

# EUROPE





## | WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

- Protection standards differ substantially across Europe. Some countries have highly developed legal frameworks, while in others asylum and protection systems are still in the process of development. The adoption in June 2013, under the framework of the European Union's Common European Asylum System (CEAS), of recast asylum laws is an important step forward in refugee protection. The CEAS sets common standards for Member States of the European Union (EU), including Croatia as a new Member.

- Still, UNHCR remains concerned about the fragility of asylum systems in several European countries. Difficulties in accessing territories and asylum procedures, violations of the principle of *non-refoulement*, low recognition rates, and the destitution of those who have been recognized as refugees continue to encourage onward movements.

- All the countries in Europe are affected by irregular mixed movements of refugees and migrants, and are struggling with the complex challenges these bring. Countries in the European Union's eastern and south-eastern regions, as well as EU Member States at the Union's external border, face a particularly challenging task, as demonstrated by the recurring and dramatic loss of life in the Mediterranean. To address this, UNHCR is developing a Central Mediterranean Sea Initiative (CMSI) which includes proposals for more effective responsibility-sharing arrangements and reinforced rescue at sea mechanisms. However stronger political commitment to addressing the issue is needed to overcome these problems.

- Almost half a million Syrians have found refuge in Turkey (see country chapter on *Turkey*). Many Syrians also continue to seek protection in other European countries. Europe is also the destination for a large number of Afghan asylum-seekers, some coming directly from Afghanistan, while many arrive in Europe after stays in the Islamic Republic of Iran or Pakistan.

- Between January and July 2013, a total of 225,000 asylum applications were lodged in 38 European countries, a 23 per cent increase over the figure for the same period in 2012, even though figures for 10 countries are not yet available. Of these, over 192,000 applications were made in EU Member States. Apart from the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), the main countries of origin, according to government statistics, include the Russian Federation (26,000) Serbia (18,000) Afghanistan (15,000), Iraq (10,000) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (6,000). Germany and France, followed by Sweden and the United Kingdom, received the largest numbers of asylum applications in Europe.

**Asylum-seekers who crossed the border from Turkey** are received at a transit centre in Bulgaria.

- UNHCR continues to search for durable solutions for those displaced during the 1991-1995 conflicts in the western Balkans. The Office is cooperating with concerned States on the Regional Housing Programme, which is expected to provide sustainable housing solutions for some 74,000 vulnerable refugees, returnees and internally displaced people (IDPs). UNHCR is also working with national authorities to address internal displacement in Georgia and Serbia.

- The number of European States Parties to the two UN Statelessness Conventions rose in 2013 with the accessions of Ukraine and Lithuania. However, the absence of identification and protection mechanisms in some countries means that many of the estimated 680,000 stateless individuals in Europe continue to face difficulties in gaining access to their rights.

## | STRATEGY |

### ◉ *Safeguarding asylum space*

Ensuring access to territory, improving the quality of decisions, providing support to unaccompanied and separated children and promoting gender-appropriate policies continue to be major priorities for UNHCR in Europe. In South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, UNHCR works with IOM to address mixed movements in the western Balkans and establish functioning asylum and migration systems. The two organizations are also helping to develop a regional action plan and organize meetings of regional stakeholders.

Addressing the protection needs of asylum-seekers and refugees at sea and upon disembarkation will remain a high priority for UNHCR in Southern Europe. The growth in the number of arrivals by sea in several Southern European countries in 2013 has made it imperative for UNHCR to work with States to ensure they provide access to fair and effective asylum procedures and minimize loss of life.

### ◉ *Building and maintaining effective asylum and protection systems*

Throughout Europe, UNHCR will strengthen engagement with the judiciary by becoming involved in selected cases before the courts, and engaging in dialogue with legal networks. UNHCR will also issue comments on the asylum situation in specific countries in order to encourage improvements in protection policies and practice.

UNHCR will support EU Member States in the transposition of the newly-adopted CEAS standards into national law and raise awareness

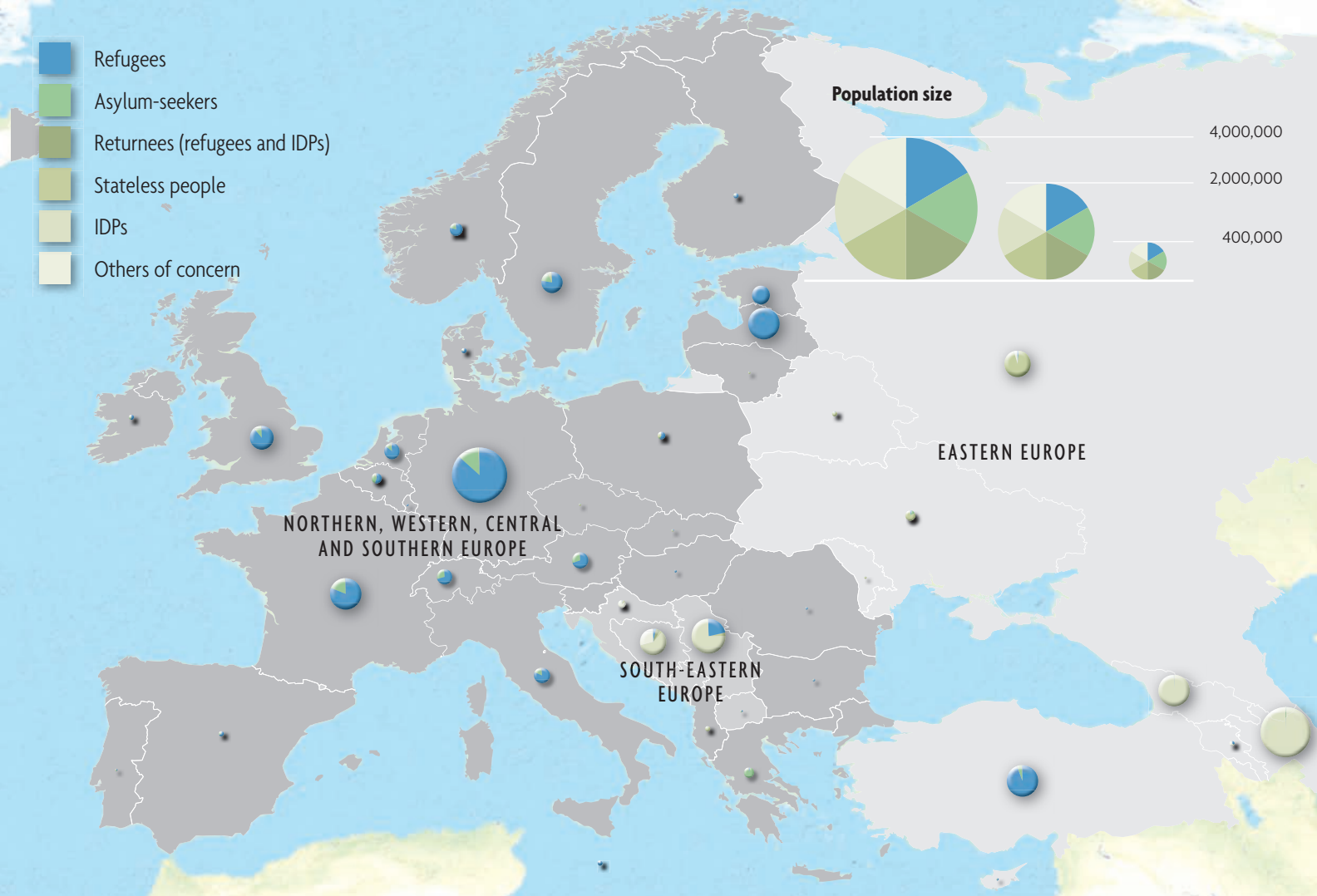
about best practices, including through cooperation with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). In the EU, UNHCR will increasingly exercise its supervisory role through cooperation with the EASO and its work to facilitate practical cooperation between EU Member States. UNHCR will also continue its operational cooperation with the Greek authorities on asylum reform, focusing particularly on supporting the new Asylum Service, Appeals Authority and First Reception Service.

In Eastern Europe, UNHCR will continue implementing the Quality Initiative for Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus in 2014. This project includes analyses of the gaps in national adjudication systems, country of origin information and training support. UNHCR also advocates for decision-making that avoids discrimination based on nationality or ethnicity. In South-Eastern Europe, UNHCR's focus will be on supporting national authorities to improve their asylum systems. The incorporation of UNHCR's age, gender and diversity principles will be promoted throughout Europe.

### ◉ *Securing durable solutions*

The difficulty of integrating beneficiaries of international protection into their host societies in many European countries requires UNHCR to give priority to promoting good practices in this area in 2014.

UNHCR continues to search for durable solutions for those displaced during the 1991-1995 conflicts in the western Balkans



and during the two conflicts in Georgia. It is cooperating with the Balkan States on the Regional Housing Programme, which is expected to provide sustainable housing solutions for some 74,000 vulnerable refugees. At the same time 97,000 IDPs still remain in need of solutions in Serbia. In Georgia, the Government successfully implements a durable solutions strategy and action plan, supported by UNHCR. However, 284,000 IDPs are still awaiting solutions. UNHCR will encourage European States to provide more places for resettlement and humanitarian admission, especially for Syrians. The emergency transit centres in Romania and the Slovak Republic will provide a temporary safe location for refugees selected for resettlement.

○ *Preventing and resolving situations of statelessness*

The dissolution of States as well as gaps in nationality legislation are two of the main causes of statelessness in Europe. UNHCR will lobby for governments to adopt adequate

safeguards against statelessness in nationality legislation, and provide status for those found to be stateless, through formal determination procedures.

○ *Strengthening UNHCR's external relations and mobilizing support*

Raising awareness of international protection and displacement issues and promoting positive public attitudes towards refugees and stateless people will remain key priorities for UNHCR in Europe. In addition to engaging with national and regional media, UNHCR will cooperate with European institutions and agencies via liaison offices in Vienna (OSCE), Strasbourg (Council of Europe) and Malta (EASO). Cooperation with the Council of Europe and its different bodies will aim to maximize the use of the Council's protection frameworks for people of concern. Across Europe, UNHCR will engage with governmental and private-sector donors to mobilize the resources needed to reduce displacement worldwide.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The organization-wide move in 2010 from a resource-based to a comprehensive needs-based methodology for planning and budgeting explains the significant increase in the region's financial requirements as of 2010 when compared with previous years. More recently, the region saw a dramatic increase from USD 233.9 million in 2012 to the revised 2013 budget of USD 382.1 million, mainly due to the expanded operations in Turkey in response to the emergency in Syria.

In 2014, the financial requirements for the Europe region are set at USD 343.3 million, a decrease of 10 per cent as compared to the revised 2013 budget, due to the scaling down of IDP operations in the Balkans and a reduction of the non-Syria related budget in Turkey. These financial requirements are based on the best estimates for 2014 using the information available as of mid-2013. In light of the evolving situation in Syria, any additional requirements as they relate to that emergency will be presented in the Regional Response Plan for Syrian refugees (RRP6), with the situation undergoing further review in the course of 2014.

## | CHALLENGES |

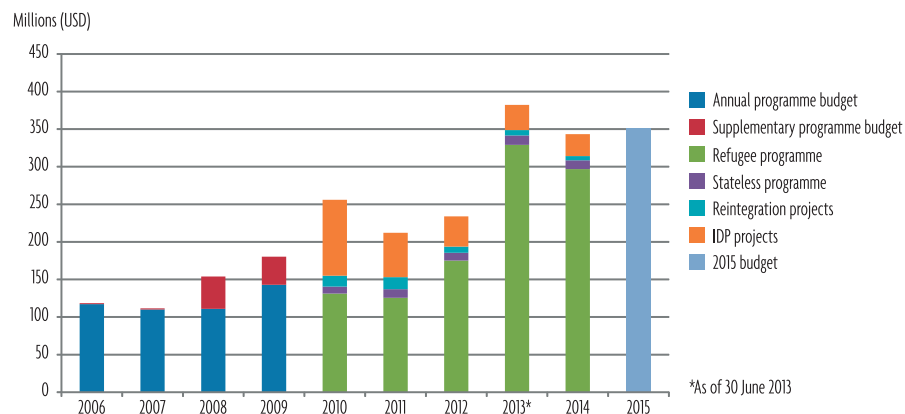
Responding adequately to the protection needs of an increasing number of Syrian refugees will be among the challenges which the countries of Europe will need to address in future. Another is the expected rise in the number of Afghan asylum-seekers, including unaccompanied and separated children.

Establishing functioning asylum systems in the context of mixed movements will continue to remain a challenge across Europe, but particularly near the European Union's eastern and southern borders. Obstacles to access to territory and divergences and gaps in procedures mean that not all refugees receive the protection they need. Improving the quality of procedures is especially important in the western Balkan countries in line for EU accession. Reception conditions which meet the

needs of those seeking protection have not yet been established across Europe.

Particularly in Eastern Europe, the primacy of national security concerns and security alliances over refugee protection may lead to the *refoulement* of asylum-seekers. Ensuring quality adjudication will remain an important objective in several European countries. Reaching a successful conclusion to the regional durable solutions process in the western Balkans will require government commitment and additional donor support. Xenophobia and racism may impede refugees' efforts to integrate into their host countries; solving this problem will require collaboration between stakeholders in all concerned European States. ■

### Budgets for Europe | 2006-2015



## BUDGETS FOR EUROPE | USD

Operation	2013	2014				Total	2015
	Revised budget (as of 30 June 2013)	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
<b>EASTERN EUROPE</b>							
Armenia	4,121,810	3,972,334	109,000	0	0	4,081,334	4,081,334
Azerbaijan	5,900,497	4,397,620	321,299	0	1,131,082	5,850,001	5,850,001
Georgia	14,958,517	2,824,660	578,014	0	9,692,035	13,094,709	13,094,709
Russian Federation	8,331,881	6,413,854	676,415	0	0	7,090,269	7,112,005
Turkey	226,058,401	194,962,505	44,000	0	0	195,006,505	204,262,690
Ukraine Regional Office	11,689,558	9,365,305	1,480,597	0	0	10,845,902	10,845,902
Subtotal	271,060,664	221,936,277	3,209,325	0	10,823,117	235,968,720	245,246,641
<b>SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE</b>							
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9,154,993	2,700,000	1,079,518	0	5,620,483	9,400,001	10,399,999
Croatia	5,000,500	1,367,495	481,922	1,758,961	0	3,608,377	3,608,377
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	8,967,393	2,395,555	1,171,493	3,836,667	219,107	7,622,823	7,474,981
Montenegro	4,546,379	4,285,770	238,937	0	0	4,524,706	4,524,706
Serbia	19,250,806	2,406,084	1,382,441	0	12,445,465	16,233,990	16,218,241
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,984,144	2,978,042	466,226	0	0	3,444,268	3,444,268
Subtotal	50,904,215	16,132,946	4,820,537	5,595,628	18,285,055	44,834,165	45,670,573
<b>NORTHERN, WESTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE</b>							
Belgium Regional Office	14,553,295	12,505,096	1,504,165	0	0	14,009,261	14,009,261
Hungary Regional Office	11,294,317	11,724,569	1,004,580	0	0	12,729,149	12,729,149
Italy Regional Office	21,728,884	22,035,168	191,910	0	0	22,227,078	19,969,225
Spain	1,459,619	1,863,715	43,808	0	0	1,907,522	1,907,522
Sweden Regional Office	3,374,032	4,405,546	935,927	0	0	5,341,473	5,341,473
Regional activities	7,768,243	6,261,619	0	0	0	6,261,619	6,261,619
Subtotal	60,178,391	58,795,712	3,680,391	0	0	62,476,103	60,218,250
Total	382,143,271	296,864,935	11,710,253	5,595,628	29,108,172	343,278,988	351,135,464