



Refugee and Migrant Response on the Mediterranean and Western Balkan Routes


Humanitarian Situation Report No. 48


Mid-Year Report: 1 January to 30 June 2023


Situation in Numbers

Highlights

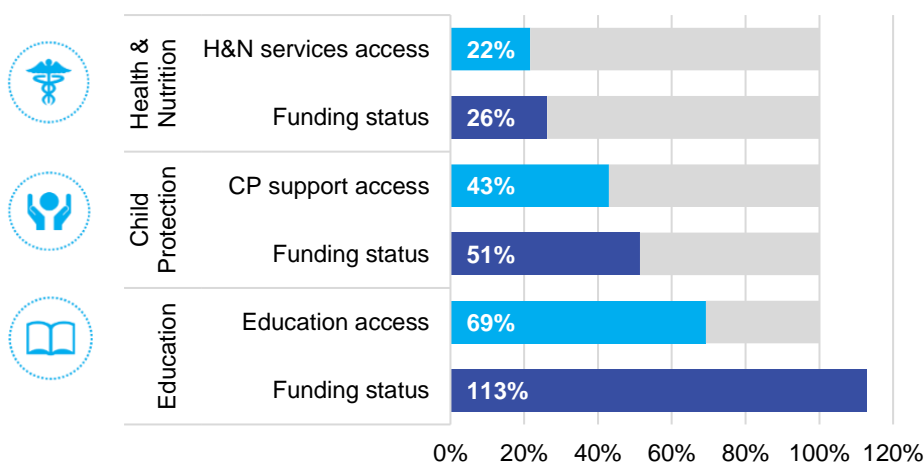
- Between January and June 2023, an estimated 129,495 refugees and migrantsⁱ, arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria,ⁱⁱ Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and North Africa. This represented a significant increase in arrivals of 81 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.
- In the five countries, UNICEF reached 19,340 children with child protection services, while 1,033 frontline workers improved their knowledge and skills on child protection. Around 22,184 children gained access to education, while 2,135 schoolteachers were trained on inclusion of refugee and migrant children. 1,333 children benefited from general health checks and referrals and 97,931 people were reached through messaging on access to services.
- In the first half of 2023, UNICEF received US\$ 2.4 million against its USD 37 million appeal. With US\$ 20.7 million of carry-forward funding, the appeal is 68 per cent funded. This however does not cover all countries and sectors equally with significant gaps in Serbia and Italy and across all sectors.

 **11,213** - estimated # of children among arrivals in 2023 in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, and Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ

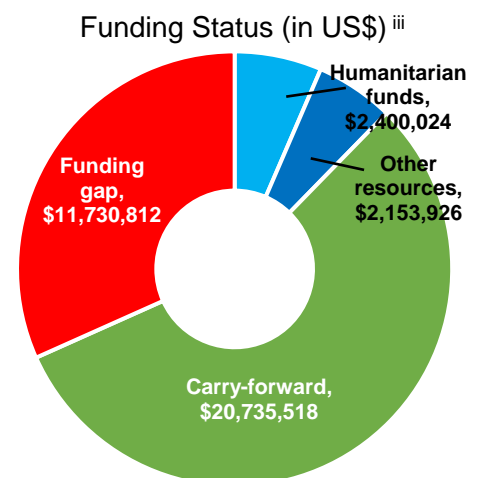
 **129,495** - estimated # of arrivals in 2023 in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria,ⁱⁱ Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ

 **18,170** - estimated # of unaccompanied and separated children present in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status***



UNICEF Appeal 2023 US\$ 37,020,280



^{*}For education, the funding status includes carryover from 2022 in Greece, which represents 93.5% of the total funding received, explaining the high status of funding. The implementation however, continuous in 2023, thus results are still to be reported. ^{**}For child protection, 24% of the available funding is allocated to Bulgaria for the construction of a safe zone for unaccompanied and separated children. Construction is ongoing and thus, results have not been reported yet.

ⁱ Estimations of arrivals are based on UNHCR, IOM, Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Special Secretariat for Unaccompanied Minors, Italian Ministry of Interior, Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and State Agency for Refugees, Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The figures do not include Ukrainian refugees who arrived in the region.

ⁱⁱ For Bulgaria, this only includes the number of asylum-seekers, the number of arrivals is not available but estimated to be much larger.

ⁱⁱⁱ The overall HAC funding gap status does not represent gaps by sector. For further details by sector, please refer to Annex B.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

By the end of June UNICEF's [2023 Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\) appeal for the refugee and migrant response on the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes](#) was 68 percent funded (US\$ 25.3 million), including US\$ 20.7 million carry-over from 2022ⁱⁱⁱ with US\$ 2.4 million received in 2023. The carry-over included generous, multi-year contributions from the European Union (EU) to Greece for education which makes up US\$15.7 million or 93.5 percent of the funding available against the education sector. Additional contributions were received from the Government of Switzerland, the European Commission, the Akelius Foundation, the Porticus Foundation, and UNICEF National Committee in Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland and pooled Global Thematic Humanitarian funds. The response to urgent humanitarian needs of refugee children and families fleeing from Ukraine continued to be supported under the Pillar 2 of the [2023 HAC Ukraine and Refugee Response Appeal](#), aligned with the Inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), and related results are reported under the [Ukraine Refugee Response situation reports](#).

Flexible, timely resources remain critical to enable UNICEF to address immediate needs and mitigate longer-term impacts on vulnerable refugee and migrant children in Europe. While generous contributions were carried over, funding was not equal among countries. Funding gaps remained particularly high in Serbia (74 per cent) and Italy (58 per cent), which significantly limited capacity to respond to existing needs.

UNICEF continued to work with national and local authorities, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organisations, and religious leaders to ensure the rights of children and families on the move were protected. Inter-agency coordination enabled effective emergency response, relocation of vulnerable children and families, and country-specific initiatives to ensure access to protection and basic services for populations in need.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Between January and June 2023, an estimated 129,495 refugees and migrants, arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, North Africa and other countries in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. This figure represented a significant increase in arrivals of 81 per cent compared to the same period in 2022. At the end of June, at least 34,362 children, the vast majority of whom (approximately 18,170) unaccompanied and separated children, were estimated to be present in the five countries, in addition to the significant number of refugees from Ukraine who remain present in the region.^{iv}

The number of refugees and migrants coming to the region through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes increased significantly due to a variety of root causes, including conflict and instability, impacts of climate change, and food insecurity. National systems in hosting countries continued to be stretched, making it challenging for governments to sustain equal access to quality services for refugee and migrant as well as host communities. In addition, many countries across the Schengen zone adapted stricter border security and restricting policies, with continued pushbacks, psychological and physical violence being reported at the Western Balkans route, impacting the ability of refugees and migrants to move safely and access essential services. Critical gaps included overcrowded and inadequate reception facilities – especially for unaccompanied and separated children, women, and girls. Additional challenges remain in capacities to provide adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, sufficient access to health and protection services and learning opportunities for children and families as well as insufficient measures to address gender-based violence (GBV) risks for women and girls. Insufficient mechanisms for identification, referrals, case management and best interest determination as well as limited availability of alternative care and legal guardianship services, exacerbated the vulnerability of children, especially those who were unaccompanied and separated.

Crossings via the Mediterranean Sea remained extremely dangerous, with a high frequency of tragedies occurring in the first half of 2023. In late February, a boat carrying refugees and migrants sank amidst harsh weather conditions in Calabria, **Italy** resulting in the death of at least 92 people and many more missing, including many children, with only 79 known survivors. Similarly, off the coast of **Greece**, a ship carrying reportedly at least 700 people, including women and children, capsized on 14 June. A total of 86 people were rescued, including five unaccompanied children, and transferred to emergency shelters. UNICEF called for the provision of safe and legal pathways for migration and asylum in the European Union ([press release](#)) and expressed its readiness support to the authorities who coordinated the response.

ⁱⁱⁱ Against US\$ 20.7 million carryover from 2022, US\$15.7 million is funding received from EU under education programme for Greece.

^{iv} The response for the Ukrainian refugee populations continued to be provisioned for and reported under the 2023 Ukraine and Refugee Response HAC.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

GREECE

Between January and May 2023, 6,021 refugee and migrant arrivals, including an estimated 814 children and 821 unaccompanied and separated children (600 boys, 221 girls), were recorded.^v This presented an increase of 49 per cent compared to the same period in 2022. The great majority arrived by sea (increased by 167 percent) on the islands. An estimated 86,600 refugees and migrants, including 21,820 children (56 percent boys, 46 percent girls) and 1,675 unaccompanied and separated children (83 percent boys, 14 percent girls, 10 percent below the age of 14), are present across the country.^{vi} 75 percent of the children are estimated to be of school age.^{vii} Reception facilities on the islands house a total 4,075 refugees and migrants, including 732 children – almost double the population of May 2022. The most common countries of origin are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, the State of Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and Eritrea.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF, in partnership with GIVMED, continued supporting access to health products for the refugee and migrant population in the country. By the end of June 2023, GIVMED continued coordinating the donation of health products to organizations supporting refugee and migrant children and their families, reaching more than 1,333 girls, boys, women and men. In addition, 950 refugee and migrant children received, through trained teachers, better information on vaccination and medication. At UNICEF-supported Mother and Child Spaces in Athens and Thessaloniki 576 refugee mothers and 232 infants and children accessed maternal support, including breastfeeding and information on nutrition.

Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): UNICEF reached 3,902 children with structured mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) across Greece, including in educational centres and spaces near the Asylum Service. During the first half of 2023, 317 frontline workers were supported in improving their knowledge and skills in GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response. Moreover, the monitoring framework for Greece's new guardianship scheme for unaccompanied children was finalized with UNICEF technical support to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. This includes reporting tools as well as feedback and complaints forms that can be used by unaccompanied children.

Education and Skills Building: In 2023, 19,300 refugee and migrant children benefitted from access to formal and/or non-formal education. A total of 17,134 children were enrolled in formal education in Greece at the end of June 2023. Between April and June 2023, 1,878 refugee and migrant children received educational support for the first time at 47 UNICEF-supported homework and creative activities centers. This includes 476 unaccompanied or separated children and 24 students with disabilities. In addition, a total of 1,687 formal schoolteachers were trained in 2023 on how best to include refugee and migrant children in their classrooms. UNICEF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, organized workshops for educational staff and authorities in several locations across Greece, including a conference in Thessaloniki with over 100 participants, as part of the "All Children in Education" programme (ACE).

Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP): 383 adolescents and youth with a refugee background had the opportunity to personally and professionally grow from skills building, including through the UNICEF-supported [FunDoo](#) tool which contributes to the promotion of 21st century skills.

Social Behavior Change (SBC)/ Accountability to Affected Population (AAP): UNICEF and UNHCR marked the World Refugee Day under the auspices of Thessaloniki Municipality with the participation of 200 students from the UNICEF-supported All Children in Education programme who had the chance to participate in sports and recreational activities.

ITALY

In the first half of 2023, 64,930 refugee and migrants arrived in Italy, including an estimated 6,810 children and 4,192 unaccompanied and separated children.^{viii} Out of the number of people who arrived by the sea, 10.5 percent are women.^{ix} There are an estimated 116,834 refugees and migrants present, including 11,687 accompanied children and 15,950 unaccompanied and separated children who are hosted in reception centers (86 percent male, 14 percent female). The

^v Ministry of Migration and Asylum. Data for June not available yet. Number of children includes only sea arrivals as of April 2023.

^{vi} Estimation of refugee and migrant population based on UNHCR data as of 23 February, estimation of children based on UNICEF data as of May, number of unaccompanied and separated children based on government data as of July 2023.

^{vii} Based on data from the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

^{viii} Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies

^{ix} UNHCR Data Portal, as of July <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205>

main countries of origin are Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Syria, while most unaccompanied children are from Egypt (25 percent).

The influx in arrival continues and government capacity to sustain access to quality services has been stretched, resulting in substantial shortcomings in reception conditions, including health, WASH and protection (child protection and GBV) services. On 11 April the Government declared a "state of emergency" for an initial six months to manage the influx. This is in addition to the "state of emergency" for the Ukrainian refugee influx in effect since March 2023 and extended until 31 December 2023. UNICEF continues to coordinate with government, UN agencies and other partners to provide increasing humanitarian needs.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: In the first half of 2023, 9,691 children were provided with quality child protection interventions, including in areas of disembarkation and transit in the Southern and Northern parts of Italy. 862 frontline workers and practitioners were trained in child protection standards, including MHPSS principles and child safeguarding. In addition, four case managers were deployed to support local authorities to manage the most vulnerable cases among unaccompanied and separated children, families, women and girls who survived or were at risk of GBV. In the first two quarters of 2023, UNICEF and partners reached over 156,610 refugees and migrants with GBV risk mitigation, prevention and response activities, with in-person and online modalities, mostly targeting women and girls but also engaging men and boys through awareness-raising activities. Among these interventions, in collaboration with Save the Children, Centro Penc, Tangram and CIAC, 1,607 individuals at risk and/or survivors received in-person information on GBV, accessed GBV case management and psychosocial support, or were referred to specialized services. Around 154,000 migrants and refugees were reached with online information on potential protection risks online. UNICEF and partners enhanced the capacity of 227 frontline workers through training on GBV standards and risk mitigation measures via e-learning, online and in-presence training. UNICEF further strengthened the contextualization of the model of Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) by leading and providing technical support to the Community of Practice on WGSS management and by finalizing the partnership with two national organizations, Tangram and CIAC, for the support of two WGSS respectively in Cagliari and Parma, to strengthen migrant and refugee women and girls' agency, participation and empowerment and, ultimately, mitigate the risk of GBV and connect survivors to life-saving services.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Interior to develop a guideline on the identification, referral and intake of asylum seekers and refugees with specific needs in the protection and reception system. The guideline aims at strengthening the reception governance system, and at providing: a) indications on operating procedures to be adopted in all phases of reception, b) operational instructions to facilitate communication among protection and reception actors. UNICEF contributed to the sections concerning the protection and reception of children, families and women who survived or are at risk of GBV, developed specific sections on MHPSS services to be provided in the reception system and risk mitigation strategies. UNICEF will continue to take part in the vulnerability working group promoted by the Ministry to monitor the implementation.

To ensure compliance with the updated United Nations PSEA standards, a dedicated consultant and focal points conducted monitoring visits to current implementing partners and started reassessments. In addition, four new implementing partners were assessed. UNICEF and UNHCR coordinated efforts in order to avoid duplication for common partners and integrated PSEA elements in GBV risk mitigation training and exercises for implementing partners.

Education: In total, 1,638 children access formal or non-formal education activities in 2023. Building on the expansion of the Akelius digital platform at the beginning of the year, this includes 796 refugee and migrant students who were involved in Italian and English classes. 538 young refugees and migrant, including unaccompanied and separated children, participated in Skill4Youth workshops on skill development and job orientation. Out of all participants, 78 percent stated that the workshop was useful for their needs and 72 percent also confirmed that the workshop helped them think about the job they would like to do.

Child Rights Monitoring: Given the critical situation in points of arrival, UNICEF, together with implementing partners, continued to monitor the situation in Friuli, Ventimiglia, Apulia, Calabria and Sicily. In coordination with UNHCR, Save the Children and other actors present in the field, UNICEF channelled the findings and recommended courses of action to the central and local authorities of the Ministry of Interior.

ADAP: Online service provision of legal counselling and MHPSS (Here4U integrated in U-Report), in partnership with ARCI, supported 139 cases. Under the OPS! Campaign, 272 university school students aged 18-23 (79 girls, 43 boys), including students with a migration background and special education needs, received training on how to counter unconscious bias and promote intersectionality through graphic design and communication. The total number of U-Reports increased to 10,505, with 1,372 young refugees and migrant (754 unaccompanied) joining during 2023.

SBC, Community Engagement and AAP: A total of 83,318 refugees and migrants were reached through messaging on access to services. Online, life-saving information material focusing on access to services, legal support awareness raising on international protection, MHPSS, Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and GBV was disseminated via U-Report channels (Facebook and Instagram). Multi-language information, uploaded on [UROTM website](#), reached an average of 56,516 U-Report followers. All the online activities were shared with 419 reception centres frontline workers via bi-monthly newsletter. Moreover, 451 U-Reporters participated in a poll on foster care highlighting that 53 percent would prefer to live in a foster care family instead of a reception center, but the family should be aware of their future project (24 percent) and their culture of origin (24 percent). A further 882 people participated in engagement actions via U Report and Here4U channels.

BULGARIA

Between January and June 2023, 7,694 asylum-seekers were registered, similar to the numbers in 2022 during the same period. This includes 2,251 children (1,784 boys, 467 girls) and 1,293 unaccompanied and separated children (1,270 boys, 23 girls). The main countries of origin are Afghanistan, Syria, Morocco, Iran and Iraq. It is estimated that 586 children and 411 unaccompanied and separated children are present as of the end of June.^x Key challenges remain in relation to reception conditions, lack of protection and services for unaccompanied and separated children, organized activities for children in reception centers, the need to strengthen the Best Interest Determination (BID) procedures and strengthening the access to alternative care services.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: In 2023, UNICEF and partners reached a total of 1,694 children, including unaccompanied and separated children, with quality MHPSS, legal counselling and case management, and alternative care and protection. UNICEF, through its partner the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, supported the release of 316 children from detention, ensuring their placement in a reception centre. 298 children shared their concerns and asked questions as part of monitoring the wellbeing and quality of statutory legal representation for unaccompanied and separated children. In addition, 716 unaccompanied children participated in information sessions regarding their rights and procedures, as well as feedback and advice about the development of their individual cases and family reunion procedures. 22 unaccompanied and separated children were supported to access family-based and alternative care arrangements.

UNICEF together with IOM and the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) started the establishment of a safe zone in the country's biggest reception centre (Harmanli) which will have capacity for 98 children, with the possibility of doubling the capacity in cases of increased arrivals.

UNICEF, UNHCR, SAR and State Agency for Child Protection shared good practices for care and protection of unaccompanied and separated children with 30 participants (6 male, 24 female) working in social services. Additionally, UNICEF organized two trainings for 42 participants (3 male and 39 female) from SAR staff, child protection departments, legal guardians and civil society organizations on good practices and application of best interest assessment and determination for unaccompanied and separated children.

SERBIA

In the first half of 2023, 37,919 refugees and migrants arrived in Serbia. The reception centers are currently hosting 2,691 refugees and migrants (2,465 men, 78 women), including 148 children (120 boys, 28 girls). Among the children, 66 boys were unaccompanied and separated. Main countries of origin are Afghanistan, Syria, Morocco, Pakistan, and Burundi.^{xi} More people arrived from Bulgaria and most refugees transit through Serbia to cross the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to reach the European Union. Main areas of support to the Government are improvements in the coordination of protection of children and women, support in humanitarian cash assistance as well as improving dissemination of child-friendly and culturally appropriate information.

Health and Nutrition: 26 parents/caregivers of children under 5 years received parenting support on the care and development (vaccination, playing with children, nutrition, hydration of baby, skin care, and hygiene) of their children and 32 infants and small children (15 girls, 17 boys) received health and nutrition services.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: UNICEF implements child protection programming for refugee and migrant children and their caregivers in the asylum center in Belgrade, the reception center in Sid and outside of centers in the Belgrade hub

^x Data based on the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees.

^{xi} Commissariat for Refugees and Migration/UNHCR

and near the borders. The program includes outreach and information dissemination, recreational and sports activities, psychosocial support online or in person, and identification and referral to specialized services for the most vulnerable children and adolescents with three partners at three locations. A series of four psychoeducational workshops for children and youth from refugee populations were conducted in May, and specialized MHPSS support was provided, including 10 individual counselling sessions and 5 group counselling sessions. In total, 566 children (528 boys and 38 girls) were provided with MHPSS, including 474 unaccompanied and separated children. Additionally, 21 caregivers received psychosocial support.

UNICEF also ensured access to safe, survivor-centered GBV prevention and response services for women and girl survivors or at risk of GBV in an asylum centre and safe space in Belgrade. Activities reached 168 women, 30 girls, and 79 boys and include information on available services, hotlines, access to a safe space, safe referrals and support to case management in GBV cases, and distribution of dignity kits for women and girls for purposes of GBV risk mitigation. Through partnership networks, beneficiaries were informed on safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse.

Education, ECD and Skills Building: UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Education and partners, defined monthly plans for Learning Clubs in 14 schools and identified 386 (174 female, 194 male) students in need of additional learning support. Of this number, 83 were migrants and refugees, some of whom do not speak Serbian, and 64 children from Roma communities. Among identified students, 32 lived with disabilities.

So far, 511 students (290 female, 221 male) participated in the Learning Clubs activities, of which 84 (414 girls, 43 boys) were migrants and refugees. Activities included classes in Serbian as a foreign language, supplementary classes primarily in mathematics and Serbian, intercultural workshops and other subjects. Refugees and migrants who participated in the final exam preparation achieved excellent results and were enrolled in high schools. 352 teachers, psychologists and pedagogues completed capacity building trainings.

Additional support was provided to 24 parents of refugee and migrant children accommodated in asylum and reception centres through workshops and parental meetings in schools. Moreover, the distribution of play and learning packages for refugee and migrant children provided 73 (37 boys, 36 girls) children accommodated in asylum and reception centers with supplies.

WASH and Basic Needs: In total, 374 persons benefited from WASH interventions in the reporting period: 137 women, 47 girls and 190 boys mostly unaccompanied and separated boys received dignity/hygiene kits.

SBC, Community Engagement and AAP: To improve the engagement of affected populations and ensure that they are at the center of the activities, UNICEF monitors partners' dialogue and feedback from the affected population. 53 beneficiaries (35 women, 7 men, 10 boys, 1 girl) shared their concerns and asked questions through established feedback mechanisms, informing adjustments to the activities. 14,391 people were reached by the promotion of social inclusion of migrants and refugees via social media. In addition, 223 people (28 women, 42 men, 53 girls, 100 boys) were reached through messaging on prevention and access to services related to health and ECD, child protection, GBV, and humanitarian cash assistance.

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

Between January and June 2023, 12,931 refugee and migrant arrivals were reported, including 1,338 children and 714 unaccompanied and separated children. Arrival figures are similar to the same period last year. Main countries of origin were Afghanistan, Morocco, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.^{xii} By the end of June, around 1,520 refugees and migrants were present (1,348 in reception centres, private and NGO accommodation and an estimated 200 in informal settlements), including 121 children and 68 unaccompanied and separated children. At the border to Croatia, violent pushbacks, psychological and physical violence continue to be reported.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF continued to support the provision of infant and young child feeding and counselling in temporary reception centers through two Mother and Baby Corners benefitting 375 children under five and parents/guardians. UNICEF ensured a private space for breastfeeding, information sharing and awareness raising on the benefits of breastfeeding, infant and young child feeding counselling and access to MHPSS, providing also a safe space for women.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: With partners World Vision and Centers for Social Welfare, UNICEF continued to provide 24/7 protection for unaccompanied children and children in families in Sarajevo and Una-Sana Canton. Protection

^{xii} Information based on Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, IOM, UNHCR, and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

services include child protection services, legal guardianship, and operating Child Friendly Space in two temporary reception centers. In 2023, 1,197 children benefited from MHPSS, 804 children received individual case management, and 1,533 unaccompanied children were provided with alternative care or reunification. 452 children (207 girls and 245 boys) benefited from CFS activities. UNICEF also continued to respond to the needs of unaccompanied children who were readmitted from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina, advocating with the relevant institutions for their rights and protection. In cooperation with the UNICEF Croatia team, identification of unaccompanied children, the assignment of guardians and accommodation conditions and service provision were addressed in both countries, in accordance with international standards.

Jointly with UNHCR, IOM, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA), UNICEF provided child safeguarding trainings for 75 local police officers in Bijeljina, Zvornik and Tuzla. In total, UNICEF supported 110 frontline workers and caregivers in improving their knowledge and skills on child protection in 2023.

To support the Government in taking ownership of the refugee and migrant response, UNICEF was actively involved in a capacity building programme, aiming to facilitate the transition and improve local counterparts' capacities to respond to the needs of children on the move, including child safeguarding trainings for local police in three cities. UNICEF jointly with IOM supported a study visit to Italy where officials from the Centers for Social Welfare, Cantonal Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Security, and SFA, had the opportunity to learn good practices in management of reception centers, child protection, cooperation between institutions and integration of policies with focus on unaccompanied and separated children. UNICEF also organized a workshop on inclusion of children on the move in the protection system, exchange of good practices and lessons learned with key ministries and institutions from four cantons.

WASH: Due to a very high turnover rate, UNICEF organized daily distribution of basic non-food items in two family camps, and reception centers in Ušivak, Sarajevo and Borići, Bihać. A total of 1,514 children, (861 unaccompanied) received clothes and other essential non-food items.

Education and Skills Building: UNICEF and its partner World Vision continued to provide non-formal education opportunities for children on the move. So far, 709 children benefitted from educational activities, including language classes. Moreover, 69 schoolteachers were trained on blended learning methods and integrating refugee and migrant students. 241 children received individual learning materials. Together with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Una-Sana Canton and Save the Children, UNICEF supported a summer school for refugee, migrant, and local elementary school students to attend German and English classes during their school break.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

To protect and support refugees and migrants along the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, UNICEF emphasized strengthening national capacities and systems through partnerships with national, subnational and municipal governments. UNICEF cooperated closely with United Nations agencies, NGOs, and CSOs to improve reception conditions and access to services in health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection, GBV prevention and response, adolescent engagement, and social behaviour change. Furthermore, UNICEF delivered technical assistance and expertise to enhance child protection systems and safeguard the rights of refugee and migrant children. UNICEF generated evidence to inform policies and planning, continued advocacy and support to governments in aligning national policies with international norms, and improved best interest determination of the child and age assessment procedures. Cross-sectoral approaches in gender, adolescent development, disability, and overall accountability to the affected population were at the core of UNICEF's response.

UNICEF's response prioritized the protection of children and women, prevention of child immigration detention, promotion of family unity, unhindered access to services for all refugees and migrants as well as the fight against xenophobia and discrimination, in line with the Global Programme Framework on Children on the Move. In close cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, under the joint Strategic Collaboration Framework, the response complemented the Global Compact on Migration and Refugees, promoted effective scale-up models, and enhanced linkages between humanitarian and development programmes.

At regional level, UNICEF supported emergency preparedness and contingency planning as well as scale up coordination given the increasing numbers of arrivals. The Regional Office continued to provide technical assistance, surge support on protection services, with a focus on unaccompanied and separated children, and promoted intraregional learning and exchange of good practices and lessons learned. UNICEF's response provides services and access to all refugee and migrant children and families across Europe, complementing the [Ukraine refugee response](#). Additionally, UNICEF's system strengthening approach in host countries benefited all refugees and migrants equally and prepared systems to cater for new arrivals.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

- UNICEF Greece Statement: [The loss of children's lives in the Mediterranean is an atrocity that will haunt these shores for years to come](#)
- UNICEF Greece Article: [Language is the passport for the integration of refugee children in their new life in Greece](#)
- UNICEF Greece Article: ["I want to offer help to anyone who needs it!"](#)
- UNICEF Italy Article: [At the roots of resilience](#)
- UNICEF Italy Report: [Reaching young refugees and migrants](#)
- UNICEF BiH Article: [I will be a reporter](#)

Who to contact for further information:

Regina De Dominicis
Special Coordinator/Regional Director UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: rdedominicis@unicef.org

Octavian Bivol
Deputy Regional Director UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: obivol@unicef.org

Anmarie Swai
Regional Advisor Emergency UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: aswai@unicef.org

Annex A - SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME RESULTS (1 January – 30 June 2023)

Areas of Response	2023 Target	Total UNICEF Results	% Achieved	Increase from last SitRep	
Health & Nutrition					
# children benefitting from increased access to general health checks and referrals, incl. access to life-saving vaccines	2,040	1,333	65%	765	▲
# of infants, children and mothers accessing health and nutrition services, including in mother and baby care centres	5,620	1,215	22%	566	▲
# of parents/caregivers of children under 5 receiving ECD counselling and/or parenting support	110	26	24%**	20	▲
WASH					
# of children receiving culturally appropriate basic supplies, including clothes, baby hygiene items, dignity kits	8,700	1,888	22%**	1,118	▲
Child Protection					
# of children reached with quality child protection support (MHPSS, legal counselling and case management) and protection standards	45,000	19,340	43%	10,181	▲
# of frontline workers and caregivers with improved knowledge and skills on child protection	3,468	1,033	30%**	812	▲
# of unaccompanied and separated children accessing family-based care or a suitable alternative	8,520	1,919	23%**	1,032	▲
Gender-Based Violence					
# women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention or response intervention	46,440	157,585	339%*	155,564	▲
# of frontline workers with improved knowledge and skills on GBV prevention and response	1,548	461	30%**	70	▲
Education					
# children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	32,020	22,184	69%	2,200	▲
# of formal school teachers trained on at least one key theme on inclusion of refugee and migrant children	4,620	2,135	46%	746	▲
# children receiving individual learning materials	1,680	495	29%**	330	▲
Adolescent Development and Participation					
# of adolescent boys and girls benefitting from enhanced participation, social inclusion and empowerment	10,260	2,021	20%**	1,336	▲
SBC, Community Engagement & AAP					
# of people reached through messaging on access to services	862,500	97,932	11%**	75,930	▲
# people participating in engagement actions (for social and behavioural change)	243,600	30,486	13%**	3	▲
# of people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms (online and offline, refugee and host community)	1,020	298	29%**	0	=

*Overachievement is the result of successful online interventions in Italy focusing on sharing information on GBV risks and response services available locally and nationally through a paid promotion on Facebook.

**Underachievement due to lack of funding for health in Serbia; WASH in all response countries; child protection and GBV in Greece, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia; education in Italy, Bulgaria, and Serbia; ADAP in Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia; and SBC across all response countries.

Annex B - FUNDING STATUS (as of 30 June 2023)

Funding Status by Sector

Sector	Requirements	Humanitarian resources received in 2023	Other resources used in 2023	Resources available from 2022 (Carry-over)	Funding gaps	
Health and Nutrition	722,000	48,000	87,067	54,141	532,792	74%
Water Sanitation and Hygiene	528,000	45,000	0	0	483,000	91%
Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA	12,652,200	1,316,517	1,640,527	3,537,792	6,157,363	49%
Education	16,718,120	970,391	426,332	16,163,887	-	-
SBC and AAP	1,027,440	50	0	87,613	939,777	91%
Adolescents/Youth	1,772,520	20,066	0	892,085	860,369	49%
RO Technical Support	3,600,000	0	0	0	3,600,000	100%
TOTAL	37,020,280	2,400,024	2,153,926	20,735,518	11,730,811	32%

Funding Status by Country

Countries	Requirements	Funds available			Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received in 2023	Other resources used in 2023	Resources available from 2022 (Carry-over)	US\$	%
Greece	15,938,000	590,850	0	15,823,651	-	-
Italy	12,212,280	837,174	337,227	3,961,960	7,075,919	58%
Bulgaria	1,476,000	572,000	0	728,000	176,000	12%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,640,000	200,000	1,816,699	117,594	505,707	19%
Serbia	1,154,000	200,000	0	104,313	849,687	74%
Regional Support	3,600,000	0	0	0	3,600,000	0%
Total	37,020,280	2,400,024	2,153,926	20,735,518	11,730,811	32%

Note on funding: Only US\$2.4 million has been received as new funding in 2023. From the substantial carryover of US\$ 20.7 million, US\$15.7 million are committed to the ACE education programme for Greece. Without immediate, continued support, UNICEF will not be able to sustain critical support to vulnerable children and their families in the coming year, nor respond to new needs arising from additional refugee movements.