

Albania
Andorra
Austria
Belgium
Cyprus
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Holy See
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Monaco
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
San Marino
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

Afghan refugees settle in for a cold night in Calais, France.



Northern, Western and Southern Europe

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- UNHCR cooperated with national authorities in four Mediterranean countries to introduce sustainable quality assurance mechanisms into their asylum services. In other countries in the region, UNHCR participated in first- or second-instance asylum procedures to ensure the fairness of asylum decisions.
- Border-monitoring activities were expanded throughout the region.
- UNHCR submitted an unprecedented number of positions on issues of concern to national courts and to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). It also published its views on these issues in cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).
- Outreach programmes and participatory research on the situation of Afghan unaccompanied children in Europe helped UNHCR intensify its work on behalf of separated children.
- UNHCR played a key role in identifying and counselling candidates in a pilot European Union (EU) project that relocated some 200 people from Malta to other EU Member States.
- The Greek authorities received intensive support from UNHCR in their bid to reform the national asylum system.
- UNHCR made considerable efforts to profile statelessness in the subregion. Three comprehensive studies were undertaken, in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.



Working environment

The Northern, Western and Southern Europe subregion continued to receive most of the asylum applications in the industrialized world. With nearly 248,000 claims, 4 per cent less than in 2009, the overall number of applications remained relatively stable. However, a breakdown of this number shows that there was a marked increase in applications in France, Germany and Sweden, and a sharp decrease in Southern Europe.

The drop in applications in Southern Europe is presumed to be linked to strengthened border controls, including maritime patrols and interception at sea, which affect people of concern to UNHCR. It also seems to be due to people with protection needs choosing to apply for asylum in other EU Member States. Meanwhile, the number of unaccompanied and separated children applying for asylum, particularly from Afghanistan, remained significant.

The political climate in the subregion on issues affecting asylum-seekers and refugees posed challenges in 2010, with many legislative proposals aimed at restricting rights or support for people of concern to UNHCR. In addition, the global economic crisis reduced refugees' prospects of integration. Nonetheless, donor support for UNHCR remained high; 14 of UNHCR's top 20 donors belong to the subregion.

The quality of the decisions on whether people were in need of international protection or not remained of concern in a number of countries. Wherever possible, UNHCR worked closely with national counterparts to improve the quality of asylum decisions, and its positions were frequently taken into account by governments, the courts, civil society and parliamentarians. Media and civil society were engaged to support advocacy and build positive attitudes towards asylum-seekers and refugees.

UNHCR increased its engagement with issues related to statelessness, not only by promoting accession to the 1954

and 1961 Statelessness Conventions but also by initiating studies to gauge the dimensions of the problem.

The management of mixed migration at both land and sea borders, together with restrictive asylum legislation and practices, continued to be of concern. The border region between Greece and Turkey, the main entry point for migrants and asylum-seekers into the European Union, received much attention.

Work to improve access to asylum for those entering the European Union through Greece was taken forward, but though progress has been made on legislation, implementation remains problematic. The first deployment of a FRONTEX Rapid Intervention Team to the Evros region resulted in the apprehension of a large number of people for irregular crossing of the border. This contributed to more overcrowding in detention facilities without appropriate access to asylum procedures.

Reception conditions remained worrying in some countries. In addition, the increased use of detention, sometimes in inappropriate conditions and on grounds not regulated by law, is an issue needing further attention.

Achievements and impact

UNHCR engaged with Governments and the EU agency FRONTEX to address mixed-migration movements, aiming to ensure access to territory and to asylum procedures for asylum-seekers. For the first time, UNHCR was invited to participate in a FRONTEX operation to prevent the trafficking of unaccompanied children at airports. UNHCR will use this experience to participate in the FRONTEX-led drafting of training materials for border guards.

Appeals were made to States to refrain from transferring asylum applications to Greece under the Dublin II Regulation, and UNHCR intervened with national and international courts on the same grounds. It also engaged intensively with the Greek authorities, EU institutions and

other Member States with a view to contributing to the reform of the Greek asylum system.

In Italy, UNHCR ensured through its participation in the Praesidium project that appropriate information reaches newly arrived asylum-seekers. In Calais (France), UNHCR provided information about asylum to people of concern.

UNHCR worked with EU institutions and academic organizations to support the creation of a Common European Asylum System. It continued to lobby for the implementation of the Asylum Procedures Directive, which provided policy makers and others with valuable insights into the areas needing greater harmonization. New research initiatives focused on decision-making in cases of asylum-seekers fleeing the indiscriminate effects of generalized violence.

UNHCR advocated for an increase in resettlement and integration capacity. Despite the economic crisis, many countries maintained their resettlement capacity. In a project with ICMC and IOM, UNHCR provided support for new resettlement countries, with a particular focus on local authorities. Eight countries in the subregion resettled some 4,100 refugees.

In addition to enjoying cooperative relations with all government counterparts, UNHCR worked closely with a wide-range of partners at the national level. It pursued its strong partnerships with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), particularly with regard to hate-crime reporting and monitoring. The Council of Europe too became an increasingly close partner with whom joint activities on cross-cutting issues were organized.

UNHCR also made a number of submissions before the ECHR and published its views on issues at stake in relevant cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union. The Bureau for Europe, located in Brussels, continued its close cooperation with EU institutions and civil society. In particular, UNHCR sought strategic partnerships to address complex issues such as the situation of unaccompanied children and trafficking in human beings.

| Constraints |

Hardened attitudes toward foreigners in general, combined with the economic downturn, created a challenging environment. A number of Governments toughened their stance on immigration and strengthened control measures. The political debate on nationality and the participation of migrants in society in a number of countries provided opportunities for UNHCR to underline the protection needs of refugees. However, in some cases, it also led to a more difficult climate for refugees.

| Operations |

In **Albania**, UNHCR monitored the pre-screening procedure to improve the identification of people with special needs in order to support their access to territory. It also sought to improve the national legal framework to secure the protection and social inclusion of people of concern. UNHCR helped provide for basic needs, including shelter, living allowances and health services, in addition to offering legal aid.

Budget and expenditure in Northern, Western and Southern Europe | USD

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	Total
Belgium Regional Office¹	Budget	4,202,882	344,239	4,547,121
	Expenditure	3,648,664	332,021	3,980,685
France	Budget	2,999,287	0	2,999,287
	Expenditure	2,995,896	0	2,995,896
Germany²	Budget	3,556,484	259,072	3,815,556
	Expenditure	2,596,996	248,792	2,845,788
Ireland	Budget	535,372	60,000	595,372
	Expenditure	419,857	56,370	476,227
Italy Regional Office³	Budget	11,207,656	110,000	11,317,656
	Expenditure	8,489,717	96,879	8,586,596
Spain	Budget	1,287,710	180,000	1,467,710
	Expenditure	1,211,026	179,440	1,390,466
Sweden Regional Office⁴	Budget	1,830,711	403,668	2,234,379
	Expenditure	1,415,745	386,928	1,802,673
United Kingdom	Budget	1,734,600	256,254	1,990,854
	Expenditure	1,724,842	250,483	1,975,325
Regional Activities	Budget	2,089,776	0	2,089,776
	Expenditure	2,056,655	0	2,056,655
Total budget		29,444,478	1,613,233	31,057,711
Total expenditure		24,559,398	1,550,913	26,110,311

¹Includes activities in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Ireland, UK and the liaison office Switzerland.

²Includes activities in Austria

³Includes activities in Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Portugal.

⁴Includes activities in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway.

Work to ensure the quality of asylum decisions was expanded in **Austria**, with a focus on children, legal counselling and voluntary return. Through high-visibility events, the difficulties of refugees were brought to public notice, and pupils from four schools joined asylum-seekers and refugee youth in workshops to prevent prejudice and promote tolerance.

UNHCR played an important role in providing information on asylum procedures in **the Benelux** countries. In **Luxembourg**, attention was on ensuring the quality of decisions, and expert advice was given in selected cases. In **the Netherlands**, UNHCR sought to ensure adequate protection for people fleeing armed conflict and promoted resettlement. This included a pilot project allowing resettlement interviews over video-link with refugees at the Emergency Transit Centre in Romania. Support was given to **Belgium** as it held the EU Presidency, and goodwill for asylum-seekers and refugees was fostered through a number of media and public events.

UNHCR maintained its presence in northern **France** to ensure access to protection for people of concern. It increased its capacity to participate in the second instance of the asylum procedure in a bid to reduce the backlog of cases. Support was also provided for France's resettlement programme.

In **Germany**, UNHCR cooperated with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and helped judges and adjudicators to enhance their capacity to gauge the needs of separated children. UNHCR also made a number of court interventions and continued its advisory role in relation to the use of the Dublin II Regulation. The resettlement of 2,500 Iraqis was completed.

In **Greece**, UNHCR's engagement with the authorities focused primarily on the reform of the asylum system. Greece's amended legislation allows for the establishment of an asylum system in accordance with international standards, but implementation is expected to take time. UNHCR undertook regular monitoring missions to border regions, including to the Evros region, and reported on detention conditions, which remained of serious concern. At the end of the year, a special support project was set up in Athens to help the Government's asylum reform efforts.

In **Ireland**, building the capacity of asylum institutions and increasing judicial engagement were the Office's main

priorities. Events to improve public awareness of the precarious situation of refugees were undertaken with great success.

UNHCR's participation in refugee status determination (RSD) in **Italy** contributed to the quality of decisions in the country. Despite the decrease in arrivals compared to previous years, UNHCR and its partners continued to identify people with special needs, offer medical assistance, make proper reception arrangements and ensure access to the asylum process.

In **Malta**, UNHCR monitored the RSD procedure and provided technical input where needed. Although systematic detention upon arrival continued, the decline in the number of arrivals allowed the Office to focus on projects to improve the situation in the open reception centres. UNHCR played a coordinating role in pre-identification and counselling in an EU pilot project for the relocation of a number of protection beneficiaries from Malta to other EU countries. UNHCR also facilitated resettlement from Malta to the United States.

UNHCR's limited presence in the **Nordic countries** (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) affected its ability to provide timely advice on issues affecting persons of concern. Nevertheless, a number of significant contributions to national legislation were made, and new initiatives were taken to ensure the quality of asylum decisions in **Sweden**. Particular emphasis was placed on people fleeing armed conflict and children on the move. A study of separated children from Afghanistan provided valuable insight into the needs of these young people.

In the **Baltic States**, UNHCR helped to build the capacity of the national asylum authorities and establish mechanisms to aid identification of asylum-seekers with special needs. Efforts to ensure access to the territory were given priority. The Office endeavoured to address statelessness in the sub-region through recommendations on national legislation and awareness-raising in local media.

In **Portugal**, where UNHCR does not have a presence, its partner, the Portuguese Refugee Council (PRC), ensured that legal aid and counselling were provided to asylum-seekers. Portugal participated in the Further Developing Quality project, which showed the strengths and weaknesses in the Portuguese asylum procedure, and agreed to take steps to address areas of concern.

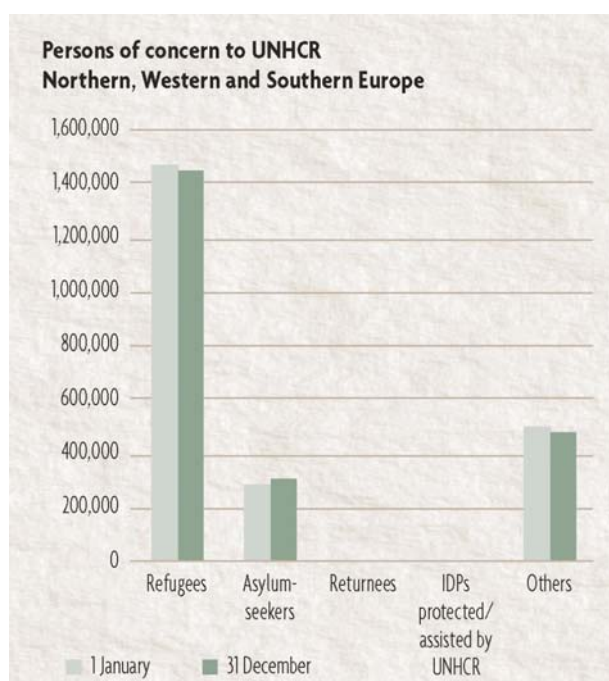
Both law and practice were priorities for UNHCR in **Switzerland**, where the use of the Dublin II regulation and airport procedures were the main challenges. Partnerships were built and strengthened, and UNHCR participated in a project to give a voice to separated children.

In **Liechtenstein**, work focused on the use of the Dublin II Regulation, as well as on improving public attitudes to asylum-seekers and refugees and raising awareness of the legislative amendments required following accession to the 1954 and the 1961 Statelessness Conventions.

In the **United Kingdom**, UNHCR began the integration of quality assurance mechanisms into asylum procedures. UNHCR also stayed engaged in developing legal standards through judicial engagement. Resettlement and the integration of refugees were supported through practical cooperation with the local authorities.

Financial information

The 2010 budget for this subregion remained fairly stable compared to 2009, despite the administrative integration of



Cyprus and Albania into this subregion. Expenditures in 2010 were mainly related to activities aimed at improving the quality and consistency of asylum decision making; the promotion of resettlement and intra-EU responsibility-sharing; and efforts to identify and resolve situations of statelessness.

A further consolidation of the regionalization exercise allowed the three regional representations (Brussels, Rome and Stockholm) to respond more flexibly and rapidly to changing budgetary needs in their respective areas.

Voluntary contributions to Northern, Western and Southern Europe | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	All pillars	Total
NORTHERN, WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE SUBREGION			
United States of America		1,209,000	1,209,000
Northern, Western and Southern Europe subtotal	0	1,209,000	1,209,000
AUSTRIA			
Austria	28,051		28,051
Austria subtotal	28,051	0	28,051
BELGIUM			
Belgium	93,894		93,894
Dutch Postcode Lottery (Netherlands)	39,602		39,602
European Commission	108,947		108,947
Belgium subtotal	242,442	0	242,442
FRANCE			
France	561,456		561,456
France subtotal	561,456	0	561,456
GERMANY			
Germany		577,201	577,201
Germany subtotal	0	577,201	577,201
GREECE			
United Kingdom	360,272		360,272
Greece	26,596		26,596
Greece subtotal	386,868	0	386,868
IRELAND			
Ireland	31,766		31,766
Ireland subtotal	31,766	0	31,766
ITALY			
European Commission	107,504		107,504
Italy	2,217,599		2,217,599
Italy subtotal	2,325,103	0	2,325,103
MALTA			
Malta	20,342		20,342
Malta subtotal	20,342	0	20,342
SPAIN			
Spain	706,681		706,681
Spain subtotal	706,681	0	706,681
SWEDEN			
Sweden	60,175		60,175
Russian Federation		300,000	300,000
Sweden subtotal	60,175	300,000	360,175
UNITED KINGDOM			
United Kingdom	289,275		289,275
United Kingdom subtotal	289,275	0	289,275
Total	4,652,159	2,086,201	6,738,360

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.