

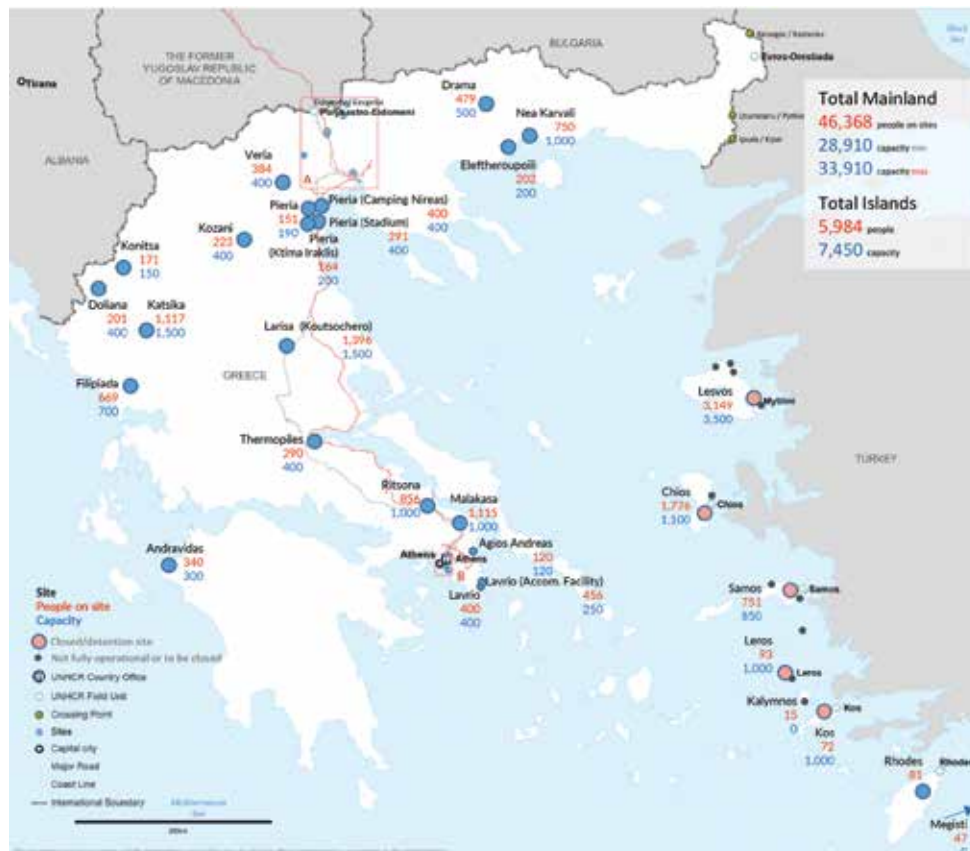


HELLENIC REPUBLIC
General Secretariat for
Media & Communication

Refugee Crisis Fact sheet

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Refugee/migration crisis & Greece



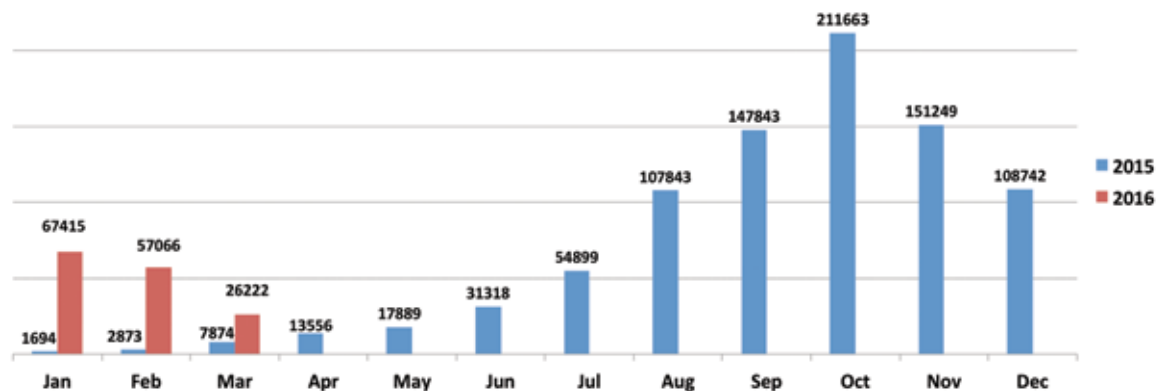
Source: UNHCR (5 April 2016)

Greece: The refugee & migrant crisis in numbers*

- **Over 1 million refugees/migrants** have arrived in Greece, via the Turkish coast, since 2015
- **847.930 arrivals** on Greek islands in 2015
- **150.703 arrivals** on Greek islands (1.1.2016 - 30.3.2016)
- **57.066 arrivals** in February 2016 and **26.222 arrivals** in March 2016
- **40.574 rescued at sea** (1.1.2016 - 20.3.2016)
- **52.352 remain temporarily** in Greece at various facilities: 5.984 on the islands, 2.542 in Central Greece, 14.506 in Attica, 28.980 in Northern Greece and 340 in Southern Greece (5.4.2016)
- **569 refugees** have been **relocated** to various EU countries (until 15.3.2016)
- **202** have been **returned to Turkey** under the EU-Turkey agreement of March 18, 2016
- **52%** of those who have entered Greece via the islands, **come from Syria**, 25% from Afghanistan, 16% from Iraq, 3% from Iran (February 2016)
- **40%** of arrivals are **minors/children**, **22%** are **women** and **38%** are **men** (1-29.2.2016)
- **127** persons have **perished at sea** and **20** are **missing** (1.1.2016 – 20.3.2016)

Sources: Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management, Hellenic Coastguard, Hellenic Police, UNHCR, EU

Sea arrivals per month



Source: UNHCR

Greece is fulfilling its obligations

Greece is fulfilling entirely its obligations and its commitments as an active EU-member state, as well as the obligations arising from the EU-Turkey agreement (18.3.2016). Specifically, the Greek government:

- **Has put forward legislation** to accelerate the examination procedure of applications for international protection at first and second instance from the Asylum Service and the Appeals Authority respectively. The procedure for the examination of applications, conducted on an individual basis, will have to be completed within 14 days.
- **Has incorporated Directive 2013/32** of the European Parliament and the European Council “on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection” which sets out specific criteria for the designation of “safe third countries”.
- **Is continuously improving** the operation, staffing and structure of Reception Services for the registration, identification and verification of those entering the country without legal formalities.
- **Has established** the operation of **Open Structures of Temporary Reception of Applicants for International Protection** for those having applied for asylum or who fall under the relocation category, as well as the operation of **Open Structures of Temporary Hospitality** for those in the process of return, deportation or readmission.

At the same time, **Greece:**

- **Continues to safeguard European sea borders** according to European regulations, in cooperation with FRONTEX and NATO
- **Respects European Law and the Geneva Convention**, which is an integral part of European Law.
- **Has completed the set up of reception facilities** currently in operation on Greek islands.
- **Systematically identifies and registers** each refugee or migrant entering the country.

Relocation and temporary accommodation centers

In addition to the aforementioned reception facilities, over 30 accommodation centers are in operation throughout Greece, with a total capacity of **33.910 places**, while **30.000 new accommodation places** will be created shortly. In this context, Greek authorities are making **efforts to relocate all refugees/migrants from makeshift settlements** to organized accommodation facilities that guarantee decent living conditions.

Rent subsidy programme of the UNHCR

3.600 accommodation places have already been created throughout Greece, **1.200** more are to be created shortly in Athens and another **1.500** in Thessaloniki, while, another **10.000** places are expected to be ready by August, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Greece.

Maritime borders surveillance

NATO and **Frontex** are contributing to the efforts of Greek port authorities to guard Greek and EU maritime borders and to combat trafficking networks.

NATO

- As of February 2016, NATO has decided to take part in the efforts to crackdown on trafficking networks and illegal migration in the Aegean.
- NATO forces perform reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance tasks in the region, as well as information exchange with Greek and Turkish authorities and Frontex.
- It has been agreed with Turkey that people rescued by NATO ships will be returned to Turkey; however, the specific laws of the Alliance member country, whose ship performs the rescue, will be taken into account as well.

Frontex

- Frontex continues to develop joint operations in the Aegean, providing Greece with technical assistance and human resources to enhance its border surveillance, search and rescue operations, registration and identification capacity.



Source: Athens News Agency Macedonian Press Agency (ana-mpa)

- In total Frontex has deployed 474 border guards and experts on Greek islands (27/03/2016, Hellenic Police data). Under the EU–Turkey agreement, about 200 officers have been deployed on the Greek islands and additional personnel is expected in the coming days.

Coordinating Bodies

a) Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management

- A Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management has been established, acting as an inter-ministerial steering group, with the participation of competent Ministers.
- The Executive branch of this inter-ministerial steering group is the **National Coordination Center for Border, Migration and Asylum Control (ESKESMA)**, responsible for gathering information and providing daily records incorporating all the new data for evaluation.
- **A Spokesperson** has been designated for **daily updates** and **regular media briefings**.

b) Ministry of Health Coordinating Body

- The National Health Operations Center (EKEPY) has established a Coordinating Body for the immediate and effective response to needs arising, as well as for planning and epidemiological surveillance, collecting data from informal settlements and refugee reception centers across the country.
- Special consideration for **emergency pediatric care**.

Informing refugees/migrants

The government aims at providing **reliable information** to refugees and migrants regarding their rights and obligations as well as to what is applicable, in order for them not to fall victim to misinformation and exploitation.

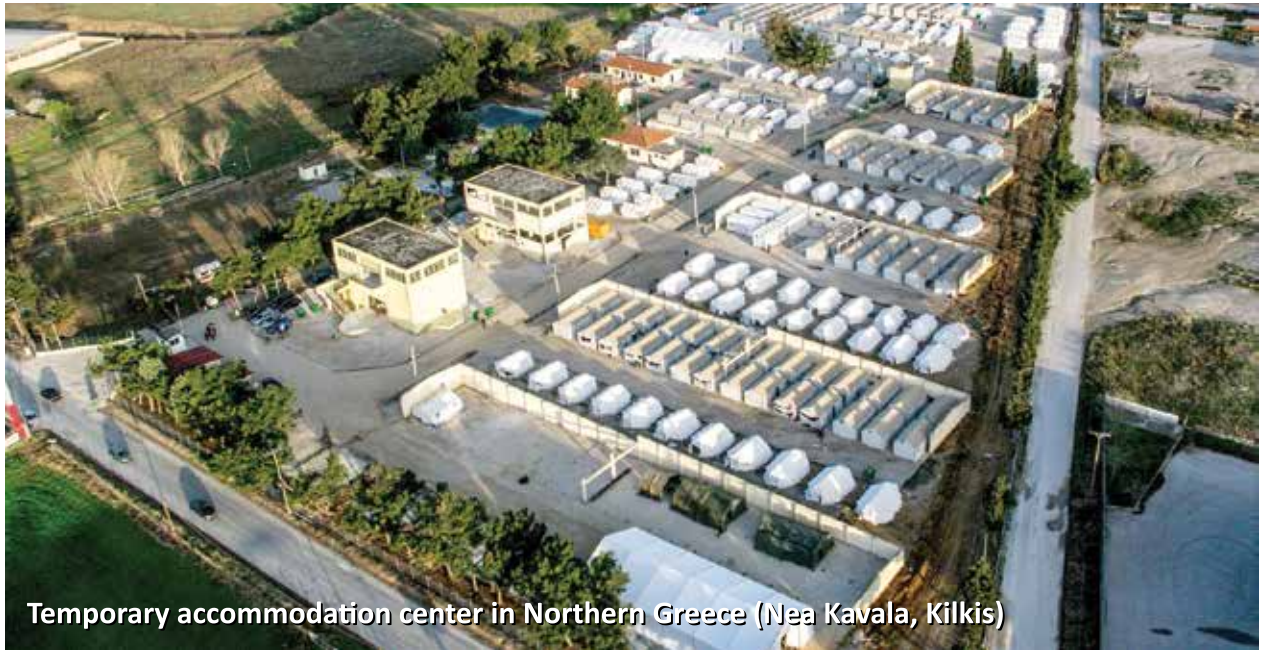
Thus, Greek authorities:

- Are distributing **informative brochures** to refugees/migrants about transportation means and accommodation facilities available within the country, especially after the closure of the Western Balkan route and the EU-Turkey agreement of March 18, 2016.
- Are dispatching **interpreters and translators on-site** and plan to install PA systems for various announcements.
- Have launched **Arabic news bulletins** on public TV/Radio broadcasters and an **Athens News Agency webpage in Arabic** to keep refugees/migrants informed.
- Are establishing **wi-fi internet connection infrastructure** at all accommodation facilities, with a default access to the Athens News Agency webpage in Arabic so that refugees/migrants have access to direct and continuous flow of information.

What should be done to address the problem

The decision by some countries in the EU and in the so-called “Western Balkans route” to **close their borders** to all migrants and refugees **has been suffocating Greece**, which is still receiving large migration flows from the Turkish coast.

The closure of borders is not the appropriate way to address the refugee/migration problem, as it has thus far evolved.



Temporary accommodation center in Northern Greece (Nea Kavala, Kilkis)

Source: Athens News Agency Macedonian Press Agency (ana-mpa)

Following the **EU-Turkey agreement of March 18, 2016**, a serious effort has been made to **address the problem at a European level**, with the cooperation of Turkey.

The crisis management framework following the agreement includes:

- **Direct assistance to Greece** with qualified staff from all EU countries **for the examination of asylum applications** to be submitted and the return to Turkey of all those not entitled to or not requesting asylum. The agreement foresees the arrival of some 2500 manpower specializing in asylum, returns, interpretation etc.
- Crackdown on **illegal trafficking networks** from Turkey in order to restrict refugee/migration flows.
- **Implementation of the readmission agreement** of irregular migrants concluded between the EU and Turkey as well as between Greece and Turkey, the importance of which our country has repeatedly highlighted.
- **Fair distribution of refugees among EU member states**, either through the implementation of the **relocation** process from Greece to other EU countries, or through that of **resettlement** directly from Turkey. These procedures are implemented at an extremely slow pace that does not respond to actual needs, while their fulfillment should not be voluntary but proportional, according to the population and financial means of every country.

Greece is in favour of cooperation between the EU and all countries involved, so that:

- **Agreements** concluded are **observed** and the decisions of the European Council are **respected by all parties**, while unilateral actions (such as closing borders), which do not constitute a solution, are condemned.
- **European assistance** (humanitarian, funding, human resources) dealing with the refugee crisis is provided in a **timely and effective manner** corresponding to emergencies arising from refugee flows.

Managing Costs - Financing

National Funds	2015	2016	2014-2020
	450mn Euros spent in reception structures, research and rescue operations, transportation from the islands to mainland Greece, asylum procedures and relocations. These do not include expenses covered through voluntary work, nor indirect costs and losses.	1 bn Euros , (Greek authorities' estimate for refugee/migration management costs)	
European Union*	2015	2016	2014-2020
Emergency Funding	51,8 mn Euros to Greek authorities	267 mn Euros estimate. The sum will be allocated to Greek authorities and International Organizations	
	129,2 mn Euros to the International Organization for Migration and the UNHCR		
Regular Funding			509 mn Euros for Greek national programmes from Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF). The biggest part concerns actions for border surveillance, Schengen Treaty implementation programmes etc and does not concern costs for developing reception and accommodation facilities, asylum procedures etc
Emergency Aid(new mechanism within the EU)		It is estimated that 100 mn Euros will be allocated to cover Greece's needs	
Frontex		60 mn Euros for returns	
EASO (European Asylum Service)		It does not concern funding but support in personnel, judges, interpreters etc from other EU member countries (1, 9 mn Euros estimate)	

*Data from the Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management

**This is a publication of the General Secretariat for Media and Communication,
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