



The Balkans

Asylum Seekers, Migrants, and Refugees in Transit

Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
	Not required	Low	Moderate X	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Major
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate X	Significant	Major

Crisis Overview

As of 16 November, close to 820,000 people have arrived in Europe by sea in 2015, including 673,916 to Greece, 142,400 to Italy, 2,797 to Spain and 105 to Malta. 85% of the arrivals are from the world's top ten refugee-producing countries. 52% of the refugees are from Syria, 10% from Afghanistan, 6% from Iraq. As the sea route to Italy via North Africa is longer and more risky, and as the number of Syrians has increased, more people are travelling through Greece and then through the Balkans to reach northern and western Europe. The main pattern of movement is from Greece to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) northwest through Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia towards Austria and Germany.

Greece has received the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers in decades and, several months after the start of the crisis, the rate of people arriving continues to grow. Despite the onset of winter, the movement is not expected to decrease, and UNHCR anticipates up to 600,000 arrivals between November 2015 and February 2016. Very few recent arrivals are pursuing asylum in the Balkan countries.

Humanitarian needs are driven by obstacles at the borders, overcrowded and expensive transportation, long waits for registration, tensions between host communities and refugees, the risk of exploitation by smugglers, as well as inadequate assistance and shelter. Local and international capacities are under strain, and the arrival of winter is expected to exacerbate needs.

The closing of various borders in Europe is placing a further strain on the situation, and could result in people being stuck in transit facilities, leading to overcrowding.

Key Findings

Anticipated scope and scale

- The flow of people is expected to continue, with an estimated arrival of 5,000 people per day between November and February 2016.
- As more borders are closing, including the border between Slovenia and Croatia, people may be stranded with limited accommodation and assistance.
- The approaching winter is exacerbating the situation, and increasing humanitarian needs, particularly in terms of supply of adequate winterised shelter and NFIs.
- Seasonal conditions will also make the boat crossing from Turkey to Greece more treacherous, leading to an increase in drowning and hypothermia.
- The number of people transiting through the Balkans is vastly underestimated, largely due to a significant number of people transiting bypassing registration.

Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- **Shelter:** winterisation assistance and heating in reception centres
- **NFIs:** blankets and winter clothes
- **Protection:** specialised services for unaccompanied and separated children, older people, pregnant and lactating women, infants and young children, and people with disabilities who have specific needs in transit and for accommodation.
- **WASH:** improved and expanded (winterised) WASH facilities at reception and accommodation centres and access to drinking water.
- **Health:** access to healthcare and psycho-social support. Prevention and treatment of hypothermia and other cold-related pathologies.

Limitations

The constant and dynamic movements of people and the fluidity of the situation in each country limit the accuracy of figures and information on needs in each location.

Most data covers those who are registered; little is known about the high number of non-registered people moving across the region.

Movement of Asylum Seekers and Refugees through the Balkans

European Migrant Crisis: Overview (as of 17 Nov 2015)

1-14 November 2015

Average daily arrivals per day		
Greece	4,826	people/day
FYROM	6,921	people/day
Serbia	6,342	people/day
Croatia	6,853	people/day
Slovenia	6,685	people/day



Displacement

819,218 people are reported to have arrived to Europe by sea as of 16 November, including 673,916 to Greece, 142,400 to Italy, 2,797 to Spain and 105 to Malta. 65% of arrivals are male adults, 14% are women and 20% are children. 85% of the arrivals come from the world's top ten refugee-producing countries. 52% are from Syria, 10% from Afghanistan, 6% from Iraq, 5% from Eritrea, 2% from Nigeria, 2% from Pakistan, 2% from Somalia, and the remainder come from other countries including Sudan, Gambia, and Mali (UNHCR 16/11/2015)

Several months after the beginning of the crisis, the number of people moving along the eastern Mediterranean–western Balkans route continues to grow. Despite the onset of winter, it is not expected that these movements will decrease. Between November 2015 and February 2016, UNHCR anticipates an average of 5,000 arrivals per day from Turkey, resulting in up to 600,000 arrivals into Croatia, Greece, Serbia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (UNHCR 05/11/15).

Between January and 13 November, 3,460 refugees have died or are missing in the Mediterranean (UNHCR 16/11/2015). 360 went missing or died in the last four weeks, including 250 in the Aegean Greek territorial waters (UNHCR 13/11/2015).

Greece: As of 14 November, 673,916 people had arrived to Greece by sea since January. For the first two months of November, the average number of arrivals was 4,826 per day (UNHCR 16/11/2015), compared to 6,800 per day in October (UNHCR 14/11/2015).

Between January and 8 November, 62% of the sea arrivals to Greece were from Syria, 23% from Afghanistan, 7% from Iraq, 3% from Pakistan and the remaining 5% from other countries (UNHCR 08/11/2015). For the first two weeks of November, the top nationalities arriving to Greece were Syria (53%), Afghanistan (28%) and Iraq (8%) (UNHCR 14/11/2015).

As of 14 November, 58% of arrivals in Greece, equivalent to 387,340 refugees, landed first at the island of Lesbos (UNHCR 12/11/2015). The average rate of arrival on Lesbos for the first two weeks of November was approximately 3,200 per day, compared to a daily arrival rate of 4,400 in October (UNHCR 14/11/2015). In January, 737 people arrived, compared to 95,384 in September and 135,021 in October (UNHCR 08/11/2015). Between January and October, of the total arrivals to Lesbos, 56% were from Syria, 32% from Afghanistan and 6% from Iraq. The proportion of arrivals from Afghanistan has increased, reaching 40% in October (UNHCR 14/11/2015, UNHCR 12/11/2015).

As of 11 November, more than 51,000 people have arrived on Kos (UNHCR 11/11/2015).

In Lesbos, eight buses and three minivans are being used to transport new arrivals from the beaches to the reception site (UNHCR 13/11/15). Once registered, Syrians with valid documents have permission to remain in the country for six months. Asylum seekers from other countries are given expulsion notices to leave the country within 40 days (Liveleak 10/07/2015).

With winter approaching, incidents at sea are occurring almost daily. In late October/early November, 11 shipwrecks took place off Lesbos, taking the lives of 64 people. A minimum of 12 people have gone missing, and 620 people were rescued by the Hellenic Coast Guard (UNHCR 12/11/2015).

The ferry strike that took place from 2 to 6 November put additional pressure on already overstretched reception capacities on all the islands (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

FYROM: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the main corridor for people travelling from Greece to Serbia. Between 19 June and 5 November, 214,343 refugees and migrants declared their intention to apply for asylum in FYROM (IOM 12/11/2015). The estimated daily arrival for the first two weeks of November was 6,922, an increase compared to rate of 6,000 for October (UNHCR 16/11/2015; IOM 22/10/2015). As of 3 November, 25% of the refugees were children, of which 5% were unaccompanied. Of the arrivals between 19 June and 3 November, 64% were from Syria, 20% from Afghanistan, 8% from Iraq, and 2% from Pakistan. The remainder included people from oPt, Iran, Somalia, DRC, and Bangladesh (UNHCR 03/11/2015).

Registration remains a challenge: the standard operating procedures proposed by UNHCR have still not been discussed by the Ministry of Interior (UNHCR 03/11/2015). FYROM changed its asylum law on 16 June 2015, after a series of fatal accidents involving people travelling through the country via dangerous routes to avoid arrest (AP, 18/06/2015). According to the new law, people can apply for temporary asylum at the border or the nearest police station, which will allow them to travel legally through the country for three days. Before this, the asylum seekers' entry into the country was considered illegal and could result in imprisonment. After receipt of the document at Gevgelija reception centre people can travel directly to Tabanovce reception centre, which is next to the train station at the FYROM–Serbia border (UNHCR, 10/2015; w2eu.info, 10/2015).

The vast majority of registered people are transiting through the country. 1,739 asylum applications were submitted to the Government from January to the end of October (UNHCR, 03/11/2015). As of 3 November, 470,000 refugees and migrants had

departed the country since UNHCR started monitoring departures from Gavgelija on 1 July (UNHCR 03/11/2015).

Serbia: As of 11 November, 404,022 migrants and refugees had entered into Serbia, most from FYROM. The main point of registration is the Preševo One Stop Centre, just north of the border with FYROM (UNICEF 12/10/2015). Average daily arrivals for the first two weeks of November were 6,343 per day (UNHCR 16/11/2015).

In addition to the registration centre in Preševo, the government has identified a building in Bujanovac as an additional registration centre (IOM 12/11/2015). As of 2 November, registration capacity had stepped up to 8,000/day in Preševo and 500/day elsewhere. Refugees and migrants also continue to arrive into Serbia from Bulgaria, with an average of 200 arriving daily across the entire stretch of the border (UNHCR 02/11/2015). Due to greatly increased capacity, the police registered 180,307 asylum seekers in October, compared to 51,048 in September. This means almost half of all registrations for the year were in October. Among the October arrivals, approximately 55% were male, 15% female and 30% children. 93.5% of claimants originated from refugee-producing countries (UNHCR 02/11/2015).

Registration papers allowing 72 hours stay in Serbia are given to migrants in the registration camps in Prešovo and Dimitrovgrad. It has been reported that migrants cannot board transport to Croatia without these documents (WTE 17/11/2015). IOM, MSF, and UNHCR continued to transport up to 4,200 most vulnerable refugees daily from Miratovac to Preševo Reception Centre. During the last week of October, the approximate average waiting time for registration in Preševo was four hours (UNHCR 02/11/2015). Power cuts in Preševo have increased waiting times and challenged effective provision of assistance at night (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

Refugees continue to exit to Croatia on foot at Berkasovo/Bapska border crossing, with an average estimated 6,100 daily exits (UNHCR 02/11/2015). Authorities have established a new special train service which takes refugees and migrants from Šid (Serbia) directly to the reception centre in Slavonski Brod (Croatia) and from there to Dobova (Slovenia). The winterised centre and coordinated transport arrangements ensure a more dignified transit and significantly reduce waiting times (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

The number of people seeking asylum increased by 37% between August and September. The proportion of Afghan applicants also increased. However, it is reported that very few follow up on their applications (UNHCR 12/10/2015, ACAPS, 04/11/2015). Most are thought not to plan to spend more than a few days on Serbian territory (IRIN 14/10/2015). Those who pursue their initial registered 'intent to seek asylum' must go to one of the five asylum centres in Bogovadja, Banja Koviljača, Krnjača, Sjenica and Tutin (central, western and southwestern Serbia). Only 14

people have been officially granted refugee status since the beginning of the year (UNICEF 12/10/2015).

Croatia: According to the Ministry of the Interior, 354,446 migrants and refugees entered into Croatia between 16 September and 10 November (IOM 12/11/2015). Average daily arrivals for the first two weeks of November were 6,853 (UNHCR 16/11/2015). On 6 and 7 November, numbers were smaller than usual due to a strike by Greek ferry operators. By 8 November, the flow of migrants and refugees had picked up again, with approximately 5,500 arrivals (IOM 12/11/2015).

On 16 September, Hungary closed its border with Serbia and announced it would start arresting people crossing the border illegally. Since then, the number of asylum seekers transiting through Croatia drastically increased (IFRC, 02/10/2015). Croatia closed most of its eight border points with Serbia two days after people began arriving (AFP, 19/10/2015). On 16 October, Hungary also closed its borders with Croatia to migrants and asylum seekers, forcing people to move on to Slovenia or stay in Croatia (Independent, 16/10/2015).

While the Opatovac transit centre in Croatia remained operational until 4 November, reception and arrival assistance were minimal due to the transfer of services to the new transit centre in Slavonski Brod. By 4 November, remaining migrants and refugees transiting through Opatovac were taken to Slavonski Brod for their registration and onward journey (IOM 12/11/2015). On 3 November, a train service began taking refugees from the Serbian border town of Sid to Slavonksi Brod, after Serbia and Croatia agreed a new protocol on border cooperation on 30 October. The protocol envisions six to seven trains a day, carrying as many as 7,700 migrants altogether (NYT 03/11/2015). The transit centre in Slavonski Brod can accommodate 5,000 (GoC 06/11/2015).

The vast majority of refugees do not express an intention to stay in Croatia, and as of early October, only four asylum applications had been submitted (UNICEF, 12/10/2015).

Slovenia: According to the government, close to 200,000 refugees and migrants entered Slovenia between 16 October and 13 November (GoRoS 13/11/2015). The average arrival rate for the first two weeks of November was 6,685 people per day (UNHCR 16/11/2015). According to the Slovenian Police and the Ministry of Interior, the majority of migrants and refugees entering the country originate from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan (IOM 12/11/2015).

Dobova has become the main entry point into Slovenia. However, some cross through Macelj/Gruškovje and Mursko Središće/Petisovci (UNHCR 05/11/2015). Four to five trains arrive in Dobova every day, with approximately 1,200 refugees each. Refugees are registered at the station: the extent of registration depends upon

police capacity (WTE 05/11/2015). From Dobova, people are transferred to centres near the Austrian border, mostly by train to Sentilj, and in a few cases to Jesencie (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

According to the Slovenian Interior Ministry, temporary barriers extending over 4.5km were set up on the border between Croatia and Slovenia on 11 November as a preventative and temporary measure to control and direct the flow of refugees to where reception centres are located. The barriers do not therefore extend along the entire border. Seventy foreign police officers from four EU member states will take part in protecting the border near Novo mesto in the coming months (GoRoS 12/11/2015).

Austria has announced that only up to 6,000 people are accepted per day, and Germany will be imposing a similar restriction. This could result in thousands of people being stranded in Slovenia (GoRoS 10/11/2015).

Shelter and NFIs

Safe temporary shelter facilities are required along transit routes, particularly as delays increase at border crossings, boat crossings, and registration sites (Caritas 03/09/2015; MSF 15/10/2015).

Winter

Humanitarian needs are changing with the arrival of winter weather, which many refugees have not seen before, and people are arriving wearing sandals and inappropriate clothing. There is an urgent need for more shelters, blankets, winter clothing, water and food to avoid refugees contracting hypothermia, pneumonia and other diseases (Reuters 13/11/2015).

Given the volatile and fast-evolving situation, travel routes may again change in the coming weeks, leading to an increase in the number of affected countries and the points at which winterisation assistance will have to be provided. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, and Kosovo may be affected (UNHCR 05/11/15).

According to a Swiss Humanitarian Aid assessment that took place from 4 to 8 November, winter infrastructure was identified as one of the most pressing needs for Slovenia and Croatia (GoS 16/11/2015).

Shelter

Greece: The conditions in transit camps are totally inadequate, and they turn into seas of mud when it rains (Reuters 13/11/2015). In Lesbos, the reception sites of Moria

and Kara Tepe have a capacity of 2,800, while there are currently 16,000 refugees and migrants on the island. Many people, including women, children and newborn babies have no choice but to sleep outside (UNHCR 13/11/2015, Reuters 13/11/2015). In an attempt to address the lack of accommodation space, the Minister of Migration Policy announced the creation of new spaces to accommodate up to 10,000 migrants and refugees, 5,000 in Attica region and another 5,000 in Macedonia region (IOM 12/11/2015). At Kara Tape, living conditions have improved, but conditions at the Moria site remain below minimum standards (UNHCR 13/11/2015). The winterisation of shelters needs to be accelerated (UNHCR 13/11/2015).

Urgent action is required to establish management of the reception sites of Moria and Kara Tepe. At the moment, refugees have to find their own place to sleep in the few shelters available. The competition and tension particularly affects people in a more vulnerable position (UNHCR 13/11/2015). The limited registration capacity in Lesbos is source of backlogs and bottlenecks, putting additional pressure on reception capacity. Registration needs to be carried out in compliance with EU standards. Additional human resources and Eurodac finger print machines are required (UNHCR 12/11/2015).

The ferry strike had a negative impact on the already overstretched reception conditions. Many people are sleeping in substandard sites or in the open on Leros, Kos, Samos, Lesbos, and Chios. On Kos, overcrowded registration sites and limitations in access hampered the systematic provision of information (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

Arrivals on the small island of Kastellorizo and the nearby uninhabited island of Ro have increased during the last weeks. There are no reception facilities on the islands and refugees and migrants rent private accommodations, stay in a local health clinic, or in the open (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

FYROM: Cold temperatures have increased the need for heating and blankets in Gevgelija centre (independent.mk, 30/10/2015). With the cold nights refugees are lighting fires outside and inside the site to keep warm, which has caused some fire hazard concerns. As soon as the electricity grid has been upgraded, heaters will be installed at the site, in the meantime, heaters will be operated using generators (UNHCR 03/11/2015).

Serbia: Conditions at all reception facilities require improvement, particularly with regard to winterisation, and there is a lack of shelter for people with specific needs in the centres in Sentilj. Attempts have been made to improve crowd control at the Sentilj/Spielfeld border crossing. However, the centres in Sentilj are still at times overcrowded due to the slow pace of border crossings. Authorities are considering establishing additional shelter (UNHCR 05/11/2015). Delays at border crossings are causing more people to be stranded with no access to shelter. Preševo centre

provides space for short rests but as winter approaches, improved shelter facilities are required (UNICEF 12/10/2015). An estimated 800 places in shelters are available in Serbia but many are not on the main transit routes (IRIN 14/10/2015). There is an urgent need particularly along the Croatia–Serbia border (MSF 15/10/2015). The heated tent at the Lendava accommodation centre (near the Croatian border) has a capacity of 200 persons. Other tents with a capacity of 676 are not heated (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

Hard shelter is lacking in Negotin and Zaječar, and more blankets, shoes, and warm clothes are needed at crossings used by refugees and migrants along the Serbia–Bulgaria border (UNHCR 02/11/2015).

Croatia: The transit centre in Slavonski Brod is winterised, and has a capacity to host 3,300 refugees and migrants (IOM 12/11/2015; UNHCR 05/11/2015). In addition to the Slavonski Brod centre, as of early October, Croatia could reportedly host 1,500–2,000 asylum seekers and refugees in Zagreb, which is located along the current transit routes, and smaller numbers at other temporary shelters around the country (AFP 02/10/2015).

Slovenia: According to Slovenia’s Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, refugees and migrants are being received and accommodated at seven reception and 13 accommodation centres with a total capacity of 10,000 beds (GoRoS 04/11/2015). The current maximum capacity of the reception centre in Dobova is 2,000 people (GoRoS 13/11/2015). Slovenia is currently improving accommodation conditions for refugees in all reception and accommodation centres (GoRoS 12/11/2015).

WASH

The lack of adequate sanitation facilities, drinking water, rubbish collection, and cleaning services is a major concern across all reception centres in the Balkans. This is assumed to be a major issue along the transit routes as well.

Greece: In Kara Tepe, WASH has significantly improved but needs the creation of additional separate facilities for men and women. In Moria, the WASH situation is critical and poses significant health risks. Garbage collection for both sites is urgently required. Instalment of latrines, water points and showers are also required in all sites (UNHCR 13/11/2015).

FYROM: Despite improvements, train wagons remain overcrowded and hygiene standards are of serious concern (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

As of late October, rubbish accumulation was a problem in and around Gevgelija reception centre. According to local authorities, the procurement of a waste truck

and drinking water were required (Independent MK, 30/10/2015). UNHCR has also reported inadequate cleaning in and around the centre (UNHCR, 20/10/2015).

Serbia: WASH conditions at all reception facilities require improvement (UNHCR 05/11/2015). Refugees interviewed by the UNHCR protection team expressed the need for more latrines all along the route, especially for women (UNHCR 02/11/2015). In mid-October, a need for clean water and safe sanitation facilities was reported at crossing points and registration centres (MSF 19/10/2015; Amnesty International 24/10/2015). In late October, it was reported that there were only 12 toilets at Preševo registration centre available for the 6,000-10,000 people passing through the centre daily, amounting to approximately 66 people to one toilet (Deutsche Welle 26/10/2015; UNHCR 12/10/2015; Caritas 26/10/2015; ECHO 20/10/2015)

The new waste stream is jeopardising the already fragile collection service. As the weather is changing, the waste management challenge has shifted from collecting used bottles and packaging to collecting thousands of discarded blankets and clothes, soaked by rain (UNDP 12/11/2015).

Croatia: Some areas for improvement observed in Slavonski Brod include the provision of clothes washing and drying facilities (UNHCR 05/11/2015). Furthermore, winter washing and sanitation has been identified as a pressing need during an assessment conducted in early November (GoS 16/11/2015). There were also reports in late October that the Opatovac transit centre was overstretched on occasions, and people were without proper hygiene and sanitation facilities (Care, 21/10/2015).

Slovenia: Winter washing and sanitation has been identified as pressing needs during an assessment conducted in early November (GoS 16/11/2015) Furthermore, WASH facilities at reception centres require improvement. Limited WASH access for people taking the 15-hour train journey from the Croatian town of Tovarnik to Slovenia is a major concern (UNHCR, 02/11/2015).

Food Security and Livelihoods

Greece: On Lesvos, most refugees buy bread and water and other basic food from the in-camp canteen. Food distributions are limited. Formal sites have more structured and regular food distribution. In the informal camps, the young and healthy tend to push to the front of the lines at the distribution points, often meaning others leave with nothing. Some people say they have not eaten for days (UNICEF 06/11/2015). In late October, it was reported that food distribution on most of the islands was only undertaken on a sporadic basis by local NGOs and volunteers (UNHCR, 26/10/2015).

FYROM: The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has put the provision of hot meals on hold until the new distribution area in the reception centre is established (UNHCR 03/11/2015).

Serbia: In mid-October it was reported that adequate food supplies were needed at registration centres, transportation points, and border crossings at the Croatian border and to a lesser extent along the border with Bulgaria. As temperatures drop, warm food would be more appropriate (MSF 15/10/2015).

Croatia: Current health regulations do not allow serving of warm meals, but authorities are working towards a solution (UNHCR 05/11/2015). There is a concern about food security, especially for infants, as most children in transit have been eating dry food for weeks or sometimes months (UNICEF, 12/10/2015). The nutrition situation is likely to worsen as winter conditions demand a higher calorie intake.

Slovenia: The lack of food for people travelling by train from the Croatian town of Tovarnik to Slovenia is a concern (UNHCR, 02/11/2015).

Protection

Greece: Security, including lighting, needs to set up in Moria and Kara Tepe (UNHCR 13/11/2015).

FYROM: According to Amnesty International, hundreds of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants of all ages are being unlawfully detained in the Gazi Baba Reception Centre for Foreigners in Skopje. The centre is overcrowded and conditions are inhuman and degrading, with extremely limited access to adequate sanitation and healthcare (AI 2015)

Serbia: Limited police presence in evening and night hours at Preševo, has led to challenges related to crowd control as tensions erupted during long waiting times (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

Vulnerable Groups

Family separation is a major concern, especially when boarding buses and trains (UNHCR, 01/10/2015). Unaccompanied children and women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers and other perpetrators of abuse (UNHCR 9/10/2015; UNICEF 12/10/2015). There are also reports of attempted abductions of children, as families with children receive priority access to services such as transport and food (UNICEF, 12/10/2015). As of early September, approximately 12% of women were pregnant (UNICEF, 01/09/2015).

Greece: In reception areas, women and unaccompanied and separated children must be allocated separate areas to sleep. Sites are not gender sensitive and expose women and children to SGBV (UNHCR 13/11/2015). Furthermore, there is a lack of systematic SGBV prevention and response mechanisms (UNHCR 12/11/2015). In June, only one in ten refugees and migrants registered crossing the border from Greece into FYROM through Gevgelija was a child. By October, children accounted for one in three refugees and migrants registered at the same border (UNICEF 13/11/2015). Child protection activities need to be enhanced to ensure that protection and assistance provided by humanitarian actors and volunteers respond to the needs of children, including UASC (UNHCR 13/11/2015).

There is a lack of appropriate shelters on almost all islands, resulting in cases of children remaining in police custody in substandard conditions, before being transferred to open reception facilities in the mainland (UNHCR, 22/10/2015).

FYROM: Refugees are reportedly being charged higher costs for train tickets than locals and there is reported abuse by train operators (UNHCR, 20/10/2015). In early November, 25% of the refugees were children, of which 5% were unaccompanied (UNHCR 03/11/2015).

Serbia: In October, approximately 45% of registered refugees were women and children (UNHCR 02/11/2015). Among the registered intentions to seek asylum in October, 29.5% were expressed by minors (UNHCR 02/11/2015).

Croatia: Information on asylum seekers in Croatia is not disaggregated, but in mid-October it was estimated that women and children constituted 30–40% of arrivals (UNICEF, 12/10/2015). As reported in late September, many children arriving at the reception centre are reportedly exhausted, confused, and traumatised, with some experiencing illnesses and dehydration as a result of the long journey (UNICEF, 22/09/2015).

Slovenia: The number of separated families is reportedly significantly rising. They are separated during border crossings from Croatia and when women and children are given priority for transportation (UNHCR, 02/11/2015).

Social Tensions

Tensions between asylum seekers and host communities are frequent, as well as among asylum seekers, particularly in transit centres. Incidents of discrimination and violence against asylum seekers have been reported (UNHCR, 2015).

Greece: Tensions are increasing between refugees and the local population on the islands, as well as among refugees themselves (UNHCR, 16/10/2015).

FYROM: In August, residents of Gevgelija protested the physical and environmental toll that the flow of asylum seekers and refugees has had on the local area (NYT, 21/10/2015). These tensions erupted into clashes between police and asylum seekers/refugees.

Croatia: At the end of September, tensions between groups of asylum seekers and refugees were reported at the Opatovac transit centre due to the delays in registration and departures from the centre (UNHCR, 01/10/2015).

Health

Most Syrian refugees have already been vaccinated. However Syrian children, and refugees from countries with weak health systems, need to be vaccinated against diseases like measles and polio as soon as possible (Reuters 13/11/2015).

As the weather grows colder, the risk of illnesses like pneumonia increases, especially for those sleeping outside (Reuters 13/11/2015).

As a result of the trauma experienced in home country and during the refugees journey, psychosocial services are needed to reduce health and mental health risks associated with the mass movement of people (IOM, 10/2015).

According to the UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia, one in five women of childbearing age is likely to be pregnant. It is important to ensure that they have access to health services to diminish risk of life-threatening complications (UNRCS 12/11/2015)

There is a growing concern for the increasing number of smaller children. As there are not adequate water and sanitation facilities and a lot of garbage lying around, diseases can spread easily (Reuters 13/11/2015).

Greece: The refugees arriving daily on the Greek islands are exhausted, chilled in their wet clothes, and often do not know where they are (Christian Aid 09/11/2015). Respiratory illnesses have been reported among children, and children were observed to have blue hands and lips during a recent cold spell (Reuters 13/11/2015). Cases of hypothermia, other cold-related conditions, and psychological distress were reported from Lesvos in early November (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

During monitoring at the border with FYROM, UNHCR observed a number of persons showing signs of psychological trauma, particularly among the survivors of shipwrecks (UNHCR 05/11/2015).

FYROM: During the summer months the medical teams on the ground were treating cases of heatstroke and sunburn. Recently, the most common health issues are colds and respiratory infections (Reuters 13/11/2015).

Serbia: The number of refugees and migrants with various pathologies caused by a weakened immune system (flu, fever, respiratory issues, diarrhoea, stomach problems, etc.) is growing (UNHCR 05/11/2015). The local health centre in Dimitrovgrad lacks medication and equipment to adequately assist the new arrivals (UNHCR 02/11/2015).

In October it was reported that patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, Asthma and heart problems have been unable to obtain medication whilst on their journey (MSF 15/10/2015).

Slovenia: As of early November, the most common medical issues are respiratory infections, diarrhoea and colds, along with frequent reports of fatigue and aggravated chronic conditions. Most patients can be treated on-site. According to the government, the situation is manageable (GoRoS 03/11/2015).

The health situation is reportedly most difficult in Brežice due to overcrowding (Government, 26/10/2015). A few isolated cases of scabies and hepatitis were reported as of late October (Government, 24/10/2015).

Response Capacity

Local Capacity

Given the dynamic nature of this crisis, even mapping of needs is a challenge, one which may have contributed to municipal capacities remaining largely unsupported by international donors (UNDP 12/11/2015).

Greece: Officially, undocumented refugees and asylum seekers are not entitled to access public health services, except for emergencies. In practice, however, refugees and asylum seekers are referred to local health centres for testing and hospitalisations on some islands (Médecins du Monde, 04/2015).

FYROM: The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has taken over the coordination of reception conditions including humanitarian assistance. This includes site planning (UNHCR 03/11/2015). In the wake of clashes with asylum seekers and refugees, a temporary state of emergency was declared in August and the military was deployed to restore calm along its borders with Greece and Serbia (NYT 20/08/2015). In September, the Macedonian parliament extended the state of emergency on the country's borders until June 2016 (AP, 04/10/2015).

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with public health institutions provides medical care at the reception centre site in Gevgelija. Nine mobile medical teams are working in shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce (UNHCR, 20/10/2015; WHO, 05/10/2015).

Serbia: The Serbian Government continues to request additional humanitarian support, however a number of local and international organisations have been providing medical, WASH, shelter, NFI, food and protection services (The Guardian 15/09/2015).

Croatia: The Ministry of the Interior manages the Opatovac transit centre (GoRoC 21/10/2015).

Slovenia: On 20 October, Slovenia called in its army to help manage the influx of people (BBC, 20/10/2015). Among other things, the army has been tasked with logistics, health support, and preparation and delivery of cooked meals to reception and accommodation centres (Government, 02/11/2015). A military field hospital was scheduled to be deployed in early November. Social Work Centres are also providing support with their emergency services through the provision of psychosocial support, family reunification, and identification of unaccompanied children, etc (Government, 02/11/2015).

International Actors

A number of UN agencies and international NGOs, with local partners are providing WASH, shelter, NFI, food, health, and protection support. Projects to facilitate family reunification exist along borders and in registration centres (UNHCR 12/10/2015; UNICEF, 12/10/2015).

UNHCR released its Winterization Plan for the Refugee Crisis in Europe on 5 November, appealing for USD 96.15 million in additional support for Greece and affected countries in the Balkans for the winter months (November 2015 – February 2016). The Winterization Plan emergency appeal is in addition to the Office's revised appeal for the Special Mediterranean Initiative (SMI) of USD 128 million (June 2015–December 2016). As of 5 November, USD 26.34 million has been received for the SMI. This represents 32.5% of the total requirements for the SMI in 2015 (USD 81 million) (UNHCR 5/11/2015).

Greece: The financial requirements for UNHCR response to the emergency in Greece in 2015 amounted to USD 18.2 million. In addition, USD 34.2 million are required to address the urgent need to extend assistance measures and therefore protect people of concern from the winter weather conditions (November 2015 to February 2016) (UNHCR 12/11/2015).

FYROM: The Italian Development Cooperation has decided to allocate further multilateral emergency funding of 250,000 euro (equivalent to USD 266,000) to help FYROM tackle the refugee emergency. Italy's contribution comes in addition to the 200,000 euro (equivalent to USD 213,000) already earmarked for the emergency in the Balkans (GoI 11/11/2015)

Serbia: In October, the EU allocated 7 million euros for Serbia in humanitarian assistance, including the improvement of reception centres, procurement of transportation vehicles, as well as purchase equipment necessary to help the refugees (UNHCR 02/11/2015).

On 30 October, an agreement between the Government of Serbia and the Council of Europe Development Bank was signed on grant funding worth EUR 2.3 mil (equivalent to USD 2,45 million) intended for ensuring that the most urgent needs of refugees and migrants in reception centres in Serbia are met (UNHCR 02/11/2015).

Croatia: UNHCR, national Red Cross societies, various NGOs and volunteers are helping the Croatian and Slovenian civil protection organisations working in transit centres (GoS 16/11/2015)

Slovenia: UNHCR, national Red Cross societies, various NGOs and a great many volunteers are helping the Slovenian civil protection organisations working in the transit centres (GoS 16/11/2015).

Local NGOs

Local NGOs, national Red Cross societies, and volunteer networks provide emergency assistance, primarily medical, food, and NFI assistance both at reception centres and along transit routes. They have also helped disseminate information on asylum rights and guidance on services available, and established temporary safe spaces for children and families (UNHCR 12/10/2015; UNICEF 12/10/2015).

However, in early October, it was reported that groups were struggling to keep pace with arrivals, especially with winter drawing close (AP, 04/10/2015). In Slovenia, an NGO platform is coordinating local organisations' activities.

Aggravating Factors

Winter conditions increase the need for warm clothes and shoes, high-calorie food, blankets, improved shelter, heating in reception centres and shelters, and medicine and supplies for respiratory infections. Without adequate assistance to facilitate movement at border crossings, blockages and delays in wet and cold conditions will

exacerbate the situation and increase the health needs of the refugees (MSF 15/10/2015).

Harsh winter conditions with extreme weather events may occur. Heavy snowfall can limit movement, and cut communications and electricity, especially in mountainous areas (IFRC, 15/01/2015). People might change their route to avoid the harshest weather, which could create humanitarian needs in new locations (AFP, 02/10/2015).

Communication and access to information: Télécoms Sans Frontières notes that people experience bottlenecks in communication and accessing information in some areas. These include the lack of network connectivity, high roaming costs, saturated and inoperative networks, the lack of power to charge phones, which contributes to the lack of information and separation of families (TSF, 28/10/2015).

Border controls: Neighbouring states on the transit route have concentrated on curbing irregular cross-border movement, including through tighter border controls and detention, or penalisation for illegal entry. The EU Summit on the European Refugee Crisis on 18 October noted the need for border-related confidence measures and the strengthening of border cooperation between Greece and FYROM (independent.mk, 26/10/2015).

Border controls imposed elsewhere in Europe, most significantly in Hungary, are causing a bottleneck along the Serbia–Croatia border, increasing the need for humanitarian support in the area (ECHO 20/10/2015).

On 28 October, Austria announced it would build a fence along its border with Slovenia to control the influx of people. Ljubljana has warned it will shut its border if the EU does not stick to the 17-point action plan announced on 25 October to improve cooperation regarding the asylum seeker influx (AFP, 28/10/2015).

Several EU countries have reintroduced border checks. Under the Schengen agreement (which includes 22 of the 28 EU member states, plus non-EU members Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), people can travel without showing their passports at the zone's internal borders. Temporary border controls are allowed for reasons of public policy or internal security. Slovenia announced on 11 November that it was erecting a razor-wire fence along the border with fellow EU member Croatia (AFP 13/11/2015).

Landmines along the Serbia–Croatia border: Around 300,000m² of Croatian territory along the border with Serbia is contaminated with landmines. Although contaminated areas are marked and additional markers have been installed, the mines pose a risk. De-mining is expected to be complete by November (Balkan

Transitional Justice, 15/10/2015; Independent, 22/10/2015). No update on the situation has been identified as of mid-November.

Previous displacement: In Greece, 200,000 undocumented asylum seekers and refugees were estimated to be living in the country and it is possible that some of this group will also join the flow towards western and northern Europe. Since 2013, migration routes have been shifting to Italy and Greece resulting in a significant increase in arrivals (Eliamep, 10/2014).

Information gaps

- There is a lack of comprehensive data on the number of people transiting through each country due to many people avoiding registration. The number of those registered is not disaggregated by sex, age or disability. The large, dynamic, and continuous movement of people across the Balkans severely restricts attempts to assess needs, both as a whole and in specific country contexts.
- There is an overall lack of information on specific sectoral needs.
- Data on unaccompanied or separated children is incomplete. This is in part due to the fact that some may not register or are not properly identified and referred or pretend to be adults.
- Most data available concerns asylum seekers who have registered and little is known about the situation of unregistered asylum seekers. Due to this lack of data, it is difficult to target the most vulnerable and establish the number of people arriving and exiting from each country.