



UNHCR GREECE PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2026

"Although I initially came here just for the language classes, all the women at the Centre are my friends now, and I feel that here it's my home",
Manija, refugee from Afghanistan

Manija, refugee from Afghanistan, with her 5-month-old son at Irida Women Centre in Thessaloniki, Northern Greece. © UNHCR/ Socrates Baltagiannis



\$8.3M required to sustain prioritized responses and enable critical scale up in 2026



35,000 refugees and asylum-seekers reached through prioritized activities in 2026



Working with civil society, of which **4 are funded partners** (3 are national: GCR, METAdrasi & IRC Hellas)



170,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless. **54%** are women & children

Source: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, UNHCR; February 2026



60% of arrivals in 2025 were from nationalities with refugee recognition rates above 75%

Source: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, UNHCR; December 2025



30% decrease in arrivals by April 2026 vs. same period in 2025, with an increase in Crete in late May

Source: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, UNHCR; April 2026

CONTEXT

UNHCR has been present in Greece since 1952. Following the 2015–2016 emergency, its role evolved as the Government progressively assumed operational responsibility for the refugee response.

Arrivals to Greece continue, with more than 48,000 arrivals in 2025 (21% less when compared to 2024), with the sea route from North Africa to the Crete region gaining prominence. The protection landscape in Greece remains dynamic and complex, with opportunities to strengthen access to rights and essential services for refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as to promote their socio-economic inclusion.

2025 proved particularly challenging for UNHCR, as abrupt funding cuts by more than 50% had a direct impact on programmes and services: support for survivors of violence against women and children, in-person interpretation, psychosocial support helplines, and most activities related to youth self-reliance and child protection ceased. Legal assistance, employability services, and remote interpretation continued, albeit with very limited capacity and geographic coverage.

Despite resource limitations across all humanitarian partners, Greece's strong engagement with EU initiatives – particularly opportunities emerging from the EU Pact – creates momentum for further systems strengthening.

Building on its global expertise, presence at key border points, and close and trusted collaboration with State and municipal authorities, refugee communities, specialised organisations, and host population, UNHCR continues to work to promote a favourable **protection environment** and develop **sustainable responses and solutions** for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons in Greece.

UNHCR'S PROGRAMME 2026

\$8.3 million required to address prioritized needs and ensure timely scale-up of critical interventions.

THEMATIC AREAS & 2026 TARGETS	PRIORITIZED ACTIVITIES	UNMET NEEDS & POTENTIAL SCALE UP
 <p>Protection by presence</p> <p>Target: 35,000 people receive info & 500 border and frontline personnel trained</p>	<p>UNHCR is present at border areas where it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supports asylum-seekers with information provision alongside authorities and partners, and systematically identifies and refers vulnerable persons to specialized services gathers insights on trends, profiles, and protection needs through engagement with asylum-seekers, authorities and partners, enabling timely risk identification, operational recommendations, and policy advocacy facilitates capacity building and institutional sustainability through trainings to promote human rights and good protection practices 	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$900K more to enhance presence at border locations and train 500 border and frontline personnel and reach 20% more refugees</p>
 <p>Legal assistance</p> <p>Target: 400 individuals supported</p>	<p>Through its legal assistance programme, UNHCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers essential legal assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece, through its specialized partners, to strengthen their access to rights and ensure fair procedures promotes positive policy change through strategic litigation undertakes monitoring, advocacy and capacity building, aiming to ensure the quality of the asylum system, including for the implementation of the EU Pact 	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$1.4M more to reinstate support for family reunification, expand legal assistance, including for detainees, reaching an additional 2,000 individuals</p>
 <p>Solutions & sustainable integration</p> <p>Target: 1,000 refugees benefitted</p>	<p>UNHCR promotes social and economic inclusion for refugees by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enabling access to decent work and self-reliance in the reception centres and urban areas it operates and urban areas of Athens and Thessaloniki, including supporting with documentation, workshops on labour rights, Job Fairs, CV writing and interview preparedness enhancing entrepreneurship pathways engaging consistently with the private sector to create job opportunities, including job-matching through the Adama platform addressing barriers and advocating with authorities for access to social protection services 	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$1.5M more to bring back parts of its integration programme and support an additional 3,500 refugees with livelihoods interventions</p>
 <p>Protection of vulnerable people</p> <p>Target: 130 refugee children supported & 60 government staff trained</p>	<p>UNHCR works to protect vulnerable people through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early identification of vulnerabilities and referrals to specialized services, including for survivors of violence against women and children, individuals with mental health issues and children, particularly unaccompanied ones a small scale, but impactful refugee youth self-reliance programme expert technical support to the State (TSI project funded by DG Reform) to advance institutional reforms for refugee youth self-reliance and mental health institutional strengthening of the national protection system, through advocacy for policy reforms and trainings harmonization of Best Interests Procedures 	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$420K more to support an additional 150 refugee children to achieve self-reliance and train 100 government staff on vulnerable persons' protection</p>
 <p>Refugee voices are heard</p> <p>Target: 6,000 refugees, asylum-seekers & wider public reached</p>	<p>UNHCR promotes inclusive societies and empowers refugees via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultations with refugees and outreach to understand their needs and priorities two-way communication, feedback, assistance and referrals through established platforms such as the Helpdesk, UNHCR's HELP website, and other accessible channels capacity building for refugee communities, refugee-led and women-led organisations, with a view to strengthening their resilience and inclusion visibility initiatives, media engagement and collaboration with public figures aiming at increasing public awareness and promoting positive narratives 	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$350K more to extend its communications activities and services to a wider population, reaching an additional 2,000 individuals through UNHCR channels</p>

* Click on the above thematic areas to get further details