Between January and August 2020, nearly 50,000 refugees and migrants (25 per cent children) arrived in Europe, a trend likely to continue in 2021. Children on the move – particularly the over 10,000 unaccompanied and separated children – are highly vulnerable and require urgent care and protection.

Despite the gains made in recent years, humanitarian needs remain significant and capacities to respond are overstretched due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Access to quality, appropriate health, nutrition, protection and education services and basic supplies is critical.

UNICEF will work with United Nations agencies and partners to support governments to improve reception conditions, provide protection and facilitate access to basic services for refugee and migrant boys, girls, adolescents and women, while also advocating for their rights.

UNICEF requires US$36.4 million to support the immediate and longer-term humanitarian needs of affected refugee and migrant children and their families and host communities in Europe.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **UNICEF**

**KEY PLANNED TARGETS**

- **8,100** unaccompanied/separated children reunified with family or provided with family-based care
- **25,570** people accessing gender-based violence mitigation/prevention/response services
- **26,950** children accessing educational services
- **183,200** people reached through messaging on access to services

**FUNDING REQUIREMENTS**

US$ 36.4 million

Figures are provisional and subject to change based on planning processes and the evolving situation.
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

Refugees and migrants continue to arrive in Europe, despite measures to curtail irregular migration. Boys and girls, particularly unaccompanied and separated children, remain vulnerable to abuse, gender-based violence and exploitation in countries of arrival, transit and destination.

While the COVID-19 pandemic initially curtailed arrivals in 2020, the easing of related border controls brought increasing numbers of people into Europe who are expected to remain into 2021. Nearly 50,000 refugees and migrants (25 per cent children) arrived between January and August. Italy registered a steep increase in new arrivals largely from Libya (19,000, 16 per cent children and 13 per cent unaccompanied). Greece saw nearly 12,000 new arrivals and currently hosts the largest caseload (121,000, including 45,000 children, 4,400 who are unaccompanied). New arrivals were registered in Serbia (nearly 18,000), Bosnia and Herzegovina (nearly 12,000), Montenegro (nearly 1,800) and Bulgaria (nearly 1,400). With limited pathways to settling in destination countries, most will remain in tenuous conditions. Over 10,000 unaccompanied and separated children need urgent care and protection.

Capacities for reception, identification, protection and integration, particularly alternative care options for unaccompanied children, remain insufficient. Vulnerable children, young people and families are living in unsafe, overcrowded, precarious accommodations, and are unable to access protection, legal guardianship and basic services. Shifts in resource allocations and overstretched national capacities make it difficult to access quality, appropriate health, nutrition, protection and education services and basic supplies, requiring further investment in systems to respond to the specific needs of children, adolescent and families.

Exigent circumstances – such as the fire in Moria Centre, Greece, in September, which left 12,000 refugees and migrants (4,200 children) homeless – highlight the fragility and need for urgent action. COVID-19-related lockdowns and movement restrictions have generated overcrowded reception facilities, disrupted the provision of critical education, health and protection services and restricted asylum procedures and family reunification. Increased investment in systems, capacities and supplies to shift to the remote provision of critical services and protect front-line workers is needed.

Multi-sectoral advocacy, coordination and response remain critical at the local, national and European Union levels to sustainably manage migration and allow children, young people and families to recover and contribute to inclusive societies. Recent, successful inter-agency advocacy to relocate unaccompanied and separated children from Greece to other European Union Member States and lessen health and protection risks in reception facilities is an important example of what can be achieved.

STORY FROM THE FIELD

For refugee and migrant children arriving alone in Europe, UNICEF-supported social workers and guardians play a pivotal role in providing vital care. Every unaccompanied and separated child has the right to health and education services. They also have the right to fully access asylum procedures.

This is the story of a social worker in Bosnia and Herzegovina caring for two young teenagers from Pakistan. While the children stay in a reception centre and dream of pursuing a better future, social worker Lejla Hafizovic is their guardian and friend. Their relationship is one of trust and human connection.

Read more about this story here
In 2021, UNICEF will work with United Nations sister agencies and civil society organizations to strengthen government systems and capacities and reinforce the linkages between humanitarian action and development programmes. This work will focus on improving reception conditions, protection and access to basic services for affected children. The response will complement the global compacts on migration and refugees and promote effective scale-up models.

Recognizing the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees to COVID-19 and other crises, UNICEF interventions will adapt to evolving contexts and prioritize at-risk children. In Greece and Italy, UNICEF will support children in host communities affected by COVID-19 with access to information, health care, protection and psychosocial support. In line with the Grand Bargain commitments, UNICEF will support governments to align national policies with international norms and improve capacities to address the immediate and longer-term needs of refugee and migrant children, including those with disabilities. Social, health care and other front-line workers will be trained, including online, to identify and mitigate health and protection risks, accompany children and caregivers through asylum procedures, and ensure timely referrals to specialized services. Teachers will be assisted to strengthen approaches to intercultural education, language instruction and life-skills training, including through online forums. Unaccompanied children and youth in reception facilities and urban areas will be enabled to access integrated mental health and psychosocial support.

UNICEF will prioritize the provision of appropriate care to unaccompanied children, preferably in communities, as well as legal aid and guardianship. Pregnant and lactating women will be supported to care for their children and access immunization. Gender-based violence survivors and at-risk groups will receive age- and gender-appropriate information, referrals and support. Empowerment and skills-building for young people will be scaled up to boost youth resilience and provide opportunities to participate in social and behavioural change. Messaging campaigns, including on social media platforms, will include information on COVID-19, access to services and reducing stigma.

At the regional level, UNICEF will coordinate risk monitoring, strengthen knowledge and support preparedness. Advocacy will focus on national and regional policy reforms that uphold the child's right to safe migration, improve best-interests determination and age assessment, end child immigration detention and secure unhindered access to basic social services, including health care and education. This will include continued inter-agency advocacy to mainstream children’s rights into the European Union Pact on Migration and relocate unaccompanied and separated children to other European Union Member States.

Progress against the 2020 programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: https://www.unicef.org/appeals/refugee-migrant-response-europe/situation-reports

**2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS**

**Health and nutrition**
- 17,500 children benefiting from increased access to general health checks and referrals, including access to life-saving vaccines
- 4,650 infants, children and mothers accessing health and nutrition services, including in mother and baby care centres
- 5,750 women, girls, men and boys benefiting from increased health literacy

**Water, sanitation and hygiene**
- 8,500 people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies (including hygiene items) and services
- 4,765 children receiving culturally-appropriate basic supplies, including clothes, baby hygiene items and dignity kits

**Child protection, GBViE and PSEA**
- 8,100 unaccompanied and separated children reunited with their primary caregiver or provided with family-based care/alternative care services
- 44,450 children reached with quality child protection support (mental health and psychosocial support, legal counselling and case management) and protection standards
- 2,530 front-line workers and caregivers with improved knowledge and skills on child protection

**Gender-based violence in emergencies**
- 25,570 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions
- 31,500 women, men and boys (including refugees, migrants and host communities) receiving information on available gender-based violence services and how to access them
- 1,655 front-line workers with improved knowledge and skills on gender-based violence prevention and response

**Education**
- 26,950 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning

**C4D, community engagement and AAP**
- 183,200 people reached with messages on access to services

**Adolescents/youth**
- 14,800 adolescent boys and girls benefiting from enhanced participation, social inclusion and empowerment
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF requires US$36.4 million to support the immediate and longer-term humanitarian needs of refugee and migrant children, adolescents and their families. This request, which has increased since 2020, will enable UNICEF to maintain basic services in health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), gender-based violence and adolescent empowerment and respond to urgent, emerging needs such as COVID-19 and the Moria fire. UNICEF will prioritize the implementation of risk communication and community engagement to raise awareness on containing the coronavirus. Funds allocated to gender-specific responses will support female-friendly spaces, capacity-building to prevent and identify gender-based violence cases and training to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers. Investment in youth engagement will foster skills-building for independence and integration into destination societies. Given the extreme vulnerability of refugee and migrant children, if their needs go unaddressed, these children are at risk of ending up in the hands of criminals, including traffickers. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these vulnerabilities and increased dependence on the provision of basic services. UNICEF is therefore requesting flexible funding to reach people in need in a comprehensive way. Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the continuing crisis.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
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<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<td>Gender-based violence in emergencies</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Adolescents/youth</td>
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<td>Regional office technical capacity</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions: Regional office technical capacity (5.4%), Adolescents/youth (4.7%), C4D, community engagement and AAP (1.8%).
Who to contact for further information:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
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Who to contact for further information:

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The countries referenced in this appeal are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Serbia.

4. UNHCR data on current refugee and migrant populations present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as estimates of new arrivals in 2021.

5. Ibid.

6. This includes 135,000 people in Italy; 80,000 people in Greece; 5,400 people in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 4,300 people in Serbia; 2,200 people in Bulgaria; and 1,000 people in Montenegro. For Greece and Italy, this includes complementary COVID-19 support for the most vulnerable people in host communities. The total figure includes an estimated 95,405 women/girls and 132,495 boys/men. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children, and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.

7. This includes 48,000 children in Greece; 21,600 children in Italy; 5,000 children in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 2,500 children in Serbia; 880 children in Bulgaria; and 200 children in Montenegro. For Greece and Italy, this includes complementary COVID-19 support for the most vulnerable children in host communities. The total figure includes an estimated 31,115 girls and 47,065 boys.

8. This is a UNICEF estimate based on the latest data available from the Greece National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA), the Italy Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Bulgaria State Agency for Refugees, the Serbia Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Security, the Montenegro Ministry of Interior, IOM, UNHCR and non-governmental organizations.

9. This includes pushbacks at borders and constraints on rescue operations.


11. For Greece and Italy: UNHCR data for the period January-August 2020.

12. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia: IOM data for the period January-July 2020.

13. For example, asylum, family reunification and relocation.


15. The swift actions of countries such as Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal to successfully relocate 1,600 unaccompanied and separated children despite COVID-19 constraints have helped to inspire more relocation pledges.

16. This is a UNICEF estimate of the number of refugee and migrant people present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Serbia based on the Bosnia and Herzegovina United Nations Country Team, the Bulgaria State Agency for Refugees, the Greece National Center for Social Solidarity, the Italy Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, UNHCR Montenegro and UNHCR Serbia.

17. Ibid.

18. This is a UNICEF estimate of the number of children among new arrivals that entered Europe through Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain in 2020. This figure is included in the total number of children currently present in the six countries. ‘Operational Portal Refugee Situations: Mediterranean situation’.

19. Ibid.

20. This appeal incorporates the COVID-19 response for refugee and migrant children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Serbia. Given the significant response in Greece and Italy, the every child approach and related strong integration of interventions with the immediate host communities, the response in these countries includes complementary COVID-19 support for the most vulnerable children in host communities. The more distinct support requirements for COVID-19 for children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia are incorporated in the 2021 regional appeal for Europe and Central Asia.

21. The Grand Bargain is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations, who have committed to getting more means into the hands of people in need and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

22. This will entail removing barriers to public health, education, protection and social welfare services, particularly in the context of COVID-19, and improving reception conditions to allow for appropriate hygiene practices and physical distancing.

23. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBVIE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).

24. In addition to messaging on access to services, this includes messaging on COVID-19 and child protection-related issues.

25. These gender-sensitive activities focus on skills-building and learning opportunities, access to information, improved health literacy, youth-led online platforms and communication channels to ensure participation, peer-to-peer exchange and empowerment for more independence and better integration into destination societies.

26. The response will be delivered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Serbia.

27. In line with the UNICEF multi-regional approach, funding requirements complement the appeal for refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and the appeals for the Middle East and North Africa and West and Central Africa regions.

28. Countries are presented in the following order: countries of arrival (Greece, Italy and Bulgaria), followed by countries affected by secondary migration (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro), with countries with the greatest refugee/migrant population needs listed first within each group.

29. This includes US$117,000 for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse interventions.