

EUROPE

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- To assure access to territory and asylum for those in need of protection, UNHCR worked with States and other partners in Europe to institute protection-sensitive border management procedures and safeguards for asylum-seekers. In Central Europe, border monitoring was conducted in tandem with training and cross-border coordination initiatives aimed at preventing *refoulement*. In Southern Europe, UNHCR worked with national actors to ensure access to protection for refugees who fled the turmoil in North Africa in 2011.
- UNHCR stepped up efforts to build asylum capacity and promote solidarity and responsibility-sharing among European countries. It also gave significant operational support to the Greek Government's efforts to reform its asylum system. In addition, under the framework of the Further Developing Asylum Quality (FDQ) project, UNHCR collaborated with 12 European Union (EU) Member States to develop mechanisms in national asylum structures to ensure high standards in the implementation of asylum procedures. In Eastern Europe, UNHCR engaged in dialogue and capacity-building, including through EU-supported frameworks.
- With detention of asylum-seekers a growing concern, UNHCR monitored conditions of detention and advocated for effective safeguards, improved conditions and alternative solutions.
- In its ongoing search for durable solutions, UNHCR supported a landmark Joint Ministerial Declaration signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia reflecting a firm commitment to find solutions for those who remain displaced as a result of the 1991-1995 conflict. UNHCR also focused on promoting and supporting resettlement in Europe, including through the second phase of an EU-funded joint ICMC/IOM/UNHCR project on reception and integration. Specific efforts in Central Europe included support for integration programmes in the Czech Republic and Romania. In Germany, a new annual resettlement programme for 300 cases was established.
- UNHCR continued to help State authorities develop and reinforce integration services for refugees and others in need of protection. To strengthen public support and receptiveness, emphasis was put on campaigns to foster tolerance and awareness as a means of addressing the xenophobia and racism that refugees are often subject to.
- Croatia and Serbia acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, while Belgium and Luxembourg pledged their ratification as part of the commemorations. Several other countries made commitments to institute new measures to address statelessness. A Statelessness Conference for South-Eastern European countries, co-organized by UNHCR and the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and supported by the European Commission, resulted in the Zagreb Declaration, a commitment to improve civil status documentation and registration services for minority-community members, including Roma. UNHCR conducted a number of studies in European countries to identify gaps and help resolve problems in this important area.
- UNHCR worked with the Government of Finland and other partners to hold one of the *Dialogues with Women and Girls* in Europe to improve the situation of this group in various countries in the region.



This young Bhutanese girl is making new friends in Wommels, Netherlands, where her family has resettled.

| Working environment |

UNHCR's operations in 45 European countries respond to a wide range of protection challenges involving asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and situations of statelessness. In some States, asylum systems are well-established and strong; in others, they remain fragile.

Increased mobility leads to mixed migration—the movement of refugees alongside people moving for economic and other reasons—within, through and to Europe. While three-quarters of the nearly 3 million people displaced by conflict in South-Eastern Europe during the 1990s have returned home or found other durable solutions, some 450,000 people—refugees and IDPs—remain displaced. Large-scale internal displacement remains a reality in Eastern Europe, with nearly a million IDPs. However, new studies of statelessness issues are providing the basis for dialogue on better identification, protection and prevention measures.

Europe remains an important asylum destination. In 2011, some 326,000 people applied for asylum in Europe, with 85 per cent of the applications in EU countries. This represents a 19 per cent increase Europe-wide and a 15 per cent increase in the European Union over the comparable figures for 2010. The largest increase was reported by the Southern European countries, with an 87 per cent rise, mainly due to boat arrivals in Italy and Malta, as well as growth in asylum-claim registrations in Turkey. In the Nordic countries, however, the number of newly registered asylum-seekers fell by 10 per cent over the year, to virtually the same level observed in 2007 and 2008. The top five countries of origin of applicants in Europe were Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia (and Kosovo: S/RES/1244(1999)), the Russian Federation and Pakistan.

The European Union, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Coordination in Europe (OSCE) are valuable protection partners for UNHCR. The European Union's efforts to establish a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), in particular, influences standard-setting and practical cooperation on asylum among its Member States. EU standards also influence other European countries, most notably EU candidate countries, but also others, through partnerships and funding.

Common standards defined by EU legislation or European courts directly

influence national practice. This makes coordination of growing importance—including through the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), with which UNHCR established firm cooperative links in its first operational year. Weaknesses, deficiencies and particular pressures affecting the asylum systems of individual States have wide ranging effects on other States, underscoring the need for common approaches and high protection standards. The situation in Greece has required specific attention in this regard, and UNHCR made a significant contribution to the country's national asylum reform process in 2011.

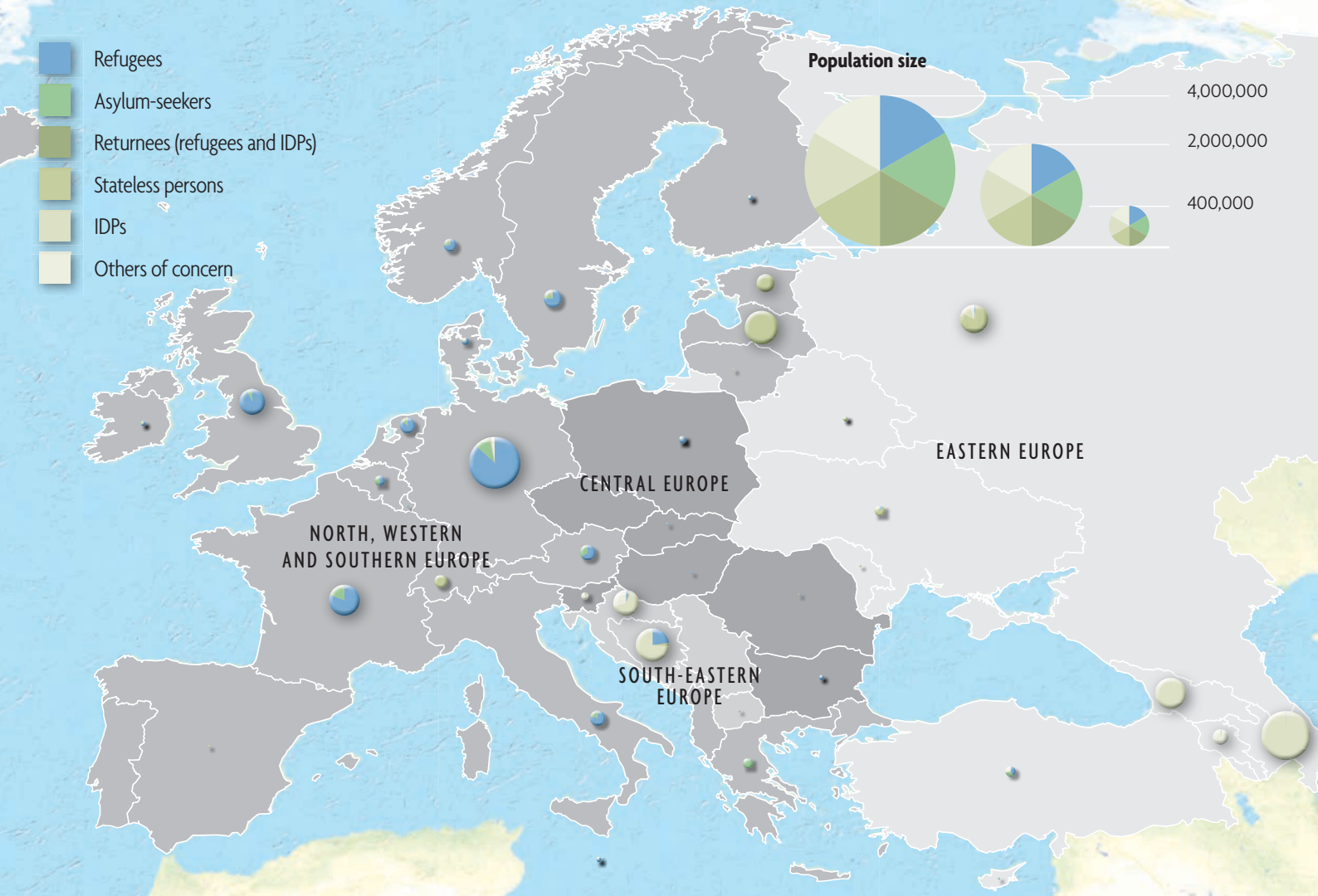
The effects of the economic crisis in Europe have led to budget cuts affecting already limited resources for legal aid, reception, support for vulnerable asylum-seekers and integration. Concerns about the economic crisis and developments in North Africa and the Middle East also affected public debate in many countries on asylum and migration. While the overall commitment to international protection in general is high, anti-immigration sentiments persist, resulting in reduced interest in maintaining or improving asylum space. In some countries, negative attitudes towards refugees have resulted in more racially motivated crime. Roma, in particular, are the target of prejudice, discrimination and hate crimes, forcing some of them to move regularly or irregularly within Europe.

| Achievements and impact |

● *Building public support for refugee protection*

The commemorations in 2011 of the 1951 and 1961 Conventions provided additional opportunities to highlight the situation of asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons and others of concern to UNHCR. The "I" Campaign was successful in attracting new interest and support for UNHCR's work throughout Europe. Moreover, through portrayals of 60 refugees' lives, UNHCR told the story of refugee protection in 60 years since 1951. The photographs were displayed in 18 European cities, as well as in Brazil, Canada and the United States of America.

UNHCR worked to raise awareness of refugee issues throughout Europe, including through traditional and new media. Local authorities were addressed through communications on resettlement and integration, and young people were engaged



through school-outreach programmes. These included the youth forum discussions co-organized with the CoE in Greece, and through an online game, *Against all Odds*, in the Nordic countries.

On statelessness, in addition to discussions and analytical reports targeting policy-makers, public events were held in the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom to show the impact of statelessness on people's lives.

○ Access to territory and quality of asylum systems

Access to territory and European land and sea borders continued to be a concern for UNHCR, which addressed this issue in cooperation with governmental and other partners. Following the arrival of some 56,000 people from North Africa in early 2011, UNHCR worked closely with governments to identify those among them in need of protection. In Latvia, a new partnership agreement on border monitoring was concluded, and implementation of existing agreements with countries on the eastern

border of the European Union continued. Cross-border regional coordination on border management took place with countries such as Croatia, Serbia and Ukraine. UNHCR's ongoing liaison work with FRONTEX supported protection-sensitive border control.

The detention of asylum-seekers and reception arrangements in general were monitored closely in several countries. Alternatives to detention were promoted both nationally and at a multi-stakeholder event in Brussels, as well as in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Detention remains an area in which further engagement is imperative.

The lack of adequate reception facilities is of specific concern in some countries. UNHCR also advocated for appropriate reception standards in countries where an increase in the number of applications revealed gaps, including in Belgium, France and Luxembourg.

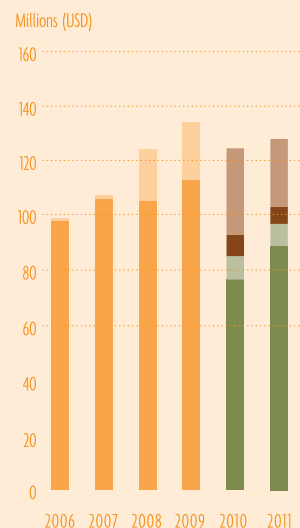
Participatory assessments in Central European countries identified the key concerns of asylum-seekers, refugees and others in need of protection. UNHCR sought to address these concerns with governments and partners.

Financial information

The budget for Europe in

2011 totalled USD 196.9 million. However, only some 69 per cent of this amount was available to address the assessed needs.

Expenditure in Europe 2006-2011



UNHCR worked throughout Europe to strengthen the legal and practical framework for robust asylum systems. In Eastern Europe, UNHCR intervened on behalf of individuals or groups to ensure access to territory, procedures and appeal processes. It served as the first contact and referral point for asylum-seekers wishing to avail themselves of government-run status determination procedures in Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Turkey.

In the widely-acknowledged report, *Safe at Last*, UNHCR examined application of Article 15c of the EU Qualification Directive relating to persons fleeing indiscriminate violence in armed conflict. It also enhanced support for the development of protection standards through engagement with competent courts. Two decisions on cases where UNHCR had intervened as third party, *MSS vs. Belgium and Greece* before the European Court of Human Rights and *NS and ME* before the EU Court of Justice, had a particular impact on some aspects of CEAS, in particular the Dublin Regulation.

Special efforts were directed towards supporting development of the Greek asylum system through implementation of the country's Action Plan on Migration Management and Asylum Reform. UNHCR's direct operational support, including through the deployment of 38 staff with national authorities, contributed to progress. Nevertheless, serious challenges persisted at the end of 2011.

The building of quality in asylum systems was also supported through initiatives in the United Kingdom, Austria and Sweden, as well as a specific project on the response to claims from survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in Germany. UNHCR also successfully concluded a scheme linked to the FDQ project involving countries in Central, Southern and Western Europe. In addition, UNHCR remained engaged in the asylum procedure in Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Spain.

Capacity-building focused on strengthening specific protection areas covering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, as well as vulnerable people, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied and separated children. In addition, UNHCR helped the NGO-led projects, *Fleeing Homophobia*, and *Gender-Sensitive Asylum Procedures*, to reach large audiences interested in these two subject areas.

In Eastern Europe, insufficient registration of asylum-seekers, problems in accessing territory and low recognition rates indicate weak asylum systems. UNHCR worked to strengthen these systems and promote legislation to create fair and transparent

processes to deliver protection to those who need it. While many countries in this part of Europe have put in place new asylum legislation, or are in the process of doing so, implementation does not always meet international standards. Asylum systems are particularly vulnerable during times of government reform, which can hamper the functioning of administrative structures.

○ Durable solutions

UNHCR promoted a stronger European role in global resettlement efforts. Through the second joint ICMC/IOM/UNHCR resettlement project, funded by the European Refugee Fund, 17 countries were assisted through stakeholder meetings, training, information-sharing and other activities to build resettlement reception and integration capacity. Germany's announcement of the establishment of a new annual resettlement quota of 300 places was a significant development in this regard.

Particular efforts were made to resettle refugees from North Africa. Some 570 refugees originating from this region departed for their new homes, while some 800 others have been promised places. UNHCR also supported the integration of resettled refugees in the Czech Republic and Romania, and encouraged EU efforts to relocate 230 people from Malta as part of the EUREMA I project.

UNHCR emphasized the importance of support for the integration of refugees. Input was given to both EU and national legislative and policy discussions, and UNHCR contributed to integration strategies in several countries. In Malta, a project to integrate women and separated children received strong support. In Estonia, UNHCR implemented a project with IOM that focused on teachers, schoolchildren and journalists. Family reunification was pursued throughout the region and was successful in some cases.

UNHCR is looking into how development actors can ensure that the needs of refugees are met. In many cases IDPs are integrated into national development frameworks, including in Eastern Europe. Continued efforts to find durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs in South-Eastern Europe led to a landmark Joint Ministerial Declaration by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, reflecting a firm commitment to achieve durable solutions for nearly 74,000 displaced people without housing. A regional programme and work plan sets out concrete steps to be taken, including the provision of civil documentation.

Under the Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) adopted in 2010, UNHCR and development actors assisted Bosnia and Herzegovina to close the collective centres that remain in the country.

Based on a needs assessment for IDPs from Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)) in Serbia, which indicated that nearly 80 per cent of them are willing to remain in their place of displacement, UNHCR supported the authorities to strengthen local integration or assist voluntary return. Serbia adopted a National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, addressing housing, health, education, employment and documentation issues.

| Constraints |

Economic difficulties and unemployment in many countries had a negative effect on public attitudes towards migrants and refugees. Budget cuts in the asylum area affected reception standards, while support for the integration of refugees and improving asylum systems declined.

Hardening attitudes towards irregular entry and calls for stricter border control also affected refugees, who often had to resort to irregular means to reach safety in Europe. Detention as a deterrent or punishment is increasingly used at entry points, during processes or before return.

Significant differences in practice and quality among asylum systems contribute to secondary movements. The existence of protection gaps in some countries leads to questions about the workability of the Dublin system.

Some European countries prioritize migration control, without necessarily allocating sufficient resources to ensure that safeguards are available for those needing protection.

Many asylum-seekers and refugees in Eastern Europe are dependent on the limited financial support that UNHCR can provide. A lack of legal status and inability to access the labour market impede their pursuit of durable solutions and may motivate their onward movement in search of the legal, economic and social protection to which they are entitled. Integration schemes for recognized refugees throughout Eastern Europe are yet to be properly developed or prioritized in government planning.

Durable solutions for the nearly 1 million IDPs often cannot be implemented as the root causes of the displacement remain unresolved. In some parts of the region, humanitarian space has been narrowing and security concerns limit UNHCR's scope for action, hence the need to develop alternative intervention mechanisms. ■

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE IN EUROPE | USD

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
EASTERN EUROPE						
Armenia	Budget	2,391,101	180,784	983,717	0	3,555,602
	Expenditure	1,040,889	114,059	248,068	0	1,403,016
Azerbaijan	Budget	4,792,535	253,233	0	1,078,853	6,124,621
	Expenditure	3,239,524	96,981	0	299,898	3,636,403
Georgia	Budget	2,798,288	1,587,558	0	13,955,217	18,341,063
	Expenditure	2,260,273	703,977	0	11,810,467	14,774,717
Russian Federation	Budget	8,567,841	1,220,242	1,281,808	13,675,359	24,745,250
	Expenditure	7,590,210	921,569	281,024	2,516,680	11,309,483
Turkey	Budget	20,197,926	249,392	0	0	20,447,318
	Expenditure	12,294,401	147,010	0	0	12,441,411
Ukraine Regional Office ¹	Budget	10,555,407	852,287	0	0	11,407,694
	Expenditure	6,667,347	448,880	0	0	7,116,227
Subtotal	Budget	49,303,098	4,343,496	2,265,525	28,709,429	84,621,548
	Expenditure	33,092,644	2,432,476	529,092	14,627,045	50,681,257

¹ Includes activities in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova.

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Budget	3,918,465	1,233,886	0	12,295,172	17,447,523
	Expenditure	2,444,924	819,667	0	2,653,760	5,918,351
Croatia	Budget	1,502,558	491,331	5,031,409	0	7,025,298
	Expenditure	690,067	260,541	2,082,278	0	3,032,886
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	Budget	1,156,000	1,220,470	8,562,066	3,469,916	14,408,452
	Expenditure	1,154,986	1,010,410	3,554,467	2,023,804	7,743,667
Montenegro	Budget	5,049,243	437,226	0	0	5,486,469
	Expenditure	2,863,519	269,274	0	0	3,132,793
Serbia	Budget	13,022,355	773,805	85,668	14,471,631	28,353,459
	Expenditure	9,180,666	728,310	0	5,506,470	15,415,446
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Budget	3,206,489	338,319	0	0	3,544,808
	Expenditure	1,920,663	167,743	0	0	2,088,406
Subtotal	Budget	27,855,110	4,495,037	13,679,143	30,236,719	76,266,009
	Expenditure	18,254,825	3,255,945	5,636,745	10,184,034	37,331,549
CENTRAL EUROPE						
Hungary Regional Office ²	Budget	9,695,418	648,188	0	0	10,343,606
	Expenditure	7,835,611	502,769	0	0	8,338,380
Subtotal	Budget	9,695,418	648,188	0	0	10,343,606
	Expenditure	7,835,611	502,769	0	0	8,338,380
NORTHERN, WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE						
Belgium Regional Office ³	Budget	12,354,702	1,306,944	0	0	13,661,646
	Expenditure	11,067,994	1,264,087	0	0	12,332,081
Italy Regional Office ⁴	Budget	18,920,412	81,473	0	0	19,001,885
	Expenditure	13,873,225	71,144	0	0	13,944,369
Spain	Budget	1,384,762	234,190	0	0	1,618,952
	Expenditure	1,203,065	196,171	0	0	1,399,236
Sweden Regional Office ⁵	Budget	2,308,975	469,541	0	0	2,778,516
	Expenditure	1,693,123	332,643	0	0	2,025,766
Regional Activities	Budget	3,735,563	0	0	0	3,735,563
	Expenditure	2,168,429	0	0	0	2,168,429
Subtotal	Budget	38,704,414	2,092,148	0	0	40,796,562
	Expenditure	30,005,836	1,864,045	0	0	31,869,881
Total	Budget	125,558,040	11,578,869	15,944,668	58,946,148	212,027,725
	Expenditure	89,188,916	8,055,235	6,165,837	24,811,079	128,221,067

² Includes activities in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

³ Includes activities in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the Liaison Office in Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

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 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Andorra					10,000	10,000
Austria	173,626					173,626
Belgium	87,669		128,603			216,272
Brazil	50,000					50,000
CERF	1,692,740					1,692,740
Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)	369,714			102,333		472,046
Divac Foundation				118,653		118,653
European Union	3,439,975		404,695	3,241,593		7,086,263
France	875,955					875,955
Lebara Foundation	141,443					141,443
Germany					525,624	525,624
Greece	2,075,873					2,075,873
International Olympic Committee	54,239					54,239
International Organization for Migration	219,549			21,040		240,590
Ireland	26,667					26,667
Italy	2,411,368					2,411,368
Japan					615,536	615,536
Malta	79,082					79,082
Netherlands	54,889					54,889
Private donors in the Netherlands	27,049					27,049
Private donors in the United Kingdom	143,081					143,081
Russian Federation				200,000	550,000	750,000
Serbia					58,086	58,086
South Africa					122,761	122,761
Spain	582,865					582,865
Sweden	29,901					29,901
Switzerland		130,925	10,753	741,935	268,817	1,152,431
Trust Fund for International Coopera- tion for Development				71,964		71,964
UN Millennium Development Goal				231,808		231,808
UN Trust Fund for Human Security			12,370	312,084		324,454
United Kingdom	663,580					663,580
United States of America	1,468,500				23,301,000	24,769,500
Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe				333,333		333,333
Total	14,667,764	130,925	556,421	5,374,744	25,451,825	46,181,680