555,326
Subtotal	45,654,517	14,330,924	3,799,064	5,793,306	22,755,682	46,678,975
NORTHERN, WESTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE						
Belgium Regional Office ³	14,521,916	14,603,538	1,431,980	0	0	16,035,518
Hungary Regional Office ⁴	17,069,083	11,993,641	1,702,007	1,191,163	0	14,886,811
Italy Regional Office ⁵	24,976,188	22,677,175	223,092	0	0	22,900,267
Sweden Regional Office	5,538,754	4,518,289	965,440	0	0	5,483,728
Regional activities	5,969,986	8,638,394	157,127	0	0	8,795,521
Subtotal	68,075,927	62,431,037	4,479,646	1,191,163	0	68,101,847
Total	466,764,340	430,501,253	10,704,276	6,984,469	32,282,972	480,472,970

¹ Includes activities in Belarus and Republic of Moldova² As from 2015 Croatia is reported under Hungary Regional Office³ Includes activities in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the Liaison Office in Switzerland and the United Kingdom⁴ Includes activities in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and as from 2015, also includes Croatia⁵ Includes activities in Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Spain⁶ Includes activities in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway

BUDGET FOR EUROPE | 2006-2015

Millions (USD)

