

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- UNHCR continued to focus on improving asylum systems, including the quality and consistency of procedures, reception conditions and the use of detention, among other aspects. Interventions were made where concerns arose about inadequate standards or conditions, or breaches of international and regional obligations. Through collaboration with States and a strengthened network of refugee lawyers, civil society organizations and practitioners, UNHCR was able to identify weaknesses in the asylum systems and explore ways of addressing these challenges.
- Judicial engagement by UNHCR served to influence interpretations of European laws on asylum, reflecting international standards more accurately in certain cases.
- All countries in the region respected the principle of *non-refoulement* and the right to international protection for Syrian refugees. Nonetheless, the increase in Syrian refugee arrivals with evident protection needs highlighted significant differences between individual European countries regarding the recognition and treatment of asylum-seekers. This led to disparities in levels of protection, although many countries maintained high recognition rates for Syrian applicants.
- UNHCR continued its active participation in the Sarajevo process and the Regional Housing Programme as part of efforts to end the protracted refugee situation in the western Balkans. The renewed efforts of the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, with the support of the international community, led to the organization of a donor conference where EUR 260 million was pledged to provide housing for 74,000 vulnerable people who had been displaced during the 1991-1995 conflicts.
- Since the commemoration of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in December 2011, Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova and Portugal have acceded to both statelessness conventions, while Hungary has lifted one of its reservations to the 1951 Convention. Croatia, Serbia and Georgia have acceded to one of the two instruments, and Ukraine's Parliament has adopted laws approving accession to both conventions.



A refugee trains to become a seamstress at the Refugee Integration Centre in Sofia, Bulgaria, as part of the National Integration Programme.

EUROPE

| Working environment |

UNHCR continued to work in 48 countries in the region and maintained active working relations with the European Union (EU) and its institutions and agencies, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the OSCE.

In 2012, according to provisional asylum statistics, over 350,000 new applications were filed in 38 European countries, representing an increase of close to 10 per cent compared to 2011. This was primarily due to a higher number of claims by asylum seekers from the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), a threefold increase since 2011, and the Russian Federation. The 27 EU Member States received 83 per cent of these applications. A total of 28,000 new applications by Syrian nationals were filed in the European Union between April 2011 and December 2012, with Germany and Sweden receiving 62 per cent of the new applications during 2012 (17,300 new applications). Following applicants from Syria and the Russian Federation, the leading countries of origin of asylum-seekers in the European Union and other European countries were Afghanistan and Somalia. Applications from citizens of several countries of South-Eastern Europe, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (Security Council resolution 1244(1999)) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, continued to feature among the highest claim numbers in several European Union member States.

UNHCR's activities in Europe continued to be very diverse, including the promotion of access to territory and improvement of procedures, the development and maintenance of fair and efficient asylum systems, and protection in mixed migration contexts. The organization prepared and responded to emergencies and facilitated durable solutions, such as local integration and resettlement. UNHCR's work also extended to protection and support for internally displaced persons (IDPs), addressing and preventing statelessness and promoting tolerance and openness towards people of concern.

Difficult domestic economic situations led to the introduction of restrictive asylum policies in some European States, often in response to populist movements. Nevertheless, Europe continued to be integral in defining and implementing international refugee law and policy with strong State and regional institutions, partners from civil society as well as regional courts playing a major role in shaping European standards.

| Achievements and impact |

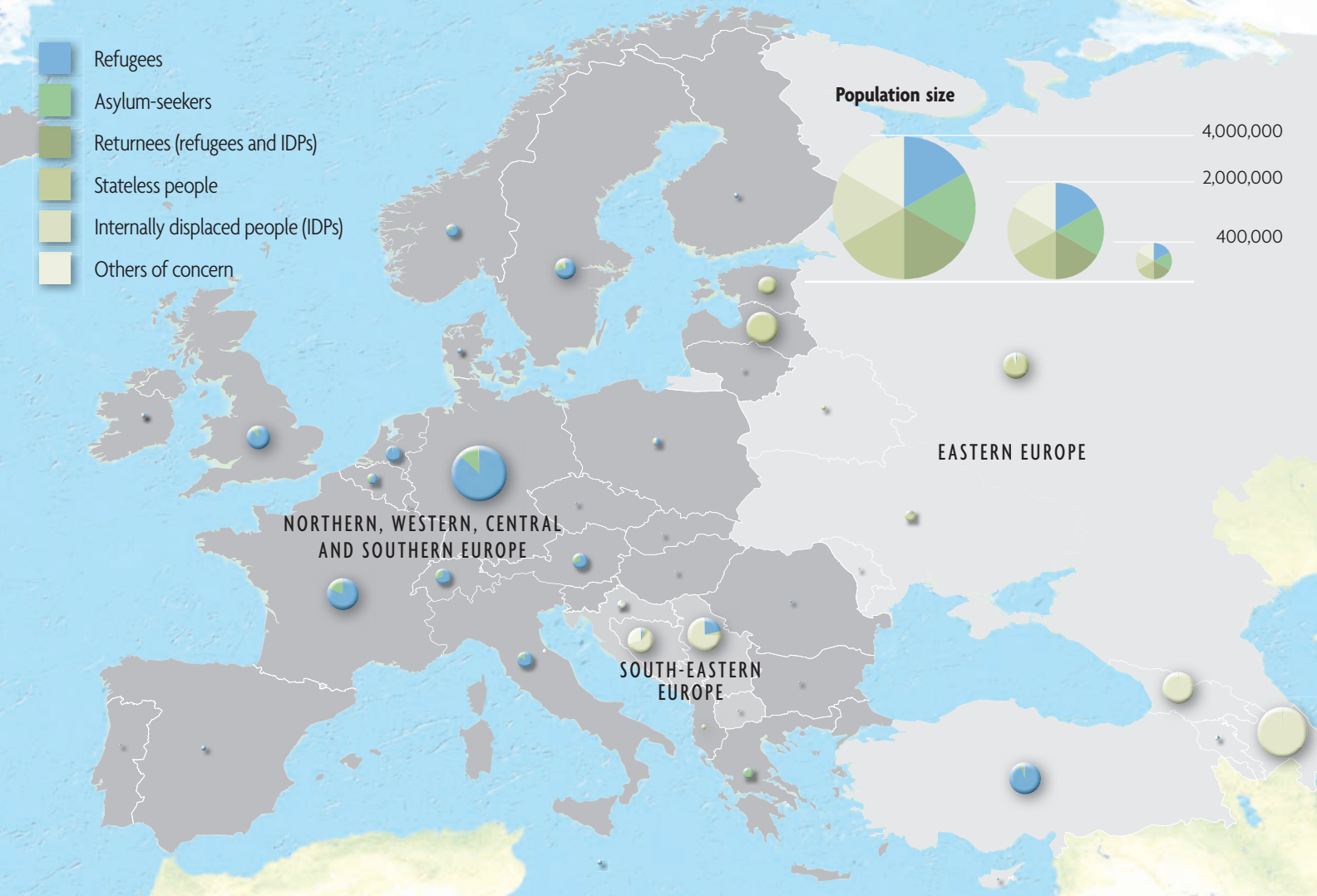
Since March 2011, more than 248,000 Syrians have sought protection and assistance in Turkey. Some 180,000 Syrians were registered and accommodated in 15 camps across seven provinces neighbouring Syria. UNHCR led the inter-agency humanitarian effort and supported the Turkish Government in addressing protection and assistance needs. UNHCR provided technical advice on registration, voluntary return, camp management, and maintaining the civilian character of asylum in addition to profiling Syrian refugees in urban settings.

UNHCR closely followed the development of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in the European Union and worked closely with Member States, including under the Cypriot and Irish Presidencies. Solidarity and responsibility sharing within the European Union remained critical to the future development of the CEAS. UNHCR provided input to the negotiation of proposed amendments to EU asylum legislation, which are expected to be adopted in 2013.

Important guidance regarding access to territory and procedures was provided by a decision of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Hirsi & Others v Italy* in February 2012. The decision clarified the obligation of States to afford effective access for asylum seekers to asylum procedures and to legal remedies, if required, in the context of extraterritorial border control activities.

In December 2012, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) handed down its decision in the case of *El Kott, Radi and Hazem v the Office of Immigration and Nationality*, relating to protection of Palestinians, a case in which UNHCR formally intervened before the CJEU for the second time. UNHCR also engaged with judicial processes, courts and lawyers in several other cases involving important protection issues in European and national courts.

UNHCR continued its dialogue with States to promote alternatives to detention and supported EU negotiations on amendments to the Reception Directive by promoting the regulation and limitation of detention for asylum seekers. UNHCR worked closely with Frontex, the EU border agency, contributing to numerous trainings and other activities.



UNHCR supported Governments in their efforts to develop comprehensive and effective asylum systems in Eastern Europe.

UNHCR worked with the European Asylum Support Office to coordinate practical cooperation on asylum among European Union member States by supporting the development of a work plan for 2012 and beyond. As many asylum-seekers continued to enter through Greece, putting pressure on the asylum system, UNHCR significantly increased its operational support for the new Greek Asylum Service, the Appeals Authority and the First Reception service to become fully operational. The organization also helped reduce the large appeals backlog. UNHCR's efforts contributed to the implementation of Greece's Action Plan on Migration Management and Asylum Reform.

As part of efforts to find durable solutions for people of concern, a Regional Housing Programme in South-Eastern Europe sought to address outstanding displacement issues from the 1991-1995 conflict. Based on the landmark political commitment expressed in the Belgrade Ministerial Declaration in late 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia produced a comprehensive Regional Housing Programme to address the most press-

ing housing needs of 74,000 vulnerable displaced persons. UNHCR worked alongside the four Governments, the European Union, OSCE, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the donor community to mobilize support for the programme presented at the Sarajevo Donor Conference and to ensure that sustainable projects reach the most vulnerable of those still in need of durable solutions.

The identification of stateless people in Europe improved in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, which joined Spain, Hungary, France, Italy and Latvia in establishing statelessness determination procedures. Belgium pledged to do the same and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is in the process of adopting legislation for this purpose. The Russian Federation, further to its pledge to reform its nationality law in favour of stateless former USSR citizens, adopted an amendment to that effect. Comprehensive studies mapped the stateless populations in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Similar mapping processes were underway in the Nordic and the Baltic countries. Research on statelessness was undertaken in Armenia, Belarus, Italy and Azerbaijan.

Financial information

The initial budget for Europe approved by the Executive Committee in 2012 amounted to USD 181.5 million. The revised 2012 budget at the end of the year was increased to USD 233.9 million.

Excluding Turkey, the overall trends and budgets for the Europe region remained stable with the main focus on protection-related activities through advocacy and capacity building. The main challenges in 2012 concerned: the operations in Turkey (related to the Syria situation) and Greece (activities related to asylum reform); efforts to address the needs related to mixed migration and asylum issues, especially in Western Europe; and achieving comprehensive solutions for the protracted IDP situation in the Balkans.

In South-Eastern Europe, UNHCR followed up on the conclusions of the Regional Statelessness Conference which took place in Zagreb in late 2011. National legislation on documentation and registration, including birth registration, was amended in many countries following the conference “Solving the Problems of People without Documents and Access to Rights” held in Skopje in April 2012, under the framework of the Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. National strategies for Roma were developed, based on the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.

UNHCR fostered durable solutions for IDPs in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe through protection oriented interventions. In Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)), relevant government counterparts, UN organizations, the EU, bilateral donors and NGOs were engaged and a Task Force on Durable Solutions was set up with the aim of closing the displacement chapter for the displaced within and outside of Kosovo. In Georgia, UNHCR continued to work with UNDP in the Gori region on long-term interventions to provide IDPs with access to housing and livelihood opportunities.

In 2012, European States received over 5,600 resettled refugees and UNHCR continued to support work towards implementation of the joint European Union Resettlement Programme. The European Union-funded project on reception and integration of resettled refugees was concluded with the establishment of a European resettlement network with a web-based platform. In addition, Germany announced the establishment of a programme to resettle 900 people over a period of three years. Several Central European States received

resettled refugees in late 2012 for the first time. Despite such accomplishments, UNHCR is looking to see further advances in the area of resettlement in Europe.

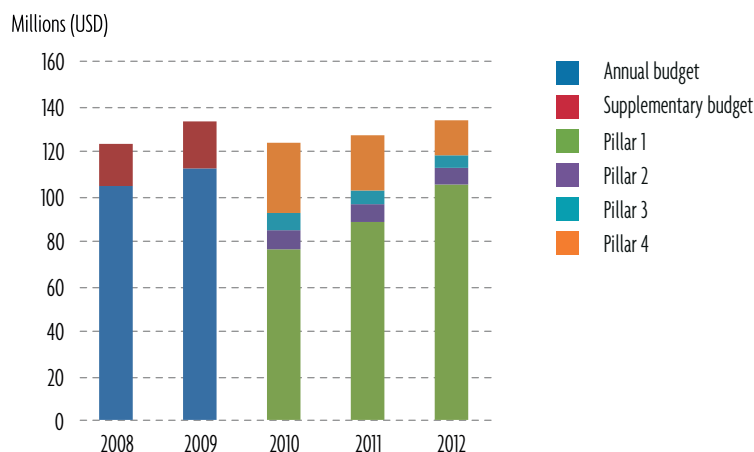
Family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection remains an area of priority for the Office. UNHCR provided input for the European Commission’s green paper on the right to family reunification of third country nationals living in Europe.

| Constraints |

Access to territory and national procedures for people seeking international protection in Europe remained a challenge, especially in the context of mixed migration. Mixed migration movements in South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe increasingly challenged States’ efforts to uphold sound asylum systems and protection standards. A concern in a number of States was the use of systematic, and occasionally prolonged, detention of asylum seekers, including families, unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable persons. Many European countries grappled with fears about social stability linked to changing demographics, particularly in light of the current volatile economic situation. In some contexts, this fuelled extremism, racist violence and hate crimes, which is also affecting refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless people and others. As a result, local integration for people of concern was at times challenging.

Large scale internal displacement remained an issue in Eastern Europe as more than 1 million people remained displaced in the Caucasus region. ■

Expenditure in Europe 2008-2012



BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE IN EUROPE | USD

Operation		Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	Total
EASTERN EUROPE						
Armenia	Budget	4,309,834	138,768	0	0	4,448,602
	Expenditure	1,407,416	101,750	0	0	1,509,166
Azerbaijan	Budget	4,297,640	384,517	0	1,234,274	5,916,431
	Expenditure	2,842,067	104,268	0	496,452	3,442,787
Georgia	Budget	2,079,375	736,930	0	12,142,790	14,959,095
	Expenditure	1,509,983	573,434	0	6,007,633	8,091,050
Russian Federation	Budget	9,587,476	506,698	0	0	10,094,174
	Expenditure	6,987,133	470,303	0	0	7,457,436
Turkey	Budget	70,934,298	44,000	0	0	70,978,298
	Expenditure	38,939,260	7,431	0	0	38,946,691
Ukraine Regional Office ¹	Budget	8,605,914	653,685	0	0	9,259,599
	Expenditure	6,867,743	311,878	0	0	7,179,621
Subtotal	Budget	99,814,537	2,464,598	0	13,377,064	115,656,199
	Expenditure	58,553,602	1,569,064	0	6,504,085	66,626,751
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Budget	4,432,852	1,809,414	0	8,786,738	15,029,004
	Expenditure	2,211,685	964,704	0	2,969,047	6,145,436
Croatia	Budget	1,399,162	351,907	3,251,931	0	5,003,000
	Expenditure	653,791	160,248	2,377,335	0	3,191,374
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	Budget	2,694,881	1,034,467	4,862,867	3,412,792	12,005,007
	Expenditure	1,200,590	1,031,101	3,317,506		5,549,197
Montenegro	Budget	4,209,323	341,559	0	0	4,550,882
	Expenditure	2,682,315	220,586	0	0	2,902,901
Serbia	Budget	7,378,415	1,022,518	0	14,607,367	23,008,300
	Expenditure	1,364,779	772,948	0	6,263,441	8,401,168
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Budget	3,628,672	356,975	0	0	3,985,647
	Expenditure	1,895,833	306,186	0	0	2,202,019
Subtotal	Budget	23,743,305	4,916,840	8,114,798	26,806,897	63,581,840
	Expenditure	10,008,993	3,455,773	5,694,841	9,232,488	28,392,095

¹ Includes activities in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova.

Operation		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	13,933,973	1,317,258	0	0	15,251,231
	Expenditure	11,032,815	1,080,250	0	0	12,113,065
Hungary Regional Office ³	Budget	10,688,354	828,957	0	0	11,517,311
	Expenditure	7,875,580	580,649	0	0	8,456,229
Italy Regional Office ⁴	Budget	18,816,105	142,584	0	0	18,958,689
	Expenditure	13,678,603	96,146	0	0	13,774,749
Spain	Budget	1,927,163	81,315	0	0	2,008,478
	Expenditure	1,700,888	79,395	0	0	1,780,283
Sweden Regional Office ⁵	Budget	2,136,852	650,040	0	0	2,786,892
	Expenditure	1,611,089	603,106	0	0	2,214,195
Regional Activities	Budget	4,116,781	0	0	0	4,116,781
	Expenditure	1,630,074	0	0	0	1,630,074
Subtotal	Budget	51,619,228	3,020,154	0	0	54,639,382
	Expenditure	37,529,049	2,439,546	0	0	39,968,595
Total	Budget	175,177,070	10,401,592	8,114,798	40,183,961	233,877,421
	Expenditure	106,091,644	7,464,383	5,694,841	15,736,573	134,987,441

² Includes activities in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the Liaison Office 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, and Malta.

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

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO EUROPE | USD

Donor	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Armenia	98,712				98,712
Austria	462,294				462,294
Azerbaijan			25,478		25,478
Belgium	94,453				94,453
Brazil	120,000				120,000
Central Emergency Response Fund	1,299,302				1,299,302
Council of Europe Development Bank	470,668				470,668
Croatia	70,032				70,032
Czech Republic	24,194				24,194
Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund	71,819				71,819
Divac Foundation			39,835		39,835
Dutch Postcode Lottery	254,692				254,692
Estonia			72,084		72,084
European Union	6,692,006		2,481,338		9,173,344
France	1,315,457				1,315,457
Germany	155,280	217,391	553,483	533,333	1,459,487
Greece	1,436,911				1,436,911
Hewlett-Packard	34,438				34,438
Hungary	257,885				257,885
International Organization for Migration	115,925		16,260		132,185
Ireland	25,974				25,974
Italy	3,023,409				3,023,409
Japan	100,000				100,000
Malta	43,605				43,605
Netherlands			676,632		676,632
New Zealand	819,001				819,001
Norway		574,555	73,566		648,121
Poland	72,597				72,597
Private donors in Spain	6,211				6,211
Republic of Korea	300,000				300,000
Romania	107,313				107,313
Russian Federation			200,000	850,000	1,050,000
Serbia	90,000				90,000
Slovak Republic	19,630				19,630
Spain	944,597				944,597
Switzerland	537,634				537,634
United Kingdom	2,280,176				2,280,176
United States of America	10,919,366			25,400,000	36,319,366
USA for UNHCR			18,000		18,000
Total	32,263,580	791,947	4,156,675	26,783,333	63,995,535

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