



European  
Commission

European Civil Protection  
and Humanitarian Aid Operations

## Greece



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### FACTS & FIGURES

Nearly **857 000** refugees and migrants arrived in Greece in 2015.

Over **173 000** people came in 2016 to Greece by sea and nearly **30 000** in 2017 (UNHCR).

Over **45 000** refugees and migrants are estimated to be stranded in the country (as of March 2018).

EU emergency support funding contracted to humanitarian aid partners:

Over **€605.3 million** since 2016, **€180 million** in 2018

## Introduction

While close to 857 000 people transited through Greece in 2015, in 2016 over 173 000 people arrived to the country by sea alone. With the closure of the so-called "Balkan migration route" in March 2016, tens of thousands of refugees were left stranded in the country. Under the EU Emergency Support Instrument, the European Commission has so far allocated €605.3 million for responding to the refugee situation in Greece.

## What are the needs?

From the period from 2015 to 2016, Greece experienced an unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees fleeing war and deprivation in their home countries in the Middle East and south Asia, or in search of a better and safer life in the EU. The closure of the border between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece in early March 2016 left thousands of refugees and migrants stranded in Greece – often without adequate accommodation, healthcare, and access to education.

The overall humanitarian situation of refugees and migrants on the mainland has improved over recent months. The situation on the islands is challenging as migrants and refugees arriving on the islands after 20 March 2016 have to stay there until a decision on their asylum application has been taken.

## How are we helping?

Under the EU Emergency Support Instrument, the Commission has so far allocated €605.3 million for responding to the refugee situation in Greece. This sum has been contracted to the EU's humanitarian aid partners in Greece such as UN bodies, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and NGOs.

The Commission's flagship initiative under the EU Emergency Support Instrument is the 'Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation' (ESTIA) programme that helps refugees and their families rent urban accommodation, and provides them with cash assistance. The total of emergency support to Greece through the ESTIA programme since its announcement in 2017 amounts to more than €290 million.

The rental accommodation component of the programme with UNHCR aims to improve the living conditions of refugees by providing up to 27 000 urban accommodation places in apartments by the end of 2018. Up to 2 000 of these places will be located on the Greek islands, with the rest (up to 25 000) rented in cities and towns on mainland Greece, and local landowners receiving a stable and reliable income for these apartments. A number of municipalities in Greece are also formally part of this project.

The programme's cash assistance component with UNHCR establishes a basic social safety net for all asylum seekers and refugees in Greece, by providing them with pre-defined monthly cash allocations through a dedicated card. It aims to enable 45 000 refugees and asylum seekers to meet their basic needs in a dignified manner by the end of 2018. The allocations are consistent across the country, and pegged to the Greek emergency social safety net, as well as being based on the refugees' family size. At the same time, this assistance is re-injected into the local economy, family shops, and service providers.

In addition to ESTIA funding, to date the EU Emergency Support Instrument has provided €313.6 million through 18 humanitarian partners, in order to address further humanitarian needs in Greece, including shelter, primary health care, psycho-social support, improved hygiene conditions and education.

Back in 2015, the European Commission helped coordinate the arrival of in-kind assistance to Greece through the European Civil Protection Mechanism. In total, twenty participating states to the Mechanism offered more than 200 000 items to Greece in response to the immediate needs created by the crisis with items such as tents, beds, sleeping bags, blankets, hygiene kits, power generators, water pumps, firefighting equipment and other specialised equipment.

