

EUROPE

The Spanish coastguard intercepts a traditional fishing boat laden with migrants off the island of Tenerife in the Canaries, Spain.



| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- Assuring access to territory, the quality of asylum procedures and adequate protection for asylum-seekers remained UNHCR's main concerns in Europe. With growing number of asylum-seekers arriving within mixed migratory movements, UNHCR worked with governments and NGOs to improve reception conditions, including the quality of legal aid. These efforts, along with the agreements on border monitoring, have strengthened the relevance of the Office's presence in the countries of the European Union (EU) as well as its neighbours.
- In the western Balkans and Eastern Europe, where the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) generated by past conflicts remained high, UNHCR focused on identifying durable solutions. The favoured options remain repatriation or local integration. Most current efforts, including support for the development of legal frameworks and housing and livelihood programmes, are aimed towards these solutions.
- UNHCR is working to further measures for addressing statelessness in Europe, in particular the provision of documentation to assure access to social and other services. Such issues relating to Roma people remain high on the agenda of the Office in South-Eastern Europe.
- In 2008, as a result of proactive external relations and advocacy work, 47 per cent of UNHCR's funding was provided by European countries. Some 46 per cent of private sector contributions in 2008 also came from Europe.



| Working environment |

Despite targeted efforts by UNHCR to combat xenophobic attitudes, intolerance towards asylum-seekers persists in both Western and Central Europe. The current financial crisis is aggravating tensions among some European populations.

The operational and political contexts in Brussels are complex, with issues of balance among the European institutions and between these institutions and the EU Member States. Changes in the political landscape can facilitate or complicate UNHCR's efforts to achieve its objectives at national and EU levels.

Humanitarian access remains difficult in some areas of the northern Caucasus.

| Achievements and impact |

The policy areas covered by UNHCR in Europe in 2008 extended beyond asylum and migration and beyond the frontiers of the European Union. They ranged from forced displacement, humanitarian aid, durable solutions and development to capacity building, peacebuilding, governance and other post-conflict issues.

● *Ensuring protection for all people of concern to UNHCR and guaranteeing age, gender and diversity perspectives in operations*

Through its presence in Greece, Italy (Lampedusa, Sardinia, Sicily) and Malta, UNHCR continued to monitor standards of international protection in the Mediterranean, where the mixed migration pressure on EU borders remains high. Cooperation with governments to improve access to territory for asylum-seekers arriving through this migratory route has resulted in some improvements. UNHCR hopes that more will be possible and that achievements can be sustained.

UNHCR offices worked with governments and other partners to address reception conditions, especially for vulnerable groups, which are of concern throughout Europe.

Across Europe, there are significant differences in refugee status recognition rates for some groups of asylum-seekers. These divergences highlight problems of quality in the assessment and adjudication of claims. Similar concerns arise with regard to vulnerable groups, in particular unaccompanied minors, for whom access to protection in Europe may vary greatly depending on where they apply for asylum. UNHCR worked with governments, the EU and other partners to address this problem.

● *Affirming and developing an international protection regime*

UNHCR is actively monitoring the legislative processes, policies and practices of European countries with regard to asylum. The Office provides support with refugee status determination (RSD), especially in Eastern Europe.

Following its successful introduction in the United Kingdom in 2004, a regional Quality Assurance Initiative project was launched in Central Europe. The project aims to help governments develop and maintain international protection regimes and is now being implemented in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

In order to help governments in Europe uphold the rights of asylum-seekers, border monitoring agreements have been concluded between UNHCR and border-guard services and NGOs in Belarus, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. An agreement will be concluded with Poland in early 2009.

UNHCR has also made direct and indirect judicial interventions. The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has ruled against the restrictive approaches of a number of States to their international protection obligations.

Throughout Europe, UNHCR has advocated for governments to establish procedures for the determination of statelessness. Wherever appropriate, it has advocated for accession to the Statelessness Conventions and the inclusion of rights enshrined in these Conventions in domestic legislation.

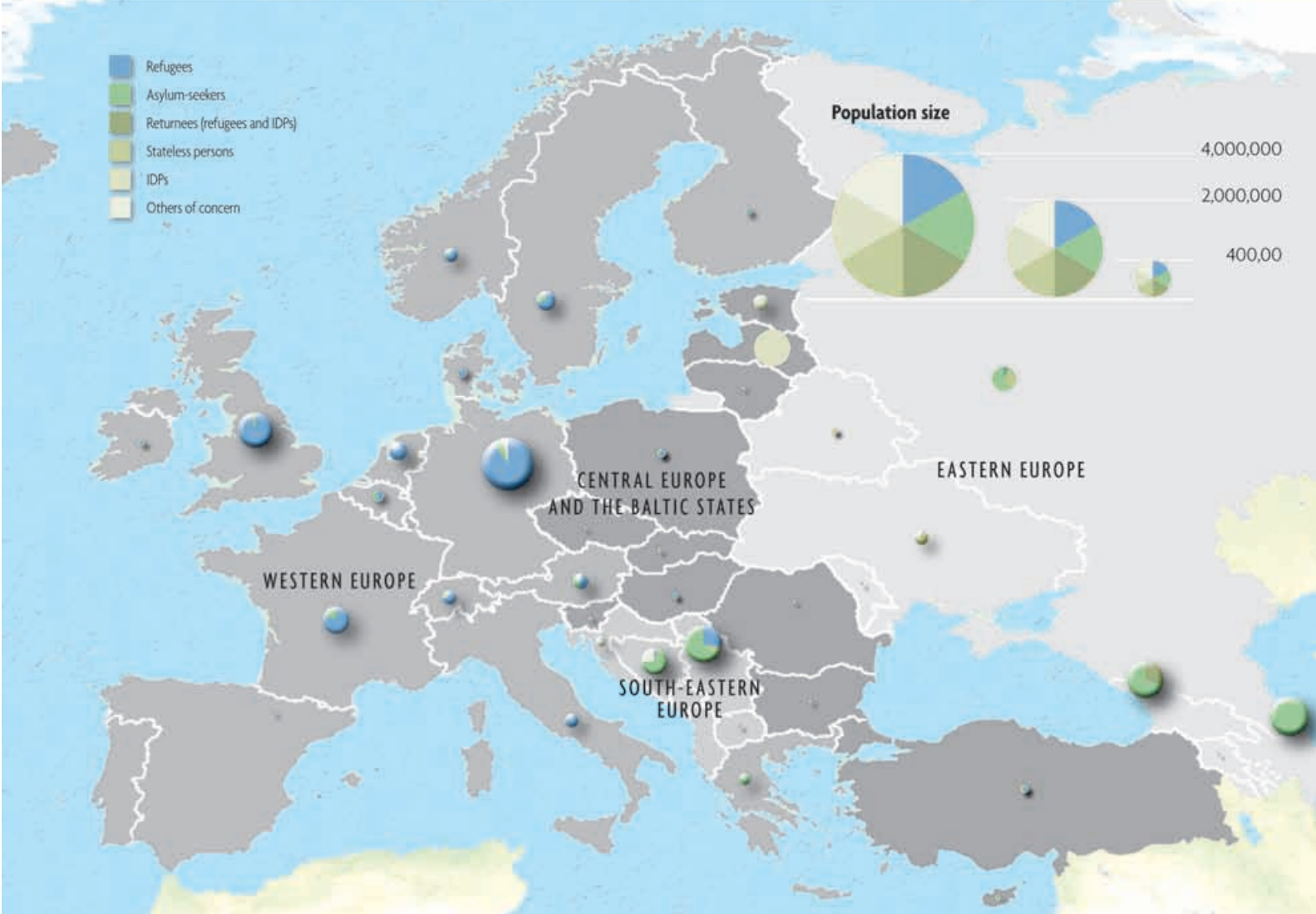
● *Attaining durable solutions*

Addressing protracted refugee situations was one of UNHCR's highest priorities in 2008. In Europe, the Office was engaged in finding durable solutions for refugees and IDPs from the conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The aim was to develop long-term strategies that would lead to the closure of these chapters of protracted displacement.

Advocacy efforts by UNHCR offices in Europe have supported responsibility sharing by establishing new resettlement programmes for refugees awaiting durable solutions. For instance, the signing of a tripartite agreement between the Government of Romania, IOM and UNHCR in 2008 led to the creation of an Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) in Timisoara. The ETC will provide a safe haven for refugees in need of evacuation before a durable solution has been found for them.

● *Developing dynamic partnerships*

In the European context, partnerships with governments, NGOs and civil society are of



crucial importance in order to ensure that standards of international protection are maintained and the rights of asylum-seekers upheld. This is even more important in cases where an increase in mixed migration movements, coupled with the current global financial environment, are having an effect on public opinion about immigration policies.

In the context of UN reform, UNHCR's office in Albania participated in the Delivering as One pilot project. The director of UNHCR's Bureau for Europe participated in the work of the Regional Directors' Team for Europe, which brought together regional directors from a number of UN Agencies to discuss practical issues in order to advance UN Reform and its implementation.

◦ *Strengthening external relations*

UNHCR has worked to heighten its profile in Europe and increase support from governments, the general public and the private sector. The results were apparent in the generous backing of European countries and private donors for UNHCR operations.

| Constraints |

In light of the increasing attention focused on combating irregular migration in Europe, governments have not always been sensitive to the need to build human rights and refugee protection into policy responses.

Xenophobic attitudes, which have grown in prominence since the eruption of the global financial crisis, present one of the biggest constraints affecting populations of concern to UNHCR throughout Europe.

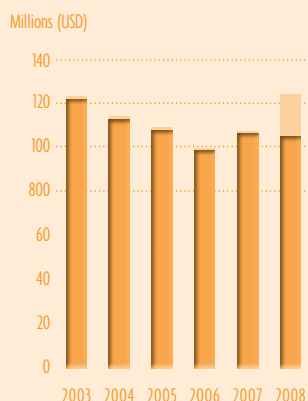
Finally, humanitarian access remains a major challenge for UNHCR. While this issue is not unique to the European context, it has had a significant impact on UNHCR operations in the Caucasus. ■

Financial information

Many governments in the region provide funding for UNHCR's office premises and utilities in their countries, which helps to keep administrative costs low. In 2008, given the significant exchange rate fluctuations of the Euro in relation to the US dollar, this was especially important. Many offices in Europe benefited from extra-budgetary allocations, which helped off-set the reduced spending power caused by the exchange rate variations.

Expenditure in Europe 2003-2008

■ Annual budget
■ Supplementary budget



Budget and expenditure in Europe (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Eastern Europe						
Armenia	1,619,055	1,000,000	2,619,055	1,616,847	938,910	2,555,757
Azerbaijan	3,938,197	0	3,938,197	3,773,277	0	3,773,277
Belarus	1,501,672	0	1,501,672	1,332,856	0	1,332,856
Georgia	6,223,971	39,437,073	45,661,044	6,163,689	15,542,423	21,706,112
Republic of Moldova	715,996	0	715,996	703,321	0	703,321
Russian Federation	13,555,676	400,000	13,955,676	13,323,304	387,136	13,710,440
Ukraine	3,104,464	0	3,104,464	2,937,820	0	2,937,820
Regional activities ¹	1,654,913	0	1,654,913	1,130,064	0	1,130,064
Subtotal	32,313,943	40,837,073	73,151,016	30,981,176	16,868,469	47,849,646
South-Eastern Europe						
Albania	756,937	0	756,937	728,305	0	728,305
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,202,741	0	6,202,741	6,129,860	0	6,129,860
Croatia	3,752,898	0	3,752,898	3,513,279	0	3,513,279
Montenegro	2,859,094	0	2,859,094	2,642,455	0	2,642,455
Serbia	24,661,546	0	24,661,546	23,393,310	0	23,393,310
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,188,783	0	3,188,783	3,064,337	0	3,064,337
Subtotal	41,421,999	0	41,421,999	39,471,546	0	39,471,546
Central Europe and the Baltic States						
Bulgaria	897,312	0	897,312	893,119	0	893,119
Cyprus	917,933	0	917,933	861,661	0	861,661
Czech Republic	459,026	0	459,026	427,085	0	427,085
Hungary	2,625,628	0	2,625,628	2,604,961	0	2,604,961
Poland	1,004,979	0	1,004,979	872,660	0	872,660
Romania	1,065,758	0	1,065,758	953,972	0	953,972
Slovakia	541,824	0	541,824	443,303	0	443,303
Slovenia	184,299	0	184,299	97,894	0	97,894
Turkey	6,416,072	2,244,230	8,660,302	6,275,213	2,104,786	8,379,999
Regional activities ²	87,636	0	87,636	76,522	0	76,522
Subtotal	14,200,467	2,244,230	16,444,697	13,506,392	2,104,786	15,611,177
Western Europe						
Austria	1,013,921	0	1,013,921	984,353	0	984,353
Belgium	3,907,597	0	3,907,597	3,805,558	0	3,805,558
France	2,987,580	0	2,987,580	2,804,801	0	2,804,801
Germany	2,666,184	0	2,666,184	2,467,082	0	2,467,082
Greece	1,284,717	0	1,284,717	1,155,893	0	1,155,893
Ireland	759,115	0	759,115	724,038	0	724,038
Italy	4,090,509	0	4,090,509	3,914,862	0	3,914,862
Malta	119,221	0	119,221	112,018	0	112,018
Portugal	88,000	0	88,000	86,036	0	86,036
Spain	1,491,194	0	1,491,194	1,355,689	0	1,355,689
Sweden	1,697,734	0	1,697,734	1,629,789	0	1,629,789
Switzerland	746,260	0	746,260	675,230	0	675,230
United Kingdom	2,012,374	0	2,012,374	1,741,902	0	1,741,902
Subtotal	22,864,404	0	22,864,404	21,457,249	0	21,457,249
Total	110,800,814	43,081,303	153,882,117	105,416,363	18,973,255	124,389,618

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.

¹ Includes activities in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, and strengthening protection capacities.

² Includes promotion of refugee law.

Voluntary Contributions to Europe (USD)

Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Australia		438,679	438,679
Australia for UNHCR		156,191	156,191
Austria	63,864		63,864
Belgian Lottery	51,020		51,020
Belgium	92,014	120,466	212,480
Bulgaria		69,649	69,649
Canada	204,499	889,952	1,094,451
Central Emergency Response Fund	133,259	837,000	970,259
Council of Europe Development Fund	264,366	602,332	866,698
Cyprus	9,351		9,351
Czech Republic		321,244	321,244
Denmark	27,620		27,620
Deutsche Stiftung für UNO (Germany)		82,277	82,277
Divac Foundation (Serbia)	1,018,474		1,018,474
<i>España con ACNUR</i> (Spain)		6,455	6,455
Eurocash (Poland)		30,117	30,117
European Commission	8,134,340	1,438,173	9,572,513
Finland		180,466	180,466
France	567,143	289,269	856,412
Germany	583,090	723,173	1,306,263
Greece	133,524	233,530	367,054
HQ Online Donations		637	637
HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein (United Arab Emirates)	70,500		70,500
Ireland	163,400	206,056	369,456
Italy	1,747,156	422,088	2,169,243
Japan*	1,000,000	934,579	1,934,579
Japan Association for UNHCR	17,917	33,333	51,250
Latvia	4,608		4,608
<i>Linfil Holding B.V.</i> (Netherlands)		44,645	44,645
Medicor Foundation (Liechtenstein)	65,100		65,100
Netherlands	676,000		676,000
Norway		867,537	867,537
Poland	132,888		132,888
Private donors in Belgium	14,126		14,126
Private donors in Canada		1,349	1,349
Private donors in China		1,103	1,103
Private donors in Cyprus	30,852		30,852
Private donors in Greece		18,211	18,211
Private donors in the United Kingdom	64,483	2,309	66,792
Romania	270,189	120,310	390,500
Russian Federation	1,000,000		1,000,000
Spain	699,693	421,632	1,121,325
Statoil Azerbaijan	159,225		159,225
Sweden	6,163,328	1,223,886	7,387,214
Switzerland	2,378,697		2,378,697
UN Trust Fund for Human Security	58,333		58,333
United Kingdom	602,824	3,989,438	4,592,261
United States of America	16,650,769	3,487,500	20,138,269
Total	43,252,654	18,193,586	61,446,240

* Countries contributed the following funds to the Europe region:

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget
Europe Region	Japan	400,000
Total		400,000

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.