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Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 38

unicef 
for every child

Situation in Numbers



94,800

Estimated # of arrivals in Europe through Italy, Greece, Spain, and Bulgaria in 2020*



17,500

Estimated # of children among all arrivals through Greece, Italy, Spain, and Bulgaria*



60,000

Estimated # of children present in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro**



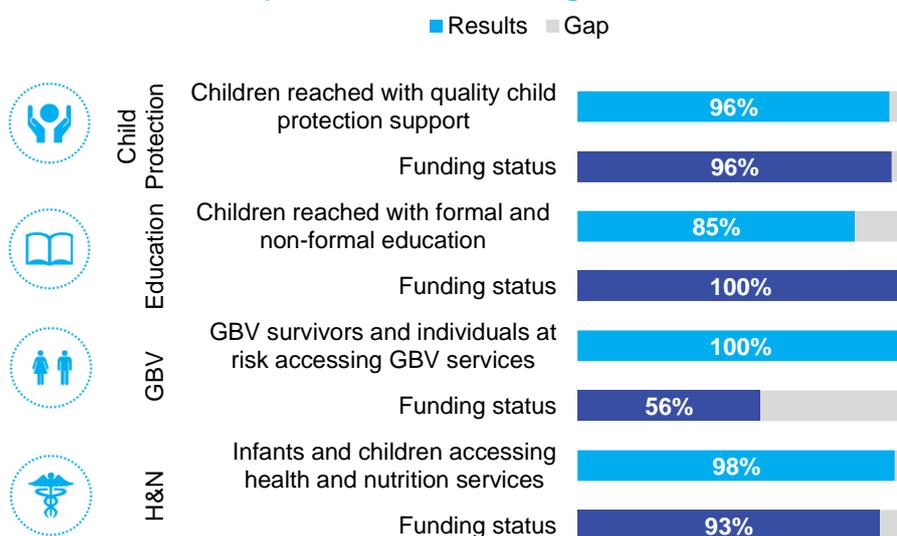
12,000

Estimated # of unaccompanied and separated children registered in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Reporting Period: 1 January to 31 December 2020

- Between January and December 2020, 94,800 refugees and migrants (18.5 percent of whom are children)* arrived in Europe. Most countries reported decreases in arrivals during the first half of 2020 due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, while numbers increased again in the second half of the year. Italy saw a steep surge in arrivals throughout the year due to the ongoing conflict in Libya.
- In Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, UNICEF reached approximately 51,000 children with a range of support. 30,500 accessed child protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), case management and referral. Over 23,000 attended formal and non-formal education (NFE) activities. Around 9,400 women, girls, and boys benefitted from gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response interventions.
- Existing vulnerabilities of the migrant and refugee population were further exacerbated by several events, including the fire at Moria Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) in Greece and the closure and subsequent burning down of Lipa Emergency Tent Camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Humanitarian needs increased as affected children and families became exposed to harsh conditions. Anti-migrant sentiments among host communities following these events are particularly worrying. In addition, an increased number of pushbacks at borders and violence against refugees and migrants have been reported.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented socio-economic consequences severely impacted the health and wellbeing of refugee and migrants already living with limited access to basic services, including MHPSS, education, healthcare, and legal aid. To mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, continued efforts must be made to ensure availability and access to basic services, particularly for accompanied and unaccompanied children who make up 27 percent of the refugee and migrant population in Europe**.
- In 2020, UNICEF received USD 26 million out of a USD 28 million appeal (7 percent funding gap). UNICEF acknowledges and appreciates the generous contributions from all public and private sector donors to support the migrant and refugee crisis response.

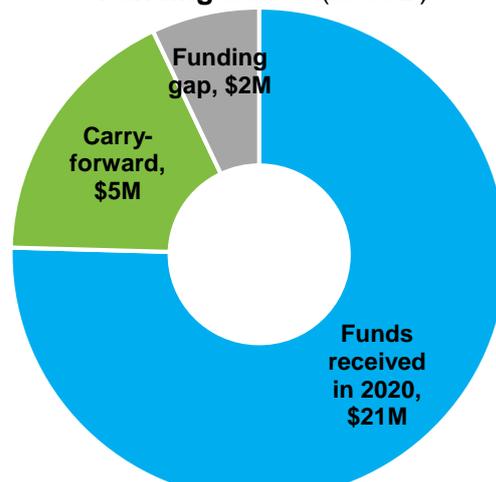
UNICEF's Response and Funding Status***



UNICEF Appeal 2020

\$ 28,123,190

Funding Status (in USD)



*UNHCR data for Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Spain as of 31 December 2020. 'Operational Portal Refugee Situations: Mediterranean situation', <<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>>.

**UNICEF estimates based on the latest data available from the Greece National Centre 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, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and non-governmental organizations.

***Funding available includes contributions received in 2020 and carry-over from 2019. Available funding for GBV and Health and Nutrition has changed from reporting in the 2020 mid-year sitrep as \$1,392,503 received from the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) was reprogrammed to support the COVID-19 HAC appeal. \$1,765,202 (out of total allocation \$2,868,955) received from the European Union (EU) DG Health and \$3,051,371 (out of total allocation of \$5,632,463) received from DG Employment have been reprogrammed for 2021.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

By the end of December 2020, UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for the Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe was 93 percent funded (\$26 million, including carry forward from 2019 as well funding received in 2020). In 2020, UNICEF received generous contributions from the European Union (EU), the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM), Education Cannot Wait, the Government of Ireland, UNICEF National Committees in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and US, as well as from pooled Global Thematic Humanitarian funds. UNICEF expresses sincere gratitude for the generous and important contributions from all public and private sector donors.

In 2020, resource mobilization and partnerships efforts enabled UNICEF to reach programme targets in Child Protection, Health and Nutrition and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response. Despite underfunding, UNICEF was able to achieve its GBV targets, owing to the use of online delivery modalities which allowed broader coverage within available funds. COVID-19 related restrictions and implications significantly impacted refugee and migrant children's access to formal/non-formal education and early learning. While significant efforts were made to innovate and ensure the provision of blended and online learning, the expected results in this area were not fully achieved, especially in Greece and Italy. While the overall response was well funded, allocations across affected countries were disproportionate, and significant funding gaps remained in Montenegro (68%), Serbia (68%), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (40%).

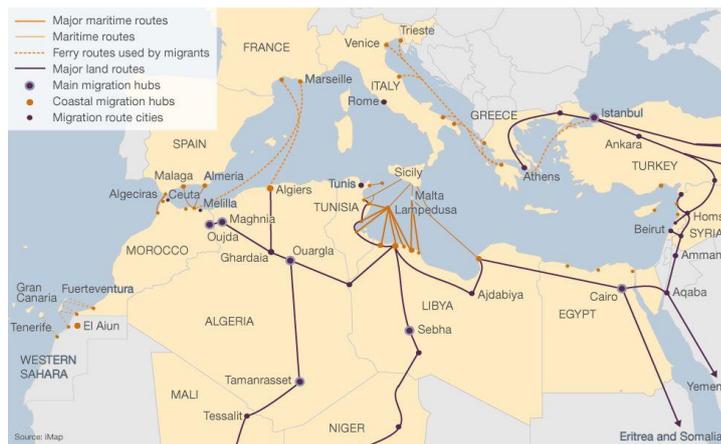
UNICEF invested in partnerships with UN agencies, international organizations, civil society and religious leaders to advance shared goals of supporting children on the move and addressing xenophobia and racism. Close cooperation was established with UNHCR and IOM for effective emergency response, relocation, and country-specific initiatives. UNICEF also devised and implemented a robust advocacy agenda, with the aim of influencing EU policies and member states on key child rights issues facing children affected by armed conflict and migration. Working directly with Parliaments and Ministries as well as through envoys and embassies, UNICEF and partners developed and delivered unified and coordinated messages and policy positions.

As the refugee and migrant response in Europe enters its sixth year, UNICEF launched its [2021 Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe HAC](#), seeking US\$ 36.4 million¹ to ensure access to basic services in health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), GBV, and adolescent empowerment and to respond to increased, urgent and emerging needs of the refugee and migrant population, including those related to COVID-19.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

New arrivals in Europe between October and December are estimated at 35,730², bringing the total number in 2020 to approximately 94,800³ (18.5 percent of whom are children). The estimated total number of refugee and migrant children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, and Serbia, is now 60,000⁴. Many remain dependent on humanitarian assistance, including 12,000⁵ unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). Main countries of origin are Tunisia (19.9%), Algeria (14.1%), Morocco (7.7%), Bangladesh (6.9%), Afghanistan (6.7%), and Syria (5.6%)⁶.

By March 2020, government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic included border closures and travel bans which severely restricted the mobility of refugees and migrants. Many were left stranded at international borders. The pandemic had short- and long-term impacts on the health and wellbeing of refugee and migrant populations, as access to critical basic services, including health, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), education, and legal aid became increasingly limited. Support to children who are separated from their families and caregivers, experiencing psychological distress, or are vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence remains a priority for UNICEF.



Map showing long, hazardous sea and land routes used to enter Europe.
Source: BBC

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¹ Increased compared to 2020 as COVID-19 response (covered under 2020 Global HAC) is integrated into the 2021 refugee and migrant HAC. Needs have also increased in Greece (after Moria fire) and Bosnia and Herzegovina with continued, expanded protection needs of children on the move.

² UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/583>

³ Ibid

⁴ UNICEF estimates based on latest data available from Greece National Centre for Social Solidarity, Italy Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria State Agency for Refugees, Serbia Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Security, Montenegro Ministry of Interior, IOM, UNHCR and non-governmental organizations.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>.

In September, a fire broke out at Moria Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) on the Greek island of Lesbos, leaving approximately 12,000 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers homeless. Among the affected were 4,200 children, including more than 400 UASC. With partners, UNICEF transformed the Tapuat Child and Family Support Hub into an emergency shelter, distributed emergency supplies, and supported the transfer of 406 UASC to the mainland. As the lead agency for responding to critical needs in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), UNICEF supported the Government in developing and implementing a WASH strategy for the new reception centre in Lesbos.

In December, 1,400 migrants, including women and children, were left without shelter amid harsh winter conditions after the Lipa Emergency Tent Camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina was closed and a subsequent fire destroyed the camp. This increased the number of refugees and migrants in need of humanitarian aid in Una Sana Canton to almost 3,000⁷. UNICEF and partners helped provide immediate humanitarian support including tents and non-food items. In both Lesbos and Una Sana Canton, plans to support and relocate the affected population prompted protests by local communities, underlining the fragility of these extremely vulnerable populations.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

GREECE

Between January and November 2020, 4,520 children arrived in Greece – an 80 percent decrease compared to 2019. 3,415 children reached the islands by sea. 74 percent were no more than 13 years old. The majority came from Afghanistan (38%) and Syria (24%).

By end of 2020, over 44,000 refugee and migrant children, including 4,027 UASC remained in Greece. Over 33,000 refugees and migrants were transferred from the Greek islands to the mainland. However, 14,265, including approximately 4,000 children, remained in overcrowded RICs on the islands of Samos, Kos, Leros and Chios, as well as in the new RIC site on Lesbos.

Emergency Response

In the last quarter of 2020, UNICEF immediately initiated an emergency response for children and women displaced by the 9 September fire that destroyed Moria RIC on Lesbos. Support included provision of emergency accommodation for UASC and single mothers with their children, identification, referrals, and case management services through outreach teams, and recreational, psychosocial support, and learning activities through a mobile Child Friendly Space.

Given the overwhelming need for WASH services in the new RIC in Lesbos, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MoMA) to coordinate partners and resources to establish, operationalize, and maintain sufficient WASH services for the affected population. UNICEF support is guided by [Humanitarian Principles](#)⁸ requiring that urgent, appropriate measures are taken to fill urgent gaps and provide equitable services for all. UNICEF's WASH strategy includes measures for transitioning from emergency to permanent structures, access to safe water, sanitation and solid waste services and includes the promotion of hygiene behaviour and COVID-10 related Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures.

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF adapted to remote modalities of programming. This included, for example, disseminating awareness information using printed materials and digital means to reach target audiences and, through the introduction of innovative tools and digital platforms, implementing blended learning approaches to ensure the continued access to formal and nonformal education.

Child Protection

By the end of 2020, UNICEF reached over 23,000 children with child protection services through a combination of direct services (e.g., mental health and psychosocial support, legal counselling and case management) and technical support in partnership with local NGOs and state authorities. Approximately 600 frontline workers and caregivers were trained on child protection and safeguarding through partnerships with local NGOs specializing in these areas of work.

UNICEF concluded the successful scale up and handover of the Supported Independent Living (SIL) scheme for UASC. In total, over 200 places were created in SIL apartments which now operate under a national regulatory framework with support from state funds. UNICEF's technical expertise has contributed to the drafting of secondary legislation and the scale-up of the SIL model of care for UASC by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA).

UNICEF continued to roll out the 'Checklist towards Child Friendly Sites' to promote harmonization of child protection standards across mainland camps. Following these self-assessments, 26 Open Accommodation Sites drafted priority action plans for children which included child protection and safeguarding.



© UNICEF/Canaj Magnum. UNICEF-supported Wash and Dignity Kits are distributed at the new RIC (KARA TEPE) on Lesbos island, Greece.

⁷ IOM, <https://www.iom.int/news/thousands-migrants-forced-sleep-rough-after-closure-destruction-bosnia-camp>

⁸ https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf

Within the ongoing context of COVID-19 and related public health restrictions, UNICEF continued to implement and improve remote modalities of outreach and service delivery through partners to support children and families. UNICEF also supported the issuance of national guidelines for shelters hosting UASC and women, and disseminated parenting tips to help parents and caregivers cope during long periods of family confinement.

UNICEF continued to advocate for and contribute technical expertise to the development of the EU's Standard Operating Procedures on the relocation of UASC from Greece to other member states. In 2020, 573 UASC were successfully relocated to other EU countries. After the Moria fire, UNICEF joined other UN agencies and the EC to support national efforts to transfer 724 UASC from the islands to the mainland, in preparation for their relocation to other member states. UNICEF further expanded child protection, GBV prevention and response as well as NFE activities on the islands through the establishment of a new Child Friendly Support Hub on Samos Island.

Gender-Based Violence

UNICEF continued its work with the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality through a dedicated information management expert who contributed to the harmonization of national data collection on GBV. UNICEF also continued supporting refugee survivors' access to state-run GBV counselling centres and shelters through the provision of interpretation services at over 20 different service delivery points.

Education and Skills Building

UNICEF continued to support formal and NFE through direct service delivery for children across Greece (through local NGO partners) and technical assistance around teacher training, coordination, and advocacy with the Ministry of Education (MoE). Accelerated learning materials for secondary school level were developed in collaboration with University of Thessaly. Throughout 2020, UNICEF in collaboration with the Institute of Education Policy (IEP), trained 1,827 teachers on different pedagogical approaches.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures/disruptions, UNICEF shifted its education interventions to remote and blended learning modalities. Overall, the number of participants in UNICEF-supported NFE programmes was impacted by government imposed social distancing rules which reduced the allowable number of children in the classroom. Despite these challenges, the Akelius digital language learning platform, co-developed with Akelius Foundation, reached more than 7,117 children and adolescents in 52 locations since the beginning of the partnership.

Child Rights Monitoring

UNICEF coordinated closely with UNHCR, IOM, civil society organizations (CSOs), and national and local authorities to collect key data on refugee and migrant children and establish dissemination channels to inform planning. UNICEF formalized new relationships with the Special Secretary for Unaccompanied Children (SSUC), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), and the Hellenic Statistical Authority to strengthen the availability of data.

UNICEF recruited a technical expert to support the Office of the SSUC in information management and monitoring. By the end of 2020, the SSUC succeeded in transferring the majority of UASC from the RICs to long- or short-term accommodation on the mainland. Between August and December, the number of UASC in RICs dropped from 900 to 127. The number of UASC in protective custody dropped from 205 to 30 and the Government announced an end to the 21-year-old nationwide practice of putting children into protective custody in police stations. UNICEF also provided technical support to the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights on identifying and analysing trends related to the situation of refugee and migrant children in Greece.

Finally, UNICEF led a national assessment to map enrolment rates of refugee and migrant children in formal education for the school year 2019-2020. Using direct feedback from more than 300 school-aged children living in mainland camps, UNICEF also conducted an assessment on student participation remote learning

ITALY

In 2020, the number of refugees and migrants making the Mediterranean Sea crossing to Italy (34,154) represented a three-fold increase compared to the number of arrivals in 2019 (11,471). As of December, 79,938 asylum seekers and refugees are hosted in reception system (including 6,601 UASC as of November). According to Ministry of the Interior (Moi) data, there was a 28 percent increase of arrivals from the Balkan route in 2020 compared to 2019 which included a quadrupled number of children. NGOs continued to report push back and protection gaps for children and families in Ventimiglia on the Italian-French border.

Migration routes can be particularly dangerous for women and adolescent girls, who face a unique set of GBV- related risks before, during and after migration. Women and girls accounted for 20.8 percent of asylum applicants in Italy by November. Girls made up 44.6 percent of minor asylum applicants in reception systems and of these, 3.6 percent were girls who were unaccompanied or separated (UAS). It must be noted that UAS girls are often not officially identified and registered. Their invisibility makes them extremely vulnerable, and they may not receive adequate attention and support.

Despite a lack of systematic data, the impact of COVID-19 on migrant and refugee children, young people and families has been evident and wide ranging; there will certainly be long-term consequences. In the immediate term, the refugee and migrant population lacked access information and supplies necessary to take IPC measures and did not have adequate access to basic health services, mental health and psychosocial support, and socioeconomic relief.

Child Protection

In 2020, 3,130 children and young migrants and refugees were reached with child protection support and 18,871 with online child protection-related information, in partnership with INTERSOS, Médecins du Monde (MdM), National Coordination of Care Communities (CNCA), Refugees Welcome Italy, Italian Recreational and Cultural Association (ARCI) and Save the Children Italy.

UNICEF's partnership with CNCA on strengthening family-based alternatives to reception centres was documented and showcased as part of the EU DG Health-funded Child Guarantee Programme, with 16 UASC currently placed in foster families. Based on these achievements, SIL and co-housing programmes will be activated in the first quarter of 2021.

Under the Child Guarantee Programme, INTERSOS and MdM continued providing psychosocial support to children and young people living within and outside the migrants and refugee reception system. 581 children and youth benefitted from MHPSS through group activities. INTERSOS continued to provide children, young people and families outside the formal reception system with information on their rights and on accessing available services. UNICEF supported INTERSOS in the case management and support of 872 individuals.

UNICEF, in partnership with MdM, enhanced capacities of 340 frontline responders (including health workers) to provide MHPSS to vulnerable children and youth. Specific attention was paid to those who suffered extreme violence or torture within the framework of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines.

In partnership with ARCI, UNICEF continued provision of case management and legal counselling, including referral requests coming from U-Reporters. In 2020, 936 cases were managed and ten live chats (including one in cooperation with UNHCR) were conducted on key topics like residence permits, international protection and risk communication about COVID-19. In December, a new integrated remote psychosocial support was launched through U-Report to provide counselling support. Through U-Report, awareness videos on online safety and seeking help for phishing, cyberbullying, sexting, online grooming, etc. reached 18,871 people.

UNICEF continued to strengthen and expand geographical coverage of support to the guardianship system and covered 298 UASC and 361 guardians. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, support to guardians continued remotely while matching activities between UASC and guardians had to be temporarily suspended. In partnership with Refugees Welcome Italy, UNICEF continued to implement the mentorship programme in Palermo, which matched 47 young migrants and refugees with mentors.

To bridge gaps to support the continuous inflow of arrivals, UNICEF within the frame of a joint operational plan with UNHCR and IOM, entered a new partnership with Save the Children Italy to provide care and support to children and families transiting through Ventimiglia and those who landed on the island of Lampedusa. Teams reached 242 individuals in December with psychological first aid, legal information, referral to services, registration to U-Report, and dignity kits.

Gender-Based Violence

While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted planned activities, requiring a re-programming and re-prioritization, it also exacerbated needs, necessitating scaled up prevention and response efforts. In partnership with INTERSOS, MdM, and the Penc Centre for Ethnopsychology, UNICEF reached 1,459 refugees and migrants (48% women, 28% men, 16% boys, 8% girls) with GBV prevention and response activities. UNICEF disseminated key information on GBV, reaching 20,000 people in a population group that often has challenges accessing information. UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA and with the participation of young people, developed key messages on rights and existing services for sexual and reproductive health. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF and partners adopted a mix of in-person and remote training approaches that reached 525 frontline workers with GBV-related training. UNICEF continued to generate knowledge on key issues affecting migrant and refugee women and girls and to advocate with key stakeholders to advance their rights.

Education and Skills Building

Safety measures imposed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 necessitated the adaptation of workshops and skills-building activities to online platforms. While the online modality ensured programme continuity, it also presented numerous challenges due to lack of devices and connectivity or a lack of fluency in the Italian language. In some cases, UNICEF support enabled needed support. 927 young migrants and refugees and Italian adolescents benefitted from skills-building activities against a planned target of 1,800, indicating challenges in access and motivation.

The first phase of U-Topia, an initiative to encourage active citizenship, included 64 workshops delivering facilitation training to 30 young Italians, migrants and refugees. Over 200 young people participated in socio-recreational activities.



© UNICEF/Saturnino. Deborah, cultural mediator, with Ibrahim, playing at the Women and girls safe space supported by UNICEF in Italy.

The second cycle of UPSHIFT was completed, with a total of 66 online workshops and pitching of 11 start-up ideas. Tablets and WIFI connections were delivered to students in need of digital devices and connectivity. An evaluation revealed that 91.2 percent of participants increased their motivation and perseverance competencies, while 85.3 percent showed increased empowerment skills. A third UPSHIFT cycle started in the last quarter of 2020, reaching 520 students and training 25 teachers. In 2020, institutional ownership was strengthened thanks to endorsement of the programme by the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP), the Regional Education Bureaus of Latium and Lombardy, the Municipality of Milan, and catch-up schools.

Youth Empowerment/Participation

2020 was a successful year for U-Report on the Move, which now counts 5,928 U-Reporters, with 2,695 young migrants and refugees registering during 2020. Activities were carried out through 21 Facebook promotions and 14 polls. U-Report on the Move also joined the U-Report global campaign for the African-European Leaders Summit. New Facebook policies took a significant toll on response rate levels, preventing use of third-party software for polling or messaging through Facebook Messenger. Despite technical challenges, engagement on the platform remained high, with a strong following of Facebook Live Chats, posts and videos. Five live chats were broadcasted, each reaching an average of 6,000 users and 1,000 unique viewers and 20 videos were produced.

Engagement and youth-led advocacy involving young migrants and refugees and Italian adolescents grew through podcasts, for example, [U-blogger](#), and through opportunities to participate at international event, including a regional justice for children conference in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Mediation skills-building event under the Dutch funded Youth@Heart conference, an inter-religious conference to protect the rights of children affected by migration, and a Youth Summit on Migration and Development. Activate Talks on digital solutions for emergencies and on girls and women's resilience and empowerment were also supported.

To amplify youth produced content, a strategic partnership was established with SCUOLAZOO, a social media platform targeting adolescents and young Italians, with over 4 million followers. Over the year, the content produced reached over 1,200,000 young people and engaged over 86,000.

BULGARIA

In 2020, the number of asylum seekers reached 3,525 compared to 2,152 in 2019. The main countries of origin are Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. The number of asylum seekers in 2020 represent the first increase after a steady downward trend that started in 2015. Out of all asylum-seekers in 2020, 1,125 (32% of all applicants) were children up to 17 years old. Of these children, 799 (over 70%) were UASC.

Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence

UNICEF and partners reached 1,337 migrants through GBV prevention and response services, case management, social evaluations and plans of action. Interventions included referral to specialized care, accommodation, assistance with finding employment and integration of beneficiaries of international protection. UNICEF reached 30 vulnerable refugee women and 25 children aged up to 3 years through mother and baby unit and crisis centre support. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF partners continued to provide direct social, psychosocial, protection and health service support to refugee and migrant children and their families. Partners also delivered face-to-face and online or telephone consultations to refugees and migrants on cases of violence (including GBV and sexual violence) and referral to specialized services.

As part of the BPRM-funded GBV project, UNICEF contributed to the development and dissemination of an animated video on the UAS Girls Note at the regional and country level, launch of a programmatic guidance on Working with Adolescent Boys Survivor of Sexual Violence (SV), publication of a Linguistic and Cultural Mediator (LCM) Training Curriculum, and the creation of video/testimonials giving refugee and migrant children and front-line workers a voice and presenting the positive impact of the project.

Education and Skills Building

UNICEF resumed its cooperation with Caritas in October 2020 to provide NFE and recreational activities to asylum-seeking children accommodated at registration and reception centres and those living at external facilities, with 61 children participating in life skills sessions. Through the Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria, UNICEF provided tablets to 26 asylum-seeking and refugee children to enable their participation in online distant learning programmes.

Health and Nutrition

Under the EU DG Health project "Strengthening refugee and migrant children's health status in Southern and South-Eastern Europe", UNICEF reached 315 individuals with routine immunisation, individual assessment and referral to state health care, while over 1,000 children and women benefitted from increased health literacy. UNICEF partners have been active in raising skills and overall awareness among health specialists and frontline workers. UNICEF developed and disseminated a Health Literacy Package (over 7,000 brochures on COVID-19, breastfeeding, access to health services, etc.) to raise health awareness among refugees and migrants.

SERBIA

In 2020, the number of new refugee and migrant arrivals, reached 24,250. Up to 17 percent were children, including UASC. In April, a record 9,100 people were accommodated in governmental centers, stretching the system beyond existing capacities. The number of people transiting through Serbia intensified after lockdown ended in the second part

2020. An increase in anti-migrant sentiments was noted in 2020, with multiple protests across the country, and incidents of young men proclaiming to be the “Peoples Guard” patrolling streets of the capital to harass refugees and migrants.

With shrinking funding opportunities, ensuring quality and sustainable protection arrangements and guardianship services as well as improving accommodation standards for UASC remain key concerns. Access to online education for refugee and migrant children (in particular, UASC) at compulsory elementary level, and non-compulsory secondary level has been significantly impeded by restrictive measures imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a lack of sufficient translators, and a lack of tailored solutions for adolescents. Despite these challenges, UNICEF was able to adapt approaches and managed to reach or exceed set targets for the year.

Child Protection

As co-chair the Child Protection Working Group, UNICEF supported coordination of Child Protection activities. UNICEF strengthened the knowledge of key senior management of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) and improved internal policies to enhance statutory requirements to address child safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in reception and asylum centres. A [guidebook](#) with new safeguarding policies and measures of SCRM and training of trainers were developed. Six SCRM staff were trained to support the future roll-out of new procedures across the sector. UNICEF, together with the University of Political Sciences, designed a course for students and practitioners on the protection of children affected by migration. To address key gaps, UNICEF supported direct child protection services (e.g., psychosocial support, recreational activities, identification of the most vulnerable children and appropriate referral to specialized services) at two UASC-dedicated centres and at the centre in the capital city benefited 634 UASC.

Gender-Based Violence

UNICEF supported Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) in four locations, including two centres in Serbia, delivering services both in-person and through remote modalities due to COVID-19. 1,931 GBV survivors and individuals at risk accessed GBV prevention and response services while 130 frontline workers were trained on GBV prevention and response. A toolkit to identify UAS girls [“Making Invisible Visible: the Identification of unaccompanied girls in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia”](#) was developed through the regional BPRM project and rolled out with multiple actors across the country via in-person and online sessions (including staff of reception centres, outreach workers, social workers, guardians) to support improved identification and protection of this group of girls.

Education and Skills Building

In addition to its monitoring role, UNICEF implemented an intervention to further facilitate access to informal education (via online language learning platform Akelius and purchase of digital equipment) and formal education (support of mentors with homework and catch-up classes, etc.) in three reception/asylum centres. This additional support proved to be essential in ensuring access to education despite the challenges emerging with shrinking funds and pandemic-related restrictions and will be evaluated for possible scale-up. 461 school-age children benefited from a strengthened and more inclusive formal education system.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF continued to be a vital technical player in the health response and coordination through provision of technical assistance to partners. UNICEF continued to ensure access to psychosocial support services, and distribution of age-appropriate and culturally sensitive information on prevention of infection and mitigation of health risks. Monitoring of the mother-baby-corners (MBCs) has shown that additional support will be needed in 2021 to ensure capacities developed in SCRM for MBC management remain operational. Additionally, UNICEF led sectoral efforts to identify key drivers of the substance abuse among UASC to inform further development of guidance on prevention in 2021.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has intensified distribution of critical supplies to support infection prevention protocols in 2020. Dignity/hygiene kits for women, girls and boys, were prioritized, and have been distributed by partners to four asylum and reception centres.



© UNICEF / Nemanja Pancic, A mother and her son spending time in a UNICEF supported mother corner in Adra, Serbia.

Youth Empowerment/Participation

Empowerment and participation of refugee/migrant youth was facilitated through their inclusion in the U-Report platform during the first half of 2020, which was later discontinued due to technical difficulties. A tailored skill building programme for adolescents, especially among UASC, was designed in late 2020, and implementation is planned in early 2021.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina officials recorded arrival of 16,150 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in 2020, including 351 unaccompanied boys (63 between 0-15 years, 288 between 16-17 years). 94 percent of newly arrived Persons of Concern (POC) expressed their intention to seek asylum, with 1.5 percent in the process of asylum claim registration.

The Government authorities closed the Bira TRC (capacity of 1,500) in September and the Emergency Tent Camp Lipa (capacity 1,000), which was subsequently destroyed by fire in December. Lack of available accommodation capacities in remaining TRCs resulted in an estimated 2,000-3,000 sleeping rough. While some progress was made to improve the care and protection of UASC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, significant challenges remain in ensuring sufficient reception capacities and adequate reception conditions. UASC are largely excluded from the national child protection and care system, and aside from accommodation in temporary reception centres, either along with families or with single men, no other formal alternative care options are available to them.

Child Protection

UNICEF invested in child protection monitoring within and outside of reception centres to ensure timely identification and registration of an increasing number of UASC sleeping rough and to facilitate the appointment of guardians and referrals to designated zones in reception centres. In partnership with Save the Children, World Vision and the local NGO Learning Activity Network (LAN), UNICEF continued to operate Child Friendly Spaces and 24/7 child protection teams in four temporary reception centres, including in designated zones for UASC. In partnership with Mdm, UNICEF ensured access to MHPSS for children and their caregivers in all TRCs in Una-Sana Canton. An estimated 3,500 children on the move benefitted from child protection support and standards, and an estimated 1,900 UASC benefitted from care and protection in designated UASC zones in temporary reception centres. Coverage of best interest assessment and determination processes have improved, with more than 500 such assessments conducted in 2020, compared to less than 10 in 2019. To ensure protection from the harsh winter elements, 367 refugee and migrant children accommodated in TRCs and 112 children living outside the TRC were provided with jackets, boots, underwear, socks, raincoats, blankets, etc., with support of the Red Cross,



© UNICEF / Selma Kacic, Malika (07) demonstrating her progress with learning the English language in a reception centre in Bulgaria, through a digital platform developed with support from UNICEF.

Education and Skills Building

UNICEF continued to support the Ministry of Education in Una-Sana Canton in enrolling refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking children into public schools. In 2020, 727 children (325 in the last quarter of the year) were enrolled in five primary schools and provided with education materials to enable their participation in online classes. UNICEF, with partners Save the Children and World Vision, continued to provide NFE and sports activities for all children in five TRCs in BiH, benefitting a total of 1,979 children. UNICEF continued to disseminate positive stories and advocacy messages about the importance of education and benefits of inclusion for all children.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF with partners Fenix, World Vision and Danish Refugee Council continued to provide health and nutrition support, benefitting 1,297 children. Paediatric healthcare services, including immunization, dental and ophthalmological care were provided in Borići and Sedra TRCs, and immunization in Miral and Ušivak TRCs, benefitting 1,190 children, including vaccination of 323 children. Four MBCs provided parents, including pregnant women with Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling, information/awareness raising on hygiene and prevention for COVID-19, psychosocial counselling and supported the provision of food and critical hygiene packages. A total of 431 parents and 1,297 children benefitted from MBC services.

MONTENEGRO

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent border closures, there has been a decrease of 38 percent in numbers of new arrivals of refugees and migrants compared to 2019. Based on data by Ministry of the Interior, 2,639 new arrivals were registered in 2020 of whom most (1,995) were men, 235 were women and 409 were children (249 boys, 160 girls, out of which nine UASC). The average stay of refugees and migrants is three to four days, which indicates that Montenegro is not a country of destination for most refugees and migrants. The most common countries of declared origin were Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco, Syria, Algeria.

Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence

In 2020, over 400 children, nearly the entire caseload, accessed child protection services including MHPSS, case management and referral. The development of a cross-sectoral training on Child Protection issues, including GBV and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, cross-sectoral cooperation and child access to quality health services, was finalized and the training will take place in February 2021. At least 60 professionals from health, social workforce, law enforcement, professionals from Reception Centres and civil society organizations will benefit from the training.

Education and Skills Building

Distance learning was introduced by the Ministry of Education (#UciDoma – Learn at Home through [TV broadcasting](#) and video materials). UNICEF purchased laptops for children residing in Asylum Centre to enable access to online classes.

Health and Nutrition

State-run asylum centres and alternative accommodations are applying all measures issued by the National Coordination Body to prevent spreading COVID-19 among the refugee and migration population. Spread of the virus has so far been reduced to a minimum.

UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and other partners supported the set-up of the Reception Centre in Božaj, ensuring a Child Friendly Space and Mother Baby Corner are available, and providing other critical medical equipment for medical screening and immediate health care of children and families on the move.

Child Monitoring

Together with the Ministry of Interior, UNHCR and IOM, UNICEF completed a rapid needs assessment of the situation of refugee and migrant children and families and of the response offered. Based on the results, UNICEF prioritized capacity building and improving system response in the areas of health, protection, breastfeeding, immunization, and GBV. Additional trainings in these areas are planned for February 2021.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

In 2020, UNICEF worked with other United Nations agencies and civil society organizations to strengthen government systems and capacities, reinforcing the linkages between humanitarian action and development programmes. This work will continue in 2021. In line with the Global Programme Framework on Children on the Move⁹, UNICEF's response to the needs of refugee and migrant children and women prioritised their protection, the end of child immigration detention, family unity, unhindered access to health and education services, improving reception conditions, addressing the root causes of migration and the fight against xenophobia and discrimination. The response complements the global compacts on migration and refugees and promote effective scale-up models.

In all six countries, UNICEF joined government-led COVID-19 response coordination mechanisms and delivered direct services in the areas of health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection, GBV and risk communication. Particular attention was given to access to testing, healthcare and other services, such as social protection, regardless of migration status, the provision of culturally and age-appropriate information on COVID-19, reception conditions that allow appropriate hygiene practices, physical distancing, advocacy against pushbacks, and provision of online services. Special care was provided to UASC and those living with disabilities. In Greece and Italy, UNICEF also supported children in host communities affected by COVID-19 with access to information, health care, protection and psychosocial support. Throughout 2020, UNICEF engaged with governments to strengthen national systems' capacity to absorb and integrate refugee and migrant children and contain as well as prevent the transmission of the virus.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

- UNICEF article: [How organizations and advocates use the law to help refugee children in Bulgaria find a future](#)
- UNICEF article: [Using social media to reach thousands of young refugees and migrants with free legal advice](#)
- UNICEF article: ["When I grow up, I want to be a doctor!" Even while on the move, a girl plans her future](#)
- UNICEF article: [After long dangerous journeys alone, refugee and migrant children in Bosnia determined to succeed](#)
- UNICEF statement: [Protecting children must be top priority, in latest refugee surge response](#)
- UNICEF article: [Refugee and migrant communities brace for COVID-19 in already dire conditions on Greek islands](#)
- UNICEF-IOM-UNHCR statement: [UN agencies welcome first relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece](#)
- UNICEF blog post: ["This is a common problem and it requires common solutions"](#)
- UNICEF article: [U-Reporters mobilize to fight COVID-19](#)
- UNICEF article: [UPSHIFT: Shifting gear in response to COVID-19](#)
- UNICEF photo essay: [UNICEF continues support for critical frontline care during COVID-19 pandemic in Italy](#)
- UNICEF blog post: ["It's our duty to be there in the frontline, doing something for the community"](#)
- UNICEF press release: [With financial support from the European Union UNICEF launches the 'RM Child-Health' project to strengthen vulnerable refugee and migrant children's health](#)
- UNICEF article: ["For me it is important to have someone I can rely on, supporting me, even from a distance"](#)
- UNICEF article: ["For young people like me living in a reception centre, this is not just about 'staying at home'"](#)
- UNICEF article: [Snapshot from Bulgaria: An Afghan family overcomes one stumbling block, only to find another](#)
- UNICEF article: [Precious support in the game of life - UNICEF BiH ensures that all refugee and displaced children have access to primary health care](#)
- UNICEF article: [A boy and his father from Iraq found shelter in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)
- UNICEF photo essay: [Refugees and migrants face new challenges in Bulgaria during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- UNICEF video: [Digital learning empowering teenage refugee girls in Greece](#)
- UNICEF statement: [UNICEF statement on fire at Moria Camp in Lesbos, Greece](#)
- UNICEF-IOM-UNHCR statement: [UN agencies hail milestone as over 1000 asylum seekers relocated from Greece so far this year through EU initiative](#)
- UNICEF article: [Non-formal education in refugee camp in BiH](#)
- UNICEF video: [Akelius language learning for refugee and migrant children in Usivak](#)
- UNICEF article: [When Sores Turn into Wounds on the Refugees' Long Road to a Better Life](#)

⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/media/62986/file>

Next SitRep: 21 April 2021

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Annex A

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME RESULTS - as of 31 December 2020

SUMMARY OF RESULTS		Targets 2020	Total Result ¹⁰	Change in Q4	
CHILD PROTECTION					
# of children reached with quality child protection support (MHPSS, legal counselling and case management) and protection standards	Greece	24,000	23,236	▲	3,735
	Italy ^I	1,330	2,065	▲	696
	Serbia	1,000	689	▲	475
	Bulgaria ^I	300	578	▲	117
	Bosnia and Herzegovina ^{II}	5,000	3,500	-	
	Montenegro ^I	150	409	▲	155
# of unaccompanied and separated children benefitting from appropriate care arrangements and/or services	Greece ^I	5,500	5,867	▲	103
	Italy ^I	715	1,114	▲	716
	Bosnia and Herzegovina ^{II}	2,000	1,900	-	
	Serbia ^I	500	634	▲	17
# of frontline workers and caregivers with improved knowledge and skills on child protection	Greece	400	583	▲	305
	Italy	2,100	1,077	▲	504
	Bulgaria	50	74	-	
	Montenegro ^{III}	30	-	-	
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE					
# of GBV survivors and individuals at risk accessing GBV prevention and response services	Greece	5,000	4,645	▲	1,564
	Italy ^{IV}	1,200	1,459	▲	514
	Serbia ^{IV}	1,300	1,931	▲	474
	Bulgaria ^{IV}	200	1,337	▲	180
# of frontline workers with improved knowledge and skills on GBV prevention and response	Greece	350	367	▲	188
	Italy	350	525	▲	327
	Serbia	80	130	▲	11
	Bulgaria	50	74	-	
	Montenegro ^{III}	30	-	-	
# of women, girls, men and boys (including refugee, migrants and host community) who receive information on GBV, available services and how to access them	Greece ^{IV}	2,500	4,032	▲	2,327
	Italy ^{IV}	15,000	20,523	▲	5,793
EDUCATION					
# of school-age children, including adolescents, participating in structured non-formal education activities	Greece	7,500	5,969	▲	1,922
	Italy	1,800	927	▲	520
	Bosnia and Herzegovina ^V	500	1,721	▲	41
# of school-age children benefitting from a strengthened and more inclusive formal education system	Greece ^{VI}	16,000	13,000	-	
	Serbia	500	461	▲	162
	Bosnia and Herzegovina ^V	300	727	▲	233
# of children (3-5 years old) benefitting from early childhood education activities	Greece ^{VI}	500	277	▲	96
	Bulgaria	50	46	▲	11
	Greece	800	1,827	▲	1,181

¹⁰ Results have largely met or exceeded initially set targets, mainly due to the evolving context characterized by changing population movement patterns, increased arrivals in Q3 & Q4, increased needs and vulnerabilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting programme priorities and the use of online modalities leading to a broader coverage than initially anticipated.

# of formal schoolteachers trained on at least one key theme on inclusion of refugee and migrant children	Bosnia and Herzegovina	50	12	▲	8
HEALTH AND NUTRITION					
# of infants and children accessing health and nutrition services, including in mother and baby care centres	Greece ^{VII}	1,200	1,403	▲	221
	Serbia ^{VIII}	200	30	▲	4
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,400	1,297	▲	198
# of mothers accessing mother and baby care services	Greece ^{VII}	1,800	2,668	▲	478
	Serbia ^{VIII}	150	38	▲	6
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	800	431	▲	105
# infants and young children benefitting from increased access to general health checks and referrals, incl. access to life-saving vaccines	Bulgaria	350	201	▲	76
	Bosnia and Herzegovina ^{VII}	600	1,190	▲	909
	Montenegro	50	50	▲	50
# children and women benefitting from increased health literacy	Bulgaria ^{VII}	250	1,072	▲	440
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION					
# of adolescent boys and girls benefitting from enhanced participation, social inclusion, and empowerment	Greece	10,000	8,434	▲	5,255
	Italy	6,000	5,928	▲	225
	Bulgaria	500	256	▲	138
	Serbia	150	114	-	
WASH and BASIC SUPPLIES					
# of children receiving culturally appropriate basic supplies, including clothes, baby hygiene items, dignity kits for women and girls	Bulgaria	1,265	819	▲	387
	Serbia ^{IX}	1,500	1,730	▲	442
	Bosnia and Herzegovina ^{IX}	1,000	2,795	▲	1,505

Notes:

I Targets have been exceeded due to a significant increase in number of new refugee and migrant arrivals in the last two quarters of 2020, a highly transient R/M population requiring support at multiple service delivery points and increased need for child protection support including legal counselling, MHPSS and case management services as well as appropriate care arrangements for UASC, due to COVID-19.

II Results have been adjusted to avoid to the extent possible double counting of children receiving support at multiple service delivery points/TRC's.

III Activity implementation and results in Montenegro have been constrained due to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted the implementation of in-person trainings with planned activities being postponed to the first quarter of 2021.

IV COVID-19 has led to an increased vulnerability to GBV and therefore the number of asylum seekers and refugee and migrant persons seeking GBV prevention, mitigation, and response services have increased significantly, thus resulting in higher reach than originally anticipated.

V Target has been exceeded owing to enhanced partner capacities and increased participation of Refugee and Migrant children in online virtual classes, allowing new arrivals to have faster access to non-formal and formal education.

VI COVID-19 related restrictions in Greece have significantly impacted refugee and migrant children access to formal education and early learning leading to an underachievement of result.

VII Targets have been exceeded due to the overall increase in R/M arrivals and the increased need of R/M population to access health related information, related services, and referral to specialized care, in the context of COVID-19. The figure for Bulgaria also includes people provided with support via telephone and online consultations, in addition to face-to-face activities.

VIII Results have been underachieved due to underfunding for Health & Nutrition sector in 2020 as opposed to the overall funding requirement.

IX Targets have been exceeded due to a significant increase in the number of new arrivals requiring culturally appropriate basic supplies.

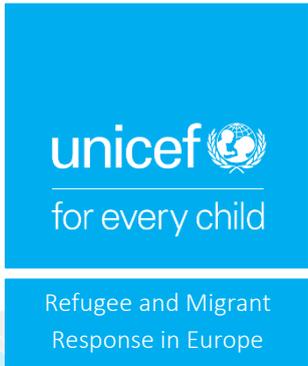
Annex B - Funding Status

Sector	Requirements	Funds available			Funding gap		Funds available 2021/2022
		Humanitarian resources received 2020	Other resources used in 2020	Resources available from 2019 (Carry-over)	\$	%	
Countries with children on the move							
Greece	13,250,000	4,664,327	9,629,788	1,982,903	(3,027,019) ¹¹	0%	2,765,607
Italy	5,080,000	1,867,822	1,197,029	1,977,985	37,164	1%	1,488,620
Bulgaria	1,015,000	350,000	131,967	161,211	371,822	37%	211,051
Serbia	1,350,000	0	153,962	277,709	918,329	68%	246,227
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5,150,000	678,111	2,295,890	100,456	2,075,544	40%	422,103
Montenegro	228,190	0	0	72,341	155,849	68%	0
Regional Support	2,050,000	20,390	225,788	359,732	1,444,091	70%	361,096
Total	28,123,190	7,580,650	13,634,423	4,932,337	1,975,780	7%	5,494,704

¹¹ The funding has been exceeded as USD 3.2 million was received against the Moria Appeal to respond to immediate needs after the fire.

UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Response Activities in Europe

Updated December 2020



- Advocacy
- Communication
- Training and capacity building
- Outreach to children at risk
- Psycho-social support
- Gender-based violence
- Education
- Health and nutrition
- Water, hygiene and sanitation
- Adolescents
- Child rights monitoring
- Basic supplies
- Technical assistance
- Coordination and preparedness



Greece

Italy

Bulgaria

Serbia

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Montenegro

Preparedness countries*

National Committee countries

Turkey

In Turkey, UNICEF is responding to the needs of over 1.7 million Syrian and other refugee and migrant children through a multi-sectoral response under the Regional Response and Resilience Plan (3RP).

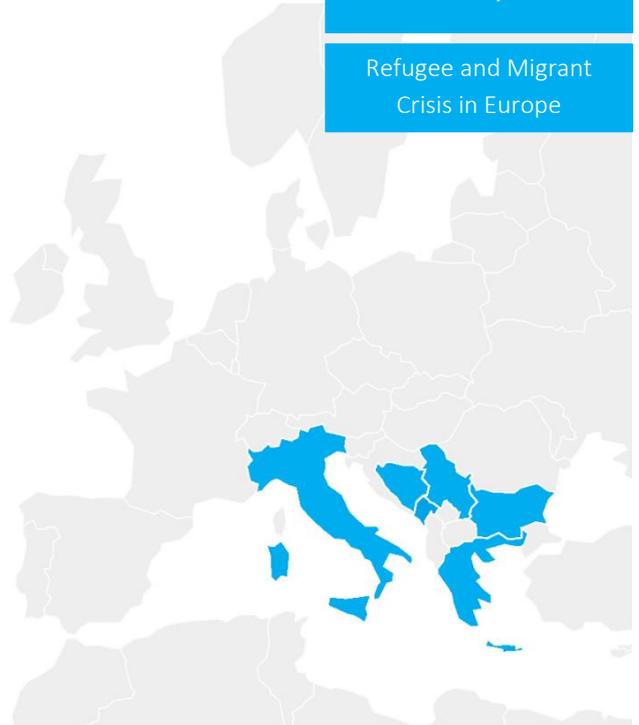
* In some countries, UNICEF may be supporting service provision on needs basis as part of the regular country programme.

UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Response Partners in Europe

Updated December 2020

unicef 
for every child

Refugee and Migrant
Crisis in Europe



-  Child protection and/or GBV prevention and response
-  Education
-  Health and nutrition
-  WASH and basic supplies
-  Technical assistance

Greece	Bulgaria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Solidarity Now, Arsis Thessaloniki, Arsis, CRWI DIOTIMA, Elix, Iliaktida, IRC Hellas, Lesvos Solidarity, Melissa, Merimna, METAdrasi, Syn-eirmos, Terre de Homme Hellas, KETHI  Solidarity Now, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Arsis, Elix, Hellenic Adult Education Association, Iliaktida, METAdrasi, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, University of Thessaly  EKKA, Ministries for Labour, Migration, Education, Deputy Ombudswoman for Children, General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Institute of Educational Policy, Public Prosecutor's Office, national authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Animus Association Foundation, Alliance for Protection from Gender-Based Violence, Nadja Center Foundation, Mission Wings Foundation, Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria, Caritas, Bulgarian Red Cross,  Bulgarian Red Cross  State Agency for Refugees
Italy	Serbia
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Médecins du Monde, INTERSOS, CNCA, Centro Penc, Refugees Welcome, ARCI  INTERSOS, Junior Achievement-Italy, CNR-ITD, ARCI  Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the National Ombudsperson, SIPROIMI, local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Info Park, University of Belgrade, DRC  Info Park  ARDA  Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Save the Children, World Vision, LAN, Centres for Social Welfare in Bihac, Cazin, Velika Kladusa, Kljuc, Hadzici  Médecins du Monde, Church World Service  Fenix, Danish Refugee Council  Fenix  Government authorities at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education