

# Global Monthly Surveillance Report

## Making a Difference for Refugee Children in Europe

ISSUE #3 – OCTOBER 2016

### 1. Migration trends, facts and figures

During October 2016 the number of people seeking international protection in Europe kept rising. The total number of arrivals by sea registered since the start of the year is now up to **336'850 in 2016**<sup>1</sup> (from which 161'668 in Italy and 170'211 in Greece) according to UNHCR<sup>2</sup>. As of November 3rd 2016, the demographic composition of this group was distributed as follows: 27% of children, 18% of women and 55% of men; main nationalities were Syrian 26%, Afghan 14%, Nigeria 9%, Iraq 8% and Eritrea 5%<sup>3</sup>. These numbers do not take into consideration those who were transiting without being registered.

For the same period<sup>4</sup>, IOM reports 357'234 arrivals to Europe in 2016. This number includes 335'031 arrivals by sea and **22'203 by land**<sup>5</sup> (that were not reported by UNHCR). IOM reports a daily average number of people arriving in Greece in October of 103<sup>6</sup>.

Month	Average arrivals per day to Italy	Average arrivals per day to Greece
January	176	2,248
February	132	1,984
March	312	(before agreement, 1st to 8th ): 1,375 (after agreement, 9th to 30th): 701
April	305	131
May	643	47
June	746	70
July	782	66
August	662	122
September	573	109
October	882	103
November	0	21

*Average daily arrival to Europe to Italy and Greece as of November 2nd 2016*

1 <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>, November 3rd 2016.

2 In 2015 there were, 1'015'078 registered arrivals by sea in 2015.

3 <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>, November 3rd 2016

4 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, Recent trends, November 2nd 2016.

5 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, Recent trends, November 2nd 2016.

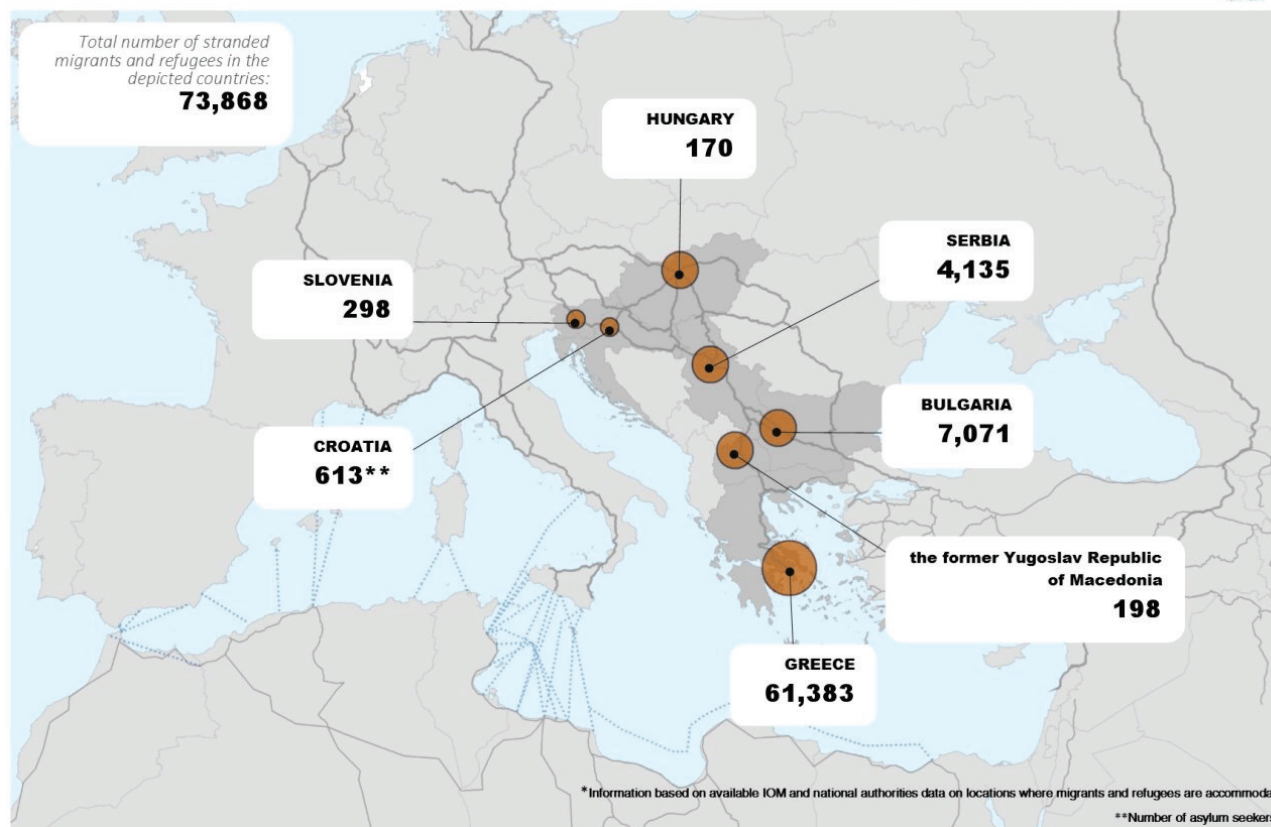
6 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, Recent trends, November 2nd 2016.

In October 2016, 73'868<sup>7</sup> people were reported stranded in Greece<sup>8</sup>, Macedonia/FYROM, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Bulgaria. The sources of these numbers differ from country to country and, therefore, the total figures are likely to be higher as they only represent people registered (or staying) in official government facilities.

## OVERVIEW: STRANDED MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Stranded migrants and refugees in Greece, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria\* 2 November 2016

Disclaimer: Base Map Source: ESRI. This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.



*Stranded people along the Balkan route according to IOM as of November 2nd 2016*

## In Tdh countries of intervention

In **Albania**, 698 people crossed the Albanian border irregularly in 2016, of which 65 between October 6th and November 2nd. According to IOM, all people apprehended during the reporting period were returned to Greece<sup>9</sup>.

In **Bulgaria**, 2'526 people applied for asylum in October<sup>10</sup>. This brings the total number of applications to 16'806 in 2016<sup>11</sup>. This month 70 people were granted refugee status, 49 subsidiary protections, 190 received a negative decision and 1'101 procedures were terminated<sup>12</sup>. During the reporting period<sup>13</sup>, the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior (Moi) apprehended 2'029 people. 411 people were arrested for irregular entry, 419 for

<sup>7</sup> <http://migration.iom.int/europe/> Stranded, November 2nd 2016.

<sup>8</sup> In Greece, at the same date (November 2nd, UNHCR is reporting 66'617 stranded people in the official facilities. <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=2128>

<sup>9</sup> <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016 and WEEKLY Flows Compilation No26, October 6th 2016

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.aref.government.bg/?cat=21>, Chart 31.10.2016

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aref.government.bg/?cat=21>, Applications and decisions taken 31.10.2016

<sup>13</sup> September 29th – October 27th 2016



attempt of irregular exit and 1'199 inside the country<sup>14</sup>. Most of the people are entering by foot at the green border. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Bulgaria launched several criminal proceedings for irregular border crossing in October, including 14 foreign people (Syrians and Iraqis) who received suspended prison sentences and fines for attempt to leave the country<sup>15</sup>. Finally, a total of 21 people were relocated from Greece to Bulgaria so far, including 15 people in October<sup>16</sup>.

According to the **Hungarian** Helsinki Committee, in October 1'198 people applied for asylum, 380 were granted protection and 3'266 people were blocked from entry<sup>17</sup>.

In **Macedonia** there is still a lack of systematic and reliable data collection about migrant movements in the country. The only official information is related to the number of people officially registered in the camps. This does not include people in transit outside of the camps, nor the push backs. UNHCR estimates that 100 to 150 people are crossing into the country every day.

In **Serbia**, according to UNHCR, there were around 6'300 stranded people at the end of October. During the week of October 20th to November 2nd, 35% of the people who were admitted through Kelbija the transit zones in Hungary were children (with 44% of men, 22% of women) while in Horgos, 31% were children (56% of adult men 13% of adult women)<sup>18</sup>.

## 2. Legal and political developments on asylum

### 2.1. At regional level

As reported in the last issue, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) - an upgraded version of FRONTEX - was officially launched on October 6 at the Kapitan Andreevo Border Checkpoint at the Bulgarian external border with Turkey. The new Agency will ensure that Union standards for border management are implemented at all external borders. The external borders will be constantly monitored with periodic risk analyses and mandatory vulnerability assessments to identify and address weak spots. Liaison officers will be seconded to Member States where the borders are at risk and will be able to relay information back to the Agency. In addition to strengthened power in the prevention and countering of cross border crimes, the agency will also play a role in voluntary departures and will also have enhanced technical and operational tasks in the organisation of return operations from the territory of the EU, upon request from Member States as well as by its own initiative. Finally, **Frontex/EBCGA** announced on October 26th that the agency is to strengthen its operations on the Greek islands and at Greece's borders with Macedonia and Albania, as well as at Croatia's border with Serbia<sup>19</sup>.

The European Commission also revealed, on October 16, the new Migration Partnership Framework to "reinforce cooperation with third countries to better manage migration". The EU will "seek tailor-made partnerships with key third countries of origin and transit and set a few priorities, which include "saving lives at sea, increasing returns, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and, in the long term,

14 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016 and WEEKLY Flows Compilation No26, October 6th 2016

15 <http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/asylum-migration-borders/overviews/october-2016>

16 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, Relocated, November 2nd 2016.

17 <http://www.helsinki.hu/en/hungary-key-asylum-figures-as-of-1-november-2016/>

18 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016

19 <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/frontex-to-strengthen-operations-in-greece-and-launch-additional-activities-on-land-borders-a21yH2>

helping third countries' development in order to address root causes of irregular migration"<sup>20</sup>.

The implementation of the EU policy on relocation and resettlement progressed at a very low pace, including in the framework of the EU-Turkey Agreement: in October a total of 717 migrants and refugees were readmitted from Greece to Turkey, with last readmission taking place on 27 October 2016. The majority of migrants and refugees were Pakistani, Afghan, Bangladeshi and Iranian nationals<sup>21</sup>.

On the **relocation front**, out of the 160'000 planned relocations, 6'625 people were relocated in 22 countries (5'136 from Greece and 1'489 from Italy<sup>22</sup>), a very poor performance, even as the initial objectives for this program were already unambitious to start out with.

## 2.2. In selected countries

There were several legislative changes in Bulgaria this month. **Bulgaria** banned use of veil covering entirely the face in public spaces. The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee decried<sup>23</sup> the legislation and declared it as discriminatory, since it affects Muslim women in particular. The organisation added that it does not respect the national constitution nor international human rights law. On October 22nd Bulgaria announced it was getting ready for a mass refugee influx. The MoI issued an order to declare the situation at the Bulgarian-Turkish border at level 2 as provided under the National Plan for Action in Emergency situation. An amendment on the reception regulation for asylum seekers allowed the setup of separate units for UASC in two Bulgarian camps (Sofia and Harmanli)<sup>24</sup>. A positive change is proposed in the draft amendment of the Family Code where new rules regarding guardianship would allow adult relatives to become guardians if they are residing in Bulgaria and if this is considered to be in the best interests of the child<sup>25</sup>. Finally the Ministry of Education started a consultation in view of providing education to asylum seeking children.

In **Hungary**, and following the referendum over the EU relocation quotas, Prime Minister Viktor Orban proposed to amend the national constitution despite the government's failure to reach the necessary participation threshold. On November 8th 2016, the Hungarian Parliament rejected the proposed amendments and Viktor Orban declared there would not be additional attempts to introduce changes.

**Macedonia** extended the state of crisis due to the increased influx of migrants entering in and transiting through Macedonia up to June 30, 2017. Macedonia first imposed a state of emergency on its southern and northern borders in August 2015 for a six-month period which has been renewed since then<sup>26</sup>.

20 [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-2072\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2072_en.htm)

21 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016

22 The Relocation Agreement was signed In July 2015, the first relocation (for asylum seekers from Italy) started on October 9th 2015, and the first relocation from Greece on November 4th 2015. <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, Relocated, November 2nd 2016

23 <http://www.bghelsinki.org/en/news/press/single/discriminatory-burqa-ban-should-be-reviewed-bulgarias-constitutional-court/>

24 <http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/asylum-migration-borders/overviews/october-2016#child-protection>

25 <http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/asylum-migration-borders/overviews/october-2016#child-protection>

26 <http://www.independent.mk/articles/37474/Macedonia+Parliament+Extends+Emergency+Crisis+on+Borders+Until+June>



### 3. Child Protection issues: vulnerability situations encountered during the period

#### 3.1. Qualitative information on reception conditions for families with children

In **Albania**, as of November 2th 2016, there were 44 people in Babrru centre for asylum seekers in Tirana, including two new-born babies<sup>27</sup>. There was no information on the situation in the closed centre for irregular migrants of Karrec.

The total number of people accommodated in **Bulgarian** facilities in October was 7'070 from which 5'509 people were hosted in open centres and 1'561 in detention centres<sup>28</sup>. In the open centres there were 2'043 children and 625 UASCs (including 108 who are under 14 years old)<sup>29</sup>. The Bulgarian facilities remain overcrowded, worsening already precarious conditions<sup>30</sup>. As a consequence, on October 26th, 300 asylum seekers and refugees protested in Harmanli against their appalling living conditions. They demanded free passage to continue their journey towards Western Europe<sup>31</sup>. 200 asylum seekers started a hunger strike in Busmantsi's Detention Centre<sup>32</sup>. The European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM) just published the report "Who gets detained?: Increasing the transparency and accountability of Bulgaria's detention practices of asylum seekers and migrants<sup>33</sup>". Since around 20% of refugees and migrants in Bulgaria are placed in detention facilities, the report recommends Bulgaria should adopt written guidelines for assessing the different legal bases for detention in accordance with the requirements for proportionality, necessity and an individualized approach.

In **Macedonia**, according to IOM, there were 198<sup>34</sup> people accommodated (125 in Gevgelija<sup>35</sup> - and 73 in Tabanovce<sup>36</sup>, figures which slightly varied depending on the days (Open Gate La Strada is reporting higher numbers: 280 people - 114 in Tabanovce, 129 in Gevgelija, 14 in Vizbegovo, 23 in Skopje's safe house and about twenty people in Gazi Baba). This difference comes from the fact that IOM only reports the number of people in two transit centres. In Gevgelija people under detention started to protest against detention. Following this, 21 asylum seekers were informed by the authorities that they would be transferred to Vizbegovo. Despite this announcement no transfer took place in October<sup>37</sup>. Macedonian NGOs, DRC, UNHCR and UNICEF are questioning detention-like conditions in transit centres and are thinking of withdrawing because of the clear violation of freedom of movement. Finally, according to aforementioned protection actors, there are still around 200 people hiding in and around the villages of Lojane and Vaksince. A single mother in Vinojug transit centre could not secure a birth certificate for her 9 month old baby, while this document is needed for family reunion procedure. Open Gate La Strada also reported that in October one family staying in Vinojug was in process of family reunification from Macedonia to Germany, while another family returned to Iraq.

27 Tdh Albania weekly report November 2nd 2016.

28 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016 and WEEKLY Flows Compilation No26, October 6th 2016

29 Tdh Bulgarian mission report, November 11th 2016

30 <http://www.novinite.com/articles/176628/Bulgaria's+Migrant+Centers+'Overcrowded'>

31 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016 and <https://www.zerocensorship.com/uncensored/bulgaria/refugees-camp-demand-passage-eu-344577>

32 <http://bulgaria.bordermonitoring.eu/2016/11/02/breaking-news-hunger-strike-in-busmantsis-detention-center/>

33 [http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Detention\\_Report\\_CLA\\_2016\\_EN\\_final.pdf](http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Detention_Report_CLA_2016_EN_final.pdf)

34 <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>, WEEKLY Flows Compilation No28, November 3rd 2016

35 73 Syrian, 4 Afghan, 42 Iraqi, and 6 Iranian nationals, 26 women, 40 men and 59 children

36 59 Syrian, 5 Iraqi, 3 Pakistani, 6 others, 20 female, 23 male and 30 children

37 Weekly report Open Gate La Strada October 28, November 3rd.



In **Serbia**, approximately 4'600 people out of the estimated 6'800 people stranded in Serbia were accommodated in the 11 government facilities in this country. The number of people sleeping outside in Belgrade rose from around 700 to 1'000 since the last report<sup>38</sup>. General living conditions in the centres are rapidly deteriorating, with particular concern over the state of hygiene and sanitation; almost all centres are now affected by body lice infection. The Public health institute stated its intention to declare an epidemic in all centres.

### 3.2. Focus on UASC in Bulgaria and Macedonia

There are still important gaps and growing concerns concerning UASCs' care and protection: lack of identification procedures (and other SOP's) and of appointment of guardian as well as of alternative care solutions, risk of human trafficking, risk of being sexually abused, risk of being detained etc.)

In **Bulgaria**, for instance, national NGO ReachOut reports that UASCs lack accommodation options once they are granted status. The Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees (SAR) only provides accommodation in the Refugee Reception Centre for 6 additional months after they receive their status. Under the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Child Protection Department is currently looking for housing solutions in public residential care for abandoned children, but only for UASCs under 14 years old. The situation demands close monitoring as concerns have been expressed about residential care staff's lack of training to work with asylum seekers and refugees, who otherwise don't speak any other language than Bulgarian and have no translators.

In **Macedonia**, according to Open Gate La Strada's field workers, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP), and the Macedonian police are engaged in systematic push-backs/expulsions of people who irregularly cross the Greek-Macedonian border and the Macedonian-Serbian border. The push-back of highly vulnerable categories of migrants especially UASCs' is of great concern. In October<sup>39</sup>:

- 122 people were pushed back to Greece from Macedonia (62 men, 23 women and 37 children). Open Gate La Strada referred to two UASCs' cases (including a 17 year old from Pakistan) that were also deported. These numbers only represent what could be observed by the project team in Gevgelija. The real numbers are likely to be higher.
- 3 people reported to be pushed back from Serbia to Macedonia<sup>40</sup>. This number only represents the number of people who came back to Tabanovce. The real numbers are likely to be higher and many people go back to Vakince and Lojane instead. Some attempt to cross the border again.

There were 9 UASC identified in October (7 were in Tabanovce, 2 in Gevgelija and 2 were staying in the safe house). At the end of October only 1 was still in Tabanovce. Apart from the latter case, no initial assessment nor guardian appointment process was conducted. Social work centres responsible for child protection failed to place these minors in appropriate facilities and ensure case follow up<sup>41</sup>.

38 [http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/uploads/uploadsmediterranean/images/documents/dt\\_mediterranean\\_2125.jpg](http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/uploads/uploadsmediterranean/images/documents/dt_mediterranean_2125.jpg)

39 Weekly report Open Gate La Strada October 8th - October 27th 2016

40 Weekly report Open Gate La Strada October 8th - October 27th 2016

41 Most probably because of a lack of official incentive and instruction.