Between January 2015 and September 2016, more than 664,500 refugee and migrant children claimed asylum in Europe. This represents around a third of all asylum claims registered in Europe during the same period of time.

Around half of all refugee and migrant children sought international protection in Germany. Other countries, which have recorded high numbers of asylum claims by children are Sweden, Hungary, Austria, France, Switzerland and Belgium.

While the number of sea arrivals during the first nine months of 2016 is 40 per cent lower compared to the same period in 2015, the number of child asylum claims is at least 15 per cent higher, which represents 35,200 children more than 2015.

One third of all child asylum claims in Europe were registered by Syrians, followed by Afghans (22 per cent), Iraqis (11 per cent), Kosovars (4 per cent) and Eritreans (3 per cent).

Around 25 per cent of all child asylum claims in Europe in 2015 were registered by unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).
As of mid-October, barely 4% (6,061 people) out of the 160,000 relocation quota for member states have been met, and only 1,700 children in total (mainly Syrians) have been relocated - some 1,600 from Greece and around 100 from Italy. Children represent 7 per cent of people relocated from Italy and 33 per cent from Greece (including 8 per cent were between 0 and 2 years of age).

Most children have been relocated from Greece to mainly France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Finland and Spain.

Only 93 (or less than 1 per cent) out of more than 22,000 UASC, who arrived in Italy and Greece in 2016 benefitted from relocation. They all departed from Greece.

With the closure of borders on the Eastern Mediterranean route and the entry into force of the EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016, the overall number of sea arrivals in Greece has significantly decreased. Yet, refugees and migrants, including hundreds of children, continue arriving on Greek islands.

Despite the overall small proportion of children using the Central Mediterranean route, Italy has seen a sharp increase in the number and proportion of UASC among all arrivals in 2016. During the first nine months of 2016, almost 21,000 UASC arrived on Italian shores - some 9,000 more than 2015. In addition, while in 2015 UASC made around 7 in 10 of all child arrivals, this proportion has increased to 9 in 10 in 2016.

Many of them may not be eligible for relocation due to multiple criteria, but they still have needs, including protection and education.