



Protection Needs and Risks for Migrants in Europe

A Situation Analysis of Five Countries

Greece • Albania • FYR Macedonia • Serbia • Bulgaria

Photo by Elie Gardner for CRS



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Executive Summary

Background

As of 15 February 2017, there were a reported 74,525 migrants and refugees stranded in Europe, including 62,540 in Greece and smaller numbers in Serbia (6,618), Bulgaria (4,255), and other countries including Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, and FYR Macedonia (collectively 1,112). In light of the ongoing crisis, a situation analysis was conducted to improve the understanding of context-specific protection risks to vulnerable groups.

Methodology

A comprehensive review of published and unpublished reports was conducted to examine the body of evidence on protection needs and risks facing migrants and refugees in countries along the Western Balkans migration route. Findings were synthesized to identify information gaps. Qualitative research was conducted to assess the context specific protection needs and risks facing women, girls, and other vulnerable groups in Greece and Serbia. Findings are intended to inform ongoing humanitarian assistance programs and identify information gaps that should be prioritized in efforts to expand the evidence base on effective approaches for addressing protection needs of refugees and migrants in Europe.

Literature Review

The literature review focused on refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants and the humanitarian response in countries along the Western Balkans route, including Greece, FYR Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania. A total of 145 documents providing information on population needs, protection risks, and humanitarian assistance programming in the areas of protection, shelter, and cash-based interventions were identified, including 18 that are produced on a recurrent basis. Greece and Bulgaria had the largest numbers of documents with country-specific information among the priority countries.

Population Needs and Protection Risks by Country

In **Bulgaria**, some of the most substantial protection challenges are the asylum process, lack of capacity of the asylum system, and problematic detention policies. Besides shelter, nutrition, and basic medical services (which are perceived as inadequate), asylum seekers at reception centres receive minimal other social support and services such as education and vocational training. Hygiene items and other non-food items, winter clothing, and supplementary foods have been identified as lacking.

The humanitarian situation of refugees in **FYR Macedonia** is deteriorating due to increased risk of exploitation and abuse where many refugees use established smuggling networks to transit through the country despite formal closure of the Western Balkans transit route. Efforts have been ongoing to achieve minimum humanitarian standards in reception and assistance sites, and in 2016 SOPs for accommodation and treatment of refugees and migrants in reception centres were developed, after which UNHCR reported an improvement in reception conditions. More recently, there have been reports of increasing occurrences of GBV, in addition to extortion, kidnapping, and trafficking.

The number of arrivals in **Greece** far outnumber those of other countries in the region. At the end of 2016, Greece was host to 83% of the total population of stranded refugees and migrants in Europe. There is an important distinction between arrivals before and after 20 March 2016, the effective date of the EU-Turkey agreement. Those arriving prior to the agreement have the right to legal stay, asylum, and the possibility to benefit from relocation to other countries. In contrast, those arriving after the agreement went into force are accommodated in closed hotspot facilities or reception and identification centres on the mainland and five Greek islands until they are registered and processed and have few options for onward travel. One of the main challenges is that refugee and migrant sites are located across several regions of Greece, with populations ranging across sites, making harmonization of standards difficult

across locations and increasing staffing requirements. There is now a longer-term need for services as refugees/migrants are remaining in Greece for an uncertain amount of time. One of the achievements of the 2016 response was an increase in protection capacity to cover all sites in addition to urban areas where refugees and migrants are hosted, including referral mechanisms for persons with specific needs and response to child protection and GBV.

Reported arrivals to **Serbia** decreased over the course of 2016 and had virtually come to a halt by the end of the year. Limitations on onward travel with Hungary in late 2016 and early 2017 left many migrants stranded in Serbia or pushed back into Serbia from Hungary. Border restrictions changed the situation in Serbia where there are now fewer migrants with longer term stays, requiring an adjustment in the response. Currently, the infrastructure in Serbia can only respond to basic needs of migrants for a short time, with municipalities struggling to cope with growing needs for basic longer-term services. Serbia has reported increasing numbers of GBV incidents, including sexual and psychological harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, and cases of domestic violence.

[Humanitarian Assistance Programs in Europe](#)

Given the unpredictable and mobile nature of needs and assistance required by refugees and migrants in Greece and along the Balkan route, the use of **cash-based interventions** (CBIs) is perceived as advantageous because it allows for rapid and flexible delivery of demand-driven assistance. Paper vouchers, prepaid cards, and one-off unrestricted cash grants were the more frequent transfer modalities and preferred because they were the fastest way to meet humanitarian needs. Multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs) require greater organizational capacity and have not been implemented in most countries.

The response to **shelter** needs varies across countries and ranges from closed and open facilities, often referred to as shelters, reception or accommodation centres, or camps, to urban settings where refugees may reside on their own, often in temporary shelters, or accommodated in apartment-like shelters. With the March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement and related border closures, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria all had significant increases in the number of stranded refugees and migrants and have seen needs for shelter and longer-term support services increase dramatically since early 2016.

Protection efforts are largely country-specific, with limited support available to those who choose not to register as asylum seekers in hopes of continuing to northern and Western Europe. Assistance coordinated by protection working groups includes monitoring of protection risks and rights violations, communication about asylum and registration policies, provision of legal assistance, and support for unaccompanied minors and separated children, GBV survivors, victims of trafficking, and people with disabilities. Access to services and durable solutions are recognized as persistent and emerging protection issues, but strategies for longer-term support to refugees and migrants remain uncertain.

Qualitative Risk Assessment

Several cross-cutting themes were identified in the qualitative risk assessment. One of the leading causes of distress for migrants in both Greece and Serbia is **uncertainty about the future**. Participants in all locations indicated a desire to continue further into Europe, but were limited by border restrictions and had minimal knowledge of migration procedures. They also expressed concerns about the effects their situation has on the health and well-being and of their family members and neighbors. The mental health effects of uncertainty were most evident in Serbia where participants described feelings of hopelessness, depression, and escalating stress from “being stuck” on their journey, whereas in Greece participants expressed feelings of nervousness and frustration with lack of information on migration procedures and available assistance.

In addition to **mental health concerns** related to uncertainty, many migrants have witnessed or survived both war-related and migration-related trauma and loss. In some cases, distress caused by these

experiences is further exacerbated by family separation and uncertainties about the potential for onward migration. Participants reported a variety of common indications of mental health and psychosocial support needs, ranging from extreme feelings of fear and anxiety to numbness, detachment, and inability to cope with daily living.

Access to education and medical care were clearly expressed priorities for migrants in both Greece and Serbia. Although there are ongoing efforts to enrol migrant children in local schools, these have not come to fruition in all areas and interests in onward migration, language barriers, and lack of supports for effective integration remain barriers to access. Similarly, while there are health services available for migrants in both countries, participants described challenges in accessing services and dissatisfaction with the availability of interpreters and quality of care received.

With respect to **protection**, refugees and migrants living in apartment buildings and accommodation centres reported feeling safe in comparison to the risks, physical trauma, and violence faced and/or feared on the journey to Europe and in reception camps. This relative sense of safety should not be mistaken for a lack of need for protection support, particularly for women and girls. Women and girls who are survivors of violence or other abuses may not report them, and gender-responsive measures need to be taken to prevent gender-based violence. Domestic violence is common among migrant households, and often accepted as a normal practice. While unaccompanied minors were not a focus of this assessment, participants in both countries identified unaccompanied minors and other adolescents as particularly vulnerable populations in need of protection; there is a need for greater understanding, awareness, and actions to address needs of this group which is perceived as particularly vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, as well as long-term impacts of breaks in education as well as family and social support networks.

Recommendations

The majority of previous needs assessments in this context have concentrated predominantly on new arrivals and populations in transit prior to the EU-Turkey agreement. A limited number of rapid assessments on protection issues or risks to women and girls were identified; however, none explored risks specific to migrants by country of origin or legal status. Differences in risks between such migrant groups may be of highest concern in Greece, where individuals arriving before the EU-Turkey agreement are entitled to legal stay, asylum, and the possibility of relocation to other countries whereas legal options for onward travel are limited for individuals arriving after the agreement. Given the high proportion of migrants in other countries along the Western Balkans route choose not to register or seek asylum in hopes of reaching destinations in Northern or Western Europe, such distinctions are also important to inform programming throughout the region.

Documentation of program implementation approaches, coverage, and effectiveness is also needed as humanitarian assistance strategies shift to focus more on longer-term needs of asylum seekers. Though information on refugee and migrant populations and policies was available in many identified documents, there were substantial information gaps in the implementation of policies and services, and what little evidence was identified was of low quality. Additional information gaps were observed across countries on the specific needs of men and boys, as well as on livelihoods opportunities and programming. Current program coverage is documentation is limited, particularly with regards to protection assistance, including gender-based violence prevention and child protection programming.

Introduction

There were a total of 387,739 arrivals in Europe in 2016, a substantial decrease (63%) from the 1,046,599 arrivals recorded in 2015. The vast majority of arrivals (94%) were by sea, with the greatest numbers of migrants arriving in Greece (46%) and Italy (40%) and substantially fewer arrivals in other countries, notably Bulgaria (4%) and Cyprus (3%).^{1,2} The decrease in the numbers of arrivals to Europe is attributed to the March 18th agreement between the European Union and Turkey that aimed to reduce migrant flows. Under the March 2016 European Union-Turkey agreement, migrants arriving in Greece from Turkey who do not apply for asylum or whose asylum claims are rejected are returned to Turkey; an equivalent number of refugees in Greece and Turkey are resettled in the European Union.^{3,4} Following the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement, arrivals from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan decreased in proportion whereas the proportion of arrivals from African nations increased.^{1,3}

The Western Balkan route has been the most frequently used to move from Greece to onward destinations in Europe.⁵ From Greece, migrants make their way North via the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYR Macedonia) and Serbia, into Hungary or Croatia, and then towards various countries in Western Europe. The EU-Turkey agreement essentially brought migration flows through the Western Balkan route to a standstill, leaving over 73,000 migrants and refugees stranded in Greece, the fYR Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Hungary at the end of 2016.¹ While EU-Turkey deal has largely halted migration flows through the Greece-fYR Macedonia route, irregular flows have continued to Serbia through fYR Macedonia and Bulgaria, and alternative routes are being pursued, including travelling through Albania or directly bypassing the Western Balkans for Italy.⁵

As of 15 February 2017, there were a reported 74,525 migrants and refugees stranded, including 62,540 (84%) in Greece and smaller numbers in Serbia (6,618 or 9%), Bulgaria (4,255 or 6%), and other countries including Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, and fYR Macedonia (collectively 1,112 or 1.5%).²

The aim of this situation analysis is to improve understanding of the context-specific protection risks to women, girls, and other vulnerable groups in these countries. The literature review characterizes the evidence base in relation to the needs of migrants and refugees, the protection risks they face, and ongoing humanitarian assistance programming. Findings are intended to inform both ongoing humanitarian assistance programs and to identify information gaps that should be prioritized in efforts to expand the evidence base on effective approaches for addressing protection needs of refugees and migrants in Europe. Following the identification of key gaps in the literature, a qualitative study will be undertaken to provide additional evidence in these areas with the aim of complementing and building on existing information.

Literature Review

Methods

The literature review was limited to information on population needs, protection risks, and humanitarian assistance programming, in particular protection, shelter, and cash-based interventions for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in Europe. The countries along the Western Balkans route, including Greece, fYR Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania were prioritized. The review was limited to information published in English from January 2015 through April 2017, thus changes to the context since this period are not reflected in the presented assessment.

A comprehensive review of publicly available information on humanitarian assistance programs and activities specifically related to protection and multi-purpose cash assistance outside of camps in

Europe/the Mediterranean was conducted with a focus on assessment and evaluation reports or sources providing primary evidence. Additional program documents identified and provided by CRS and their partner organizations were also included for a more robust assessment of programs and activities and to ensure that the list of documents identified was perceived as complete by humanitarian practitioners working in the region.

In addition to the grey literature, peer-reviewed literature was also searched to identify relevant journal publications. The literature search included the following sites: Pubmed, Scopus, Google Scholar, Relief Web, RefWorld, and the UNHCR response portal. Key words used to search for documents relating to refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in Europe included *Greece refugee, Serbia refugee, Macedonia refugee, Albania refugee, Bulgaria refugee, Greece migrant, Serbia migrant, Macedonia migrant, Albania migrant, Bulgaria migrant, Europe refugee, Europe migrant, Europe displacement, Europe asylum*. Following the initial grey literature and peer review searches, documents were assessed to identify those containing information on relevant topic areas. A matrix mapping the included documents to topic areas is provided in [Annex 1](#). A total of 145 documents were identified, including 18 publications that are produced on a recurrent basis. Findings from the literature review are presented by country and by theme in the following sections.

Population Needs and Protection Risks by Country

There were a total of 387,739 arrivals to Europe in 2016, a significant decrease from the 1,046,599 arrivals in 2015.² The March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement and related border closures significantly reduced migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean and along the Western Balkans route. This had the effect of lowering the number of arrivals to the Shelter and Access for Empowerment and Reduced Risk (SAFERR) Project countries (Greece, FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, and Bulgaria) while simultaneously increasing the size of the populations stranded* in the various countries. The focus of this review is to gain an understanding of the needs, protection risks and services available to the populations that are stranded in these countries and likely to need assistance for an extended period.

A total of 127 documents relating to the needs and protection risks of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants by country were identified. Greece and Bulgaria had the largest numbers of documents with country-specific information among the priority countries (Table 1). A summary of findings for countries in the SAFERR project follows and risk summary profiles for each country are presented in [Annex 2](#).

Table 1. Count of Documents by Country

Country	# Documents
Albania	3
Bulgaria	15
FYR Macedonia	10
Greece	44
Serbia	19
Other	13
Europe/Regional	23
Total	127*

* Note: sum of individual counts is greater than total number of documents due to documents focused on multiple countries

Albania

There were no publicly available reports, assessments, or studies identified on the needs and protection risks of refugees and migrants in Albania, nor were there any reports on the humanitarian response to the migrant crisis in Albania, though three internal CRS documents were included. Information on the number of arrivals and the stranded population in Albania was also unavailable. While Albania has been affected to a lesser extent by the migrant crisis than other countries in the region, capacity to handle even small numbers of migrants is limited due to lack of resources. There is a need to strengthen reception capacity, in particular among the Southern border with Greece. Reliance on smugglers translates to an increased

* "Stranded" individuals refer to those who, for a variety of reasons, find themselves trapped in transit countries.

risk for exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV). While referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking are in place, the identification and referral systems for other populations with special needs including GBV victims, unaccompanied minors, women at risk, and disabled persons is a priority.⁶

Bulgaria

A total of 15 relevant documents on the migration crisis and response in Bulgaria were identified. Most documentation in Bulgaria comes from reports, notes, and assessments from various NGOs and the United Nations. Information related to protection risks was not included in most of the identified literature.

In 2016, Bulgaria received 15,962 migrant and refugee arrivals by land, a 49% decrease from the 31,174 arrivals in 2015, most likely due to the tightening of borders.^{1,7} It is expected that up to 10,000 people will arrive in 2017 and that approximately 6,000 refugees and migrants will be in the country at any given time.⁶ More than 99% of arrivals in Bulgaria intend to pass through the country and do not plan to stay.^{8,9} Direct passage of migrants from Turkey to Bulgaria is limited where entry to the many Greek islands is preferable because border security is more difficult to enforce. Bulgaria is more restrictive in its treatment of illegal migrants than countries on the Western Balkans route and is perceived as higher risk, which also discourages passage through the country.¹⁰ Despite the decrease in arrivals, the number of stranded migrants and refugees in Bulgaria increased by 543% from March 2016 (n=865) to the end of December 2016 (n=5,560).² In Bulgaria, some of the most substantial protection challenges are the asylum process (i.e. extensive nature of the process itself, long wait periods, etc.), lack of capacity of the asylum system, quality of the asylum process, and problematic use of administrative detention to control immigration and irregular migration.^{6,9} Another noteworthy protection risk in Bulgaria is trafficking. The establishment of networks of traffickers transforming the refugee crisis into a lucrative business has been highlighted by the Ministry of Interior as a major risk related to the crisis. In 2015, 411 traffickers were detained in Bulgaria (including citizens of other countries); however, legal penalties for trafficking are often minor and insufficient to act as a deterrent.¹⁰ Reported incidents of violence and abuse by the authorities in relation to border crossings also are a serious concern.⁶

In early 2016, refugees transiting through Bulgaria are primarily from Syria, followed by Afghanistan, Iraq, and stateless persons.¹⁰ An estimated 40% of refugees were men, 20% were women, 40% were children, and that educational attainment among this group is very low, with 80% having no formal schooling.¹⁰ In contrast, there were an estimated 8,500 illegal economic migrants that transited through Bulgaria in 2016 consisting predominantly of 18-34 year-old males from Iraq and Afghanistan; other sources suggest there is also a high proportion of minors in this group.^{10,11} In 2016, Bulgaria received 19,418 applications for asylum, similar in number to the 20,391 applications received in 2015.^{8,11} The predominate nationalities of people seeking protection in Bulgaria in 2016 were Afghan (45%), Iraqi (28%), Syrian (14%), and Pakistani (9%); 40% of asylum seekers were men, 12% women, 34% children with families/guardians, and 14% unaccompanied minors.⁸ However, the majority of asylum seekers either withdraw their application or leave the country before being granted protection status—just 15% of asylum seekers remained in the country long enough to receive a decision (a process which takes several months).^{11,8} Of the 3,073 protection applications processed in 2016, 25% were declared refugees, 19% granted other protected status, and 56% were rejected.⁸ As of October 2016, there were an estimated 5,000 legal asylum-seekers, with additional migrants living in closed camps or illegally outside of the system.¹²

Undocumented arrivals to Bulgaria are detained for deportation whereas those who apply for asylum are released and transferred to reception centres.⁸ Accommodation capacity in early 2016 was estimated to range from 5,130 to 10,000 in various locations throughout the country.¹¹ In the early part of the year, occupancy of reception centres was low, increasing from 12% in January to 31% in July, 2016. Following the August 2016 closure of the Serbian border, the situation changed and by the end of September, the

occupancy increased to 110% of capacity, resulting in overcrowding and deterioration of the already poor sanitary and living conditions at the majority of centres.⁸ Shelter has been identified as a critical need by UNHCR and the Bulgarian government; UNHCR also identified lack of medical support as an urgent issue.⁶ Besides accommodation, nutrition, and basic medical services (which are perceived as inadequate), asylum seekers at reception centres do not receive any other social support⁸ and services such as education, vocational training, hygiene and other non-food items, winter clothing, and supplementary foods have been identified as lacking.^{6,12} The Bulgarian government previously provided migrants with 65 Lv per month in cash for food and other survival purchases; however, the government has since replaced cash assistance with in-kind food provision in the form of three meals per person per day in reception centres. Though the government no longer provides cash assistance to migrants, NGOs or other non-state actors are permitted to do so.¹² Prevention of and response to GBV is a challenge due to the lack of effective identification and referral mechanisms, cultural factors, the high proportion of refugees that abscond from asylum procedures and thus may not be aware of or have access to available services, and the temporary nature of many refugees' stays.⁶

Family separation is prevalent and family tracing activities are largely ineffective.⁶ Though estimates of the number of unaccompanied minors and separated children in Bulgaria are provided by the State Agency for Refugees (SAR), figures often reflect children in open centers with those in detention centers or children not seeking asylum and/or traveling irregularly absent from most publically-available population figures.¹³ Furthermore, the number of unaccompanied minors reported by government authorities often differ from those reported by NGOs, whose estimates include children outside official protection systems.¹³ In 2016, a total of 2,772 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in Bulgaria and 1,821 unaccompanied minors were detained; unaccompanied minors are estimated to comprise 19% of the detained population.^{8,9} Conditions in detention facilities are of serious concern, specifically with regard to overcrowding and worsening of already poor hygienic conditions, and pose particular challenges for children and other individuals with specific needs.⁶ Safe and appropriate accommodation for unaccompanied asylum seeking minors is not in place and detention of unaccompanied children, though persistent, often opposes national and international law.¹³ While the law provides for special accommodation of unaccompanied minors at reception centres, in practice they are mixed with the adult population, which poses extensive safety concerns. A regular practice is "attaching" adults traveling with unaccompanied minors (though not related to the minor) as the minor's guardians or custodians with the aim to circumvent the detention of unaccompanied minors.¹³ The main reason indicated for this practice is that, in most cases, social services fail to assist in providing appropriate accommodation for children.⁹ Social workers and municipalities are poorly equipped to deal with unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee minors, which combined with the lack of staff and administrative capacity contributed to the failure adequately protect and represent unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee minors.⁸ UNHCR has recommended a review of the national child protection system because few unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors have access to specialized social services or are assigned guardians.⁶ For children that are assigned guardians, these individuals often do not meet with all children assigned to them and follow-up is commonly inadequate.

Cultural, educational, and behavioural differences of refugees and asylum seekers have been cited as reasons for misunderstandings and difficulties with integration into Bulgarian society.^{5,14} Refugees may be perceived as lacking enthusiasm to interact and integrate within Bulgarian society, which is a potential source of tension between the refugees and the host community.¹¹ Despite observations of discrimination and an overall negative attitude of Bulgarians towards refugees, there have been no formal reports of violence between Bulgarians and asylum seekers outside of the news media.¹¹ Language serves as a major obstacle preventing social and cultural integration, further complicated by disagreement between Bulgarian authorities and NGOs on whether language training is available to asylum seekers, and in turn,

whether such courses ought to then be built onto assistance efforts.¹¹ NGOs have reported that certain services, including childcare, are only available to those who speak Bulgarian, meaning that the majority of refugees, who cannot speak Bulgarian, lack access to certain services.¹¹ The municipalities of Sofia have received funds from the European Union, intended to go directly to families that received refugee status determinations wanting to live in Sofia, to help facilitate integration of refugees.¹⁴

Information Gaps: Bulgaria

- Minimal information available on implementation of GBV standard operating procedures and protection policies in general
- Little information specific to the needs of men and boys
- No information on livelihoods
- Minimal information specific to each nationality with respect to arrivals

fYR Macedonia

A total of 10 relevant documents on the migration crisis and response in fYR Macedonia were identified. The available literature focused predominantly on needs and specific refugee and migrant populations, with relatively little information provided on response to the migrant crisis.

Official numbers on arrivals and illegal immigration disaggregated by country of origin, gender, and vulnerabilities as documented by the police force tasked with registering arrivals are available through the Macedonian Ministry of Interior; however, such figures are not available in English. Total figures are available from the Ministry of Interior and are presented; however, it should be noted that unofficial estimates are reportedly much higher. This has anecdotally been attributed to many arrivals going unregistered in light of fYR Macedonia's overwhelmed capacity to register all arrivals. In 2016, IOM estimated that fYR Macedonia received 89,771 arrivals, down 77% from the 388,233 migrants and asylum seekers registered entering the country in 2015.² This decrease is largely due to a shift in the migration route to Croatia, which followed Hungary's closing of its borders with Serbia in late 2015.¹⁵ Approximately 1,500 to 2,000 refugees were stranded at the border between Serbia and fYR Macedonia for more than a month after the border closure causing the Tabernacle reception centre, close to the Northern border with Serbia, to run at nearly twice its normal capacity.¹¹ Most of the stranded migrants left in the following months and by the end of the year, only 137 remained in fYR Macedonia.² Additionally, there have been numerous reports of individuals that formally expressed a desire to apply for asylum in fYR Macedonia who were not permitted to do so with no clear reason as to why they were restricted from attempting the asylum process.¹⁶ The humanitarian situation of refugees in fYR Macedonia is deteriorating due to increased risk of exploitation and abuse where many refugees use established smuggling networks to transit through the country. UNHCR projects that 8,000 people in need of international protection will be assisted in fYR Macedonia in 2017, including 400 referrals of vulnerable persons, 600 at risk children, and 100 GBV victims; in addition, an estimated 300 persons will remain in government accommodation sites.⁶

Despite being officially closed, movement along the Western Balkans Route has not completely stopped and the current situation is characterized by continuous attempts at illegal border crossings and an increased demand for smuggling services.⁶ The closures of borders reduced the accuracy of arrival numbers in the Balkans because of the increased proportion of illegal border crossings. As of mid-2016, there were an estimated 100-200 refugees transiting through fYR Macedonia on a daily basis and a population of several hundred waiting along the fYR Macedonia-Serbia bordering waiting to cross illegally into Serbia.¹⁵ More recent estimates from protection and border monitoring activities indicate an average of around 150 arrivals weekly with most attempting to move onwards and only a very small number seeking asylum.⁶ The situation of refugees and migrants who are on the move within the country, in most cases using smugglers and avoiding contact with authorities and UNHCR, is especially precarious.⁶ There

have been cases where new arrivals who wanted to seek asylum were unable to do so because authorities allow access to the asylum procedure only on a selective basis with the intention of keeping the number of asylum claims low. Reports of push-backs across the border with Greece are also not uncommon.¹⁵ Despite numerous calls made by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia for an end to unlawful deportation practices, forceful expulsion of refugees from FYR Macedonia to Serbia and Greece persist conflicting with international standards and law.^{17,18}

According to standard operating procedures (SOPs), individuals identified within a “vulnerable category” along the Serbian-Macedonian border, are to be referred to the Tabanovce transit centre for admission, access to services, and further referrals. Admission is however performed selectively based upon inconsistent criteria. Often, those admitted are ordered to leave as quickly as one day after arrival, while others with short stays do so intentionally, staying for as little as a single night to receive food and water before moving on to Greece.¹⁹ UNHCR reported 215 persons in the country as of early 2017 that were hosted in various accommodation facilities, primarily a reception centre in Vinojug and transit centre in Tabanovce. Of these 215 individuals, 32 are asylum seekers accommodated in the asylum centre in Vizbegovo and a safe house.⁶ FYR Macedonia established reception centres and asylum systems in 2015; however, the systems were designed for small numbers, services are perceived as inadequate, and implementation of the asylum law deficient.¹⁵ In late 2015, in an effort prompted by international actors and national NGOs, FYR Macedonia adopted an emergency plan in an effort to better cope with the migrant crisis. The emergency plan focused on provision of accommodation and winterizing shelters, which were perceived as lacking in terms of special assistance to vulnerable groups and in addressing protection and gender concerns.¹⁵ A number of SOPs have been developed in FYR Macedonia including National SOPs for treatment of victims of human trafficking, for unaccompanied minors and separated children, and for treatment of vulnerable categories of refugees and migrants. Efforts have been ongoing to achieve minimum humanitarian standards in reception and assistance sites. Following the 2016 development of SOPs for processing vulnerable categories of foreign nationals, UNHCR reported an improvement in reception conditions including access to primary care, mobile health clinics providing a range of reproductive health services, improved WASH facilities, non-formal education, and women’s corners and children’s playgrounds.⁶ Despite efforts to adapt the Vinojug reception centre and Tabanovce transit centre, they remain inadequate for longer-term stay and people live in a situation of quasi-detention with very limited or no freedom of movement.⁶

The main protection problems appear to be in the implementation of SOPs as result of poor identification (i.e. lack of capacity), non-functional referral mechanisms (i.e. different institutions not assuming their authorities), and lack of established services (i.e. simple, services are either not there or are of questionable quality or not appropriate). There have been reports of increasing occurrences of GBV, in addition to extortion, kidnapping, and trafficking; widespread abuses and violence are regularly reported in the north of the country in villages that reportedly serve as smuggling hubs.^{6,15} As a recent gender assessment conducted in FYR Macedonia and Serbia notes, “there are no comprehensive services for GBV in the context of the broader crisis and protection response in FYR Macedonia and Serbia, no dedicated GBV expertise on staff, no systemic thematic focus on GBV within the coordinated protection response, and no GBV referral pathways have been established within the respective countries or trans-nationally.”²⁰ In 2016, SOPs for multi-sectoral GBV prevention and response were developed. There is a safe house in Skopje that accommodates vulnerable persons such as unaccompanied minors, single mothers, and victims of trafficking and GBV, though operated with quite limited capacity. While living conditions are significantly better than in the reception centre and psychosocial services are offered, restricted movement and limitations to internet use, measures intended to limit the risk of contact with smugglers and traffickers, have caused many unaccompanied minors to leave the facility.¹⁵ As the risk of GBV is intensifying, continued advocacy for implementation of SOPs and coordinated approaches to

identify and prioritize persons at risk or with specific needs for protection and assistance is a response priority.⁶

The 2017 response in FYR Macedonia is projected to cost US\$11.4 million, with funds going primarily to protection (61%), shelter and non-food items (NFIs) (15%), health and nutrition (5%), food (5%), and operational support.⁶

Information Gaps: FYR Macedonia

- Minimal information available on demographics and arrivals
- No information specific to the needs of men and boys
- No information on livelihoods
- Minimal information specific to each nationality

Greece

A total of 44 relevant documents on the migration crisis and response in Greece were identified. The number of arrivals in both Greece and Italy far outnumber those of other countries in the region. As such the breadth of literature from Greece surpasses that of the other countries prioritized for the literature review and reflects the constantly changing conditions and humanitarian response within Greece. The available information comes from assessments, analysis reports, and trip reports by various NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and United Nations (UN) agencies. While this section touches on the programmatic areas of concern (cash-based interventions, protection concerns, and shelter), the following sections provide greater detail, with a heavy focus on the situation in Greece.

Greece and Italy accounted for 45.6% and 46.7%, respectively, of all arrivals to Europe in 2016. A total of 176,906 arrivals were recorded in Greece, which represents a 79% decrease as compared to the record 857,363 arrivals in 2015. The vast majority (98%) of arrivals were by sea and 87% were from the world's top ten refugee producing countries including Syria (46%), Afghanistan (24%), and Iraq (15%) with smaller numbers from Pakistan (5%), Iran (3%), and various other countries (6%); women and children accounted for more than half (59%) of all arrivals.^{1,2,21} Since the Western Balkans route closure and EU-Turkey Agreement in March of 2016, the number of stranded migrants and refugees increased by 47%. At the end of 2016, 62,489 migrants were stranded in Greece, representing 83% of the total population of stranded refugees and migrants in Europe.² At the end of 2016, the refugees and migrants in Greece resided at official and unofficial sites on the mainland (50%) and the islands (26%), as well as in UNHCR accommodation in various sites throughout the country (20%).⁶ Projections for 2017 indicated there will be 40,000 new arrivals to Greece in 2017, a total of 67,000 refugees and migrants in Greece by the end of the year.⁶

There is an important distinction between arrivals before and after March 20th, 2016, the effective date of the EU-Turkey agreement. Those arriving prior to the agreement have the right to legal stay, asylum, and the possibility to benefit from relocation to other countries. This population has mostly been relocated to mainland Greece and are accommodated either in open camps or outside of camps. In early 2017, there were 42 open accommodation sites on the mainland and two on the islands.⁶ By December 2016, there were 20,000 off-site accommodation spaces created for relocation candidates and vulnerable people such as unaccompanied minors, but there is still a need to expand this capacity.⁶ Though "vulnerable cases" including unaccompanied minors, single parents with minor children, and the elderly are eligible for accelerated procedures under Greek Law, the December 2016 Joint Action Plan (JAP) developed by the European Commission and Greek authorities seeks to remove this provision, a move that would expose those already among the most vulnerable to further risks.^{22,23,24} Large scale assistance

efforts are ongoing as are efforts to expand multi-unit transitional shelter options that meet national and Sphere humanitarian standards and provide dignified and safe environments for families and at-risk individuals.⁵ In contrast, those arriving after the agreement went into force are accommodated in closed hotspot facilities or reception and identification centres on the mainland (Evros) and five Greek islands (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kis and Leros) until they are registered and processed and have few options for onward travel.^{6,25} Reception conditions for new arrivals deteriorated in 2016 and many of the reception and identification centres are overcrowded.⁶ One of the main challenges in Greece is that refugee and migrant sites are located across several regions of the country, with populations ranging from 100 to 3,500 per site, making harmonization of standards difficult across locations and increasing staffing requirements.⁶ Efforts by Greek authorities and humanitarian organizations in late 2016 reported significant progress in efforts to relocate those in the most dangerous mainland sites to shelters that could adequately protect them from winter conditions. No such efforts have been made for those housed inadequately in island sites.²⁶

The observed increase in the number of people seeking assistance in Athens and other locations in Greece indicates a change in the type and duration of humanitarian needs. While previously, humanitarian actors have provided short-term basic services to help ensure safe passage along the Balkan migrant route, there is now a longer-term need for services such as food, shelter, water and sanitation, healthcare, and non-food items as refugees/migrants are remaining in Greece for an uncertain amount of time. Services that were not previously prioritized, such as legal support, education for prevention of trafficking and exploitation, psychosocial support and counselling, and information for accessing available services are now required by refugees and migrants as they stay longer in Greece, as is a more integrated social and economic approach.^{26,27}

Despite support provided by UNHCR and the European Asylum Support Office to the Government of Greece in such efforts, information provided to refugees on their rights, as well as 24/7 emergency service, is incomplete and refugees are often exposed to misleading information and at risk of exploitation and often pay extra for goods and services. The current conditions of open temporary reception sites in Greece, with levels of security and service provision falling short of international standards, as well as the insufficient long-term legal protection options leaves women exposed to GBV, including domestic violence, sexual assault and exploitation, trafficking, and inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health care.^{21 27} One of the achievements of the 2016 response was an increase in protection capacity to cover all sites in addition to urban areas where refugees and migrants are hosted. This includes referral mechanisms for persons with specific needs and response to child protection and GBV.⁶ Referral pathways for GBV incidents are in place in 24 locations and several sites offer case management for survivors, with an average of 45 cases received monthly; capacity building efforts are perceived as improving the quality of response to GBV survivors.⁶ Despite these efforts, GBV service provision is extremely limited in some sites that do not have case management services and which many not have a security presence. Basic measures to mitigate GBV risks in site planning phases, such as lighting and privacy of bathroom facilities, have been overlooked and GBV mitigation is not always accounted for in planning and implementation of activities, only increasing risk and vulnerability to GBV.⁶

As of November 2016, there were an estimated 2,500 unaccompanied minors in Greece with an average of 190 arriving each month.⁶ Children have particularly high protection risks with exposure to physical abuse, exploitation, sexual abuse, shared toilets, tents or shared rooms in detention centres, and added risks when traveling unaccompanied.²⁸ A recent qualitative study of physical, psychological, and sexual violence and exploitation of migrant/refugee children in Greece identified six central risk factors for such threats to children: “(1) insufficient number of specialized facilities for children; (2) risky living conditions inside camps; (3) potentially hazardous and unsupervised commingling of migrant children with the adult

migrant population; (4) weak and insufficiently resourced child protection systems; (5) lack of coordination and cooperation among responsible actors; and (6) an inefficient and radically inadequate relocation scheme.”²⁹ Unaccompanied minors are often placed in detention centres for several weeks, then transferred to care centres on the mainland, exposing the children to further risk of exploitation and trafficking.^{28,30} Efforts to expand child protection in 2016 included establishment of a task force that oversaw development of case management tools and conducted trainings for 100 case workers. The task force was also to undertake capacity building to improve management of the caseload of unaccompanied and separated minors; agreement upon minimum standards for safe zones for unaccompanied minors in temporary accommodation facilities on the mainland, including alternatives to detention; establishment of ‘Blue Dot’ child and family protection support hubs in 11 locations; and establishment of 43 shelters for provision of short and long term care for 1,200 unaccompanied minors.⁶ The 2017 response plan lays out a number of priorities for child protection, including a harmonized case management system, improved outreach in urban areas and community based child protection mechanisms aimed at increasing resilience of refugee and migrant children.⁶

The 2017 response in Greece is projected to cost US\$525.9 million, with funds going primarily to basic assistance (37%), protection (32%), education (10%), site management support (9%), health and nutrition (5%), and WASH (3%).⁶

Information Gaps: Greece

- No information specific to the needs of men and boys
- No information on livelihoods
- Minimal information on risks specific to each nationality

Serbia

A total of 19 relevant documents on the migration crisis and response in Serbia were identified. Information on Serbia’s response also comes primarily from assessments, reports, and notes documented by NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and UN agencies. The resources provided largely anecdotal evidence of the response in Serbia, with detailed information regarding shelter, protection, and cashed-based interventions.

In 2016 there were 98,975 arrivals to Serbia, down 83% from the 750,000 people who transited through the country in 2015.^{2,4} Reported arrivals decreased over the course of the year and had virtually come to a halt by the end of 2016, when an estimated 150-200 persons arrived daily from Bulgaria and FYR Macedonia. Onward travel is limited with Hungary reducing the number of asylum seekers admitted from 210 to 100 per week in November 2016 and further reduced to only 10 individuals permitted to cross the border and access the asylum system per day in April 2017.^{6,31} Consequently, the number of stranded migrants increased by 230%, from 1,706 in early 2016 to 5,608 by the end of the year.^{2,32} Those pushed back into Serbia from Hungary also face challenges re-entering the asylum system in Serbia where, without appropriate legal intervention, authorities deny them access to asylum procedures in Serbia.³¹ The combination of continued irregular arrivals and limited exit opportunities has changed the situation in Serbia where there are fewer migrants with longer term stays, requiring an adjustment in the response. Projections suggest a total of 12,000-13,000 arrivals in 2017, with a capacity to accommodate 6,000 people in government facilities and stays averaging several months in duration.⁶

Available data suggests that 85% of 2016 arrivals in Serbia originated from refugee producing countries and that 39% of arrivals were men and 61% women and children.⁶ Despite the size of the arriving population, only 12,821 individuals expressed an intention to apply for asylum and only 574 asylum applications were submitted in 2016. The majority of those expressing intentions to apply for asylum were

from Afghanistan (44%), Iraq (21%), Syria (18%), and Pakistan (8%). The vast majority were men (71%), followed by women (29%), children (10%), and unaccompanied minors (5%). Of the 108 decisions on first-instance asylum cases rendered in 2016, 13% were granted refugee status, 16% protection, and 71% were rejected.³² Limited access to asylum procedures is a concern in Serbia. This includes denial of access to asylum procedures and refusal to issue certificates of having expressed the intention to seek asylum. These issues are attributed to a general lack of knowledge of international human rights and refugee law by officials.³²

In mid-2016, introduction of mixed army-police controls along the borders with fYR Macedonia and Bulgaria were introduced, raising some concerns, particularly in light of public statements that migrants are being kept out of Serbia. In December 2016, the Ministry of Defence reported that 18,000 illegal migrant crossings from Bulgaria had been prevented. Push-backs across the border with fYR Macedonia and collective expulsions affected approximately 750 migrants in 2016.³² While Serbia has the right to control its borders, it is important that principals of non-refoulement and prohibition of collective expulsions are upheld and that the individual circumstances of each migrant are examined. Serbia lacks an adequate legal framework to put in place procedural guarantees against refoulement and forced return, which has given rise to concerns that current practices are in violation of international law.³² Refugees and migrants arriving or already in Serbia are highly susceptible to smuggling and related protection risks including physical violence, trafficking, and exploitation.⁶ Though not necessarily representative of the entire migrant/refugee population in Serbia, recent evidence from those receiving services at Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) mobile mental health clinics reported that 27% of cases experienced a violent event during their journey and 22% experienced “physical trauma due to acts of violence”, most often in fYR Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, perpetrated largely by State authorities (65% of cases).³³ Of those cases, 11% were women and 13% were children, highlighting the vulnerability among these groups. Despite a decreasing number of arrivals to Serbia, the rate of violent events per 100 consultations at MSF clinics continued to increase significantly in mid-2016.³³

At the end of 2016, more than 7,000 migrants were residing in Serbia, the vast majority (82%) of whom are accommodated in government facilities while they wait to be admitted to Hungary. The remainder of migrants stay outside of camps in Belgrade city centre (approximately 1,000) and the sites in border areas with Hungary. The primary locations that refugees/migrants have gathered in Serbia are in Belgrade (where a majority reside), Sid (Principovac), Bujanovac, and Presevo, prior to continuation of migration towards Hungary.¹⁷ Currently, the infrastructure in Serbia can only respond to basic needs of migrants for a short time, with municipalities struggling to cope with growing needs for services including waste management, water, shelter, and transportation.⁶ The Government has opened five new provisional shelters with a total capacity of about 1,500 beds to manage the increasing number of arrivals and to decongest border areas.¹⁴ There are 13 government facilities, including five asylum centres, five transit centres, and two reception centres; in January 2017, the combined capacity of government facilities was estimated at 4,000.^{6,32} There are only 3,050 places in hard-shelter structures, meaning a substantial number of people are housed in temporary structures, which is not ideal given the climate and longer lengths of stay. Crowding is a concern at both temporary and permanent government facilities.⁶

The 2017 response calls for a focus on the longer staying population and limited assistance to new arrivals.⁶ Temporary reception centres were not foreseen as accommodating asylum seekers in Serbia. Conditions at asylum centres are seen as widely variable; however, all asylum centres are over-crowded, lacking in privacy, and have poor hygiene conditions.³² The asylum centres, which include converted factories and hotels, do not all satisfy the Sphere Humanitarian Standards, though there is separate housing for single men, single women, and families in Krnjaca asylum centre near Belgrade, where most asylum seekers are housed.¹⁴ In early 2017, only 65 specialised centers were available to provide “safe

accommodation” to an estimated caseload of 750 unaccompanied minors.¹³ Many of these “specialized accommodation facilities” for children are extensions of existing centers for Serbian children with behavioural problems and unaccompanied minors often attempt to avoid placement in such “closed” facilities or leave these centers soon after placement.¹³ The 2017 response plan lists protection-sensitive shelters that prioritize GBV risk reduction, the needs of other vulnerable and at risk groups such as unaccompanied minors and families, and gender-sensitive WASH facilities as elements of the planned response.⁶ Asylum seekers housed at asylum centres receive accommodation, food, and free health care; they do not have the right to access government social welfare benefits, but some vulnerable groups receive cash transfers from NGOs.³⁴ Implementation of a voucher scheme to provide dignified accommodation to refugees and migrants with special needs is also under consideration.⁶

Serbia has reported increasing numbers of GBV incidents, including sexual and psychological harassment, sexual violence and exploitation, as well as cases of domestic violence, though GBV is likely to be underreported because of fear of reprisal, and some victims only report cases once in their destination country.¹⁴ An increase in violence and harassment of women in transit and reception centres has also been reported within Serbia.¹⁴ The Serbian government has adopted the “National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2016-2020”, which identifies women refugees as a vulnerable group at risk of discrimination, and to improve the asylum procedure, a new draft Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection is currently being considered.¹⁴

The 2017 response in Serbia is projected to cost US\$39.3 million, with funds going primarily to shelter and NFIs (27%), support to local communities (27%), protection (25%), health and nutrition (8%), food (4%), WASH (3%), and education (3%).⁶

Information Gaps: Serbia

- No information specific to the needs of men and boys
- No information on livelihoods, in particular with respect to application of 2017 Integration Decree
- Minimal information on risks specific to each nationality

Humanitarian Assistance Programs in Europe[†]

A total of 40 documents relating to cash based interventions, protection, and urban shelter were identified. The literature on protection was most developed with comparatively few documents related to cash programming and shelter (Table 2). A summary of themes in relation to the interventions and target populations for the SAFERR project follows.

Table 2. Count of Documents by Theme

Theme	# Documents
Cash Based Intervention	7
Protection	31
Shelter	2
Total	40

Cash Based Interventions

Information on cash-based interventions (CBIs) comes from assessments and reports by various organizations on current interventions and programs as well as recommendations for future interventions using these modalities. A total of seven documents focusing on cash transfer programs were identified. Given the unpredictable and mobile nature of needs and assistance required by refugees and migrants in Greece and along the Balkan route, the use of CBIs is perceived as advantageous because it allows for rapid and flexible delivery of demand-driven assistance.²³ Paper vouchers, prepaid cards, and one-off

[†] For refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with a focus on populations outside of camps

unrestricted cash grants were the more frequent transfer modalities and preferred because they were the fastest way to meet humanitarian needs. Multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs)[‡], require greater organizational capacity and have not been implemented in most countries.³⁵

The cash-based response in Greece has been the most widespread. MPGs began in late 2015 on the islands of Kos and Leros for 1,000 beneficiaries and a year later cash grants had been scaled up to reach 25,500 beneficiaries, which equates to approximately 40% of the population of concern in Greece living in formal refugee and migrant sites and urban locations.⁶ At the end of 2016, cash assistance was provided across 20 sites by UNHCR and its partners and iNGOs in the form of pre-paid cards and restricted cash/vouchers. Total cash assistance to refugees and migrants in Greece, delivered by at least 13 agencies in 2016, was estimated to exceed €8 million.³⁶ An analysis of Mercy Corps cash transfer program data for vulnerable populations in Kos, Leros, and Lesvos showed that following the EU-Turkey agreement, the most spending of cash transfers was on food (grocery stores and restaurants) and NFIs (clothing stores).³⁴

A national cash working group was established in Greece in late 2015 with the aim of coordinating implementation and harmonizing cash assistance provided by various actors. A recent review of CBIs detailed numerous recommendations for future cash transfer programming in Greece, including granting national approval to fully scale up and cover all POCs before the end of January 2017; granting national approval to provide cash assistance to unaccompanied minors and separated children aged 14+, and systematic mapping and targeting of eligible refugees in the urban settings living in various types of accommodation. Plans for a single service provider and database, along with data sharing agreements, will increase coordination and manageability as cash transfers are further scaled up in Greece during 2017. Cash assistance is intended to support basic needs, including food, clothing, hygiene, communication, and education. Plans for 2017 are to scale cash assistance to all sites where residents will be eligible if they are registered with the asylum service and do not have regular employment. Households will receive a single card and the size of the monthly transfers will vary by household size, ranging from 90 Euros for individuals to 330 Euros for families of eight or more.³⁶

In Serbia, cash assistance is provided by NGO Philanthropy in the form of cash cards for refugees. Cash cards can be used at pre-identified shops, which reduces the risk of cash being diverted to pay smugglers.^{5, 34} Cash assistance is available in all government sites in Serbia for registered refugees including families, unaccompanied minors, elderly, disabled, and when referred, single men. Monthly transfer amounts range from US\$40 per family of 1-2 children to US\$120 for families with 6+ children, with seasonal adjustments in transfers for winter. Pre-paid cards are valid for one month; however, monitoring data suggests that all funds are usually spent within the first week. To date there have been no security incidents reported in relation to cash transfers.³⁷ Mercy Corps also implemented a cash transfer program in Serbia with a similar aim of providing people with dignified choice on how to cover their needs. Transfer amounts were 70 Euros for individuals and 210 Euros for families. Monitoring data showed money was spent on ATM withdraw (38%), transport costs (38%), and food (9%) for time periods prior to the EU-Turkey agreement when it is likely that transportation costs were higher.³⁴

In Bulgaria, cash transfers were provided by the Bulgarian government on a monthly basis for adults and children at the monthly equivalent of €33 (BGN 65) per individual. The amount was considered insufficient to meet basic nutrition needs and was criticized by UNHCR and NGOs. The situation was particularly serious for unaccompanied minors not accommodated in asylum reception centres where they had to manage independently; few unaccompanied minors managed to cover their expenses with the cash

[‡] MPGs are unrestricted a cash transfers (either regular or one-off) that include any unrestricted cash assistance including pre-paid cards and direct cash transfers.

provided and many reported they were undernourished. Assistance was provided to asylum seekers in reception centres only; to live outside, asylum seekers had to declare they had enough resources to support themselves, which stripped them from the right to financial assistance. In early 2015 the provision of the monthly financial allowance to asylum seekers accommodated in reception centres was halted, under the pretext that food was to be provided in reception centres. The cessation of the monthly financial allowance was appealed by several refugee-assisting NGOs before the court, but the appeal was struck down.³⁸ There are no other reports of ongoing cash transfer programming in Bulgaria, though CRS started a small pilot program for urban refugees in early 2017.¹⁴

There were no reports of cash transfer programming in Albania or FYR Macedonia; however, in Albania, CRS and Caritas Albania are currently piloting a program to provide irregular migrants that enter Albania near the Kakavija and Kapstische border crossing points and asylum seekers living near Tirana cash assistance to meet their basic needs while they await decisions on their asylum status.³⁹ Since late 2015, one-time assistance has been provided to vulnerable families (determined as such based upon number of family members, infants, elderly, and unemployment) in the form of a cash card with US\$100 to be used as a debit card to purchase critically needed items.

Shelter

The response to shelter needs varies across countries and ranges from closed and open facilities, often referred to as shelters, reception or accommodation centres or camps, to urban settings where refugees may reside on their own, often in temporary shelters, or are accommodated in apartment-like shelters. With the March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement and related border closures, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria all had significant increases in the number of stranded refugees and migrants in 2016 and have seen needs for shelter and longer-term support services increase dramatically.^{1,27}

In Greece, refugees and migrants are accommodated in different settings including reception and identification centres, open camps, and urban settings. Reception and identification centres are closed facilities located on five Greek islands (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos, and Leros) and the mainland (Evros), and accommodate the population that arrived after the EU-Turkey agreement went into effect in March 2016. Conditions at reception and identification centres deteriorated in 2016 and many are overcrowded.⁶ In early 2017, there were 42 open accommodation sites on the mainland and two on the islands that accommodate populations arriving prior to implementation of the EU-Turkey deal.⁶ UNHCR estimated that government facilities have the capacity to house 30,000 refugees and migrants on the mainland and 75,000 on the islands. However, most government sites are over capacity, are not designed for long-term stays, are in isolated areas away from urban centres, and are unable to scale up services to provide for vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, unaccompanied minors, and disabled persons.²⁷ Camps on the mainland are also crowded and an increasing number of people are electing to stay out of camps, including those without shelter arrangements who sleep on the streets or in temporary shelters, has led to deteriorating humanitarian conditions for refugees and migrants on the mainland, in particular in the greater Athens area.²⁷

While the Greek government is taking the lead on shelter provision and services within camps, UNHCR is the lead agency for accommodations outside of camps and supports provision of shelter via five implementing partners, including both NGOs and municipalities.⁴⁰ As of November 2016, there were an estimated 19,962 off-site accommodation spaces in collective buildings, apartments, hotels, host families, and relocation sites with services, but there is still a need to expand this capacity.⁶ Efforts are ongoing as are efforts to expand multi-unit transitional shelter options that meet national and Sphere humanitarian standards and provide dignified and safe environments for families and at-risk individuals.⁵ Assessments of various shelter options have been undertaken in both Athens and Thessaloniki and provide a detailed assessment of various shelter arrangements, estimated capacities, and pros and cons of the various

shelter options.^{27,40} Some alternative solutions posed by UNHCR include social housing, rental subsidies, renovation or rehabilitation of old or sub-standard residential buildings, conversion of industrial or office buildings for residential use, hosting, and squats. In Athens, the economic crisis has left vacant spaces in the centre of the city of Athens ranging from entire building blocks to individual flats to storefronts that are unused and often in poor condition. For refugees and migrants that are likely to stay in Greece for longer periods of time, urban shelter solutions are seen as helping to promote integration and sustainability through accommodation that allows for access to cities and public services.⁸

As border closures have limited exit opportunities, Serbia has seen an increase in the number of migrants with extended stays of several months or more while they await entry into Hungary. At the end of 2016, there were 5,608 stranded migrants according to IOM, whereas other sources report more than 7,000 migrants living in Serbia.^{2,17} An estimated 82% of refugees and migrants are accommodated in government facilities; the remaining population of approximately 1,000 stay in informal settlements in Belgrade and along the border with Hungary.¹⁷ As of January 2017, there were 13 government facilities, including five asylum centres, five transit centres, and two reception centres with a combined capacity estimated at 4,000; projections for 2017 indicate capacity will expand to 6,000.^{6,32} However, there are only 3,050 places in hard-shelter structures, which are suitable for long-term stay per international standards, leaving large numbers to be housed in temporary structures, which is not ideal given harsh winters and longer lengths of stay. Crowding is a concern at both temporary and permanent government facilities.⁶ Asylum centres include a variety of structures such as converted factories and hotels, and do not all satisfy the Sphere Humanitarian Standards; crowding, lack of privacy and poor hygiene conditions are cited as the principal concerns.³² The 2017 response calls for a focus on the longer staying population which includes ensuring that emergency shelter assistance evolves to become durable, efforts to ensure that shelters and WASH facilities are protection-sensitive, and consideration of transitional options such as voucher schemes for rented accommodation.⁶

In Bulgaria, it is estimated that in 2017, approximately 6,000 refugees and migrants will be in the country at any given time.⁶ Following 2016 border closures, occupancy of reception facilities exceed capacity, contributing to overcrowding and deterioration of the already poor sanitary and living conditions at the majority of centers.⁸ Shelter has been identified as a critical need by UNHCR and the Bulgarian government.⁶ Those who apply for asylum in Bulgaria are released and transferred to reception centres whereas undocumented arrivals are detained for deportation.⁸ At the end of 2016, there were four open reception centres in Bulgaria with a total capacity of 5,130; as of December 2016, the occupancy rate at reception centres was 79%.⁸ When possible, efforts are made at reception centres to accommodate nuclear families together in separate rooms. Measures to prevent GBV are still not sufficient to properly guarantee the safety and security of the population in the centres and, contrary to international standards, unaccompanied minors are not provided separate accommodation.⁸ Undocumented arrivals and a number of asylum seekers are accommodated in detention facilities where material conditions, available services, and security are of serious concern, particularly for children and other individuals with specific needs.⁶ A total of 11,314 asylum seekers were detained in 2016 and 636 were in custody at the end of the year; capacity at Bulgaria's four detention centres is estimated at 1,090.⁸ Asylum seekers are allowed to reside outside reception centres, but only if expenses are paid for by the asylum seekers themselves and, prior to the end of government-provided "social allowance," if they have waived their right to a monthly social allowance; at the end of 2016, relatively few asylum seekers lived outside the reception centres.⁸ Both the Municipalities of Sofia and CRS have received funds to support shelter for families with refugee status determinations wanting to live in Sofia, which will begin on a small scale with the aim of facilitating integration.⁷

Shelter needs in fYR Macedonia are significantly less than in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. At the end of 2016, there were 137 stranded migrants in fYR Macedonia² and UNHCR projects that an estimated 300 persons will remain in government accommodation sites in 2017.⁶ As of early 2017, there were 215 persons in fYR Macedonia hosted in government accommodation, primarily a reception centre in Vinojug (which is closed with semi-detention conditions) and a transit centre in Tabanovce (semi-closed), an open asylum centre in Vizbegovo, a safe house in Skopje, and a “Centre for foreigners” in Gazi Baba (a closed type detention centre).⁶ A larger population transits through fYR Macedonia, in most cases using smugglers and avoiding contact with authorities and UNHCR,⁶ and may not be considered in documents referring shelter needs. Reception centres have been characterized as deficient and there have been subsequent efforts to improve accommodation including achieving minimum humanitarian standards for shelter and development SOPs for accommodation and treatment of refugees and migrants in reception centres.^{6, 15} UNHCR reported an improvement in reception conditions including access to primary care, mobile health clinics that provide a range of reproductive health services, improved WASH facilities, non-formal education, and women’s corners and children’s playgrounds.⁶ Despite efforts made to improve reception centres, they remain inadequate for longer-term stay and their residents have very limited or no freedom of movement and live in a state of quasi-detention.⁶ fYR Macedonia shelter priorities identified in the UNHCR 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan include providing support to the authorities to ensure the availability of adequate shelter in line with minimum humanitarian standards, ensuring availability of safe and secure areas for women and girls in addition to spaces for breastfeeding and child-friendly spaces, ensuring access to basic humanitarian assistance such as food and NFIs is maintained in the existing centres, and ensuring WASH facilities are adequate, including separate facilities for men and women and special facilities for people with disabilities.⁶

There was no information reported on shelter programming or needs in Albania.

Protection

Information on protection assistance comes from assessments and reports by various organizations on risks and barriers affecting refugees/migrants, as well as recommendations and funding appeals for expansion of services. A total of 31 documents were identified. Assistance coordinated by protection working groups includes monitoring of protection risks and rights violations, communication about asylum and registration policies, provision of legal assistance, and support for overall child protection as well as specifically for unaccompanied minors and separated children, GBV survivors, victims of trafficking, and people with disabilities.⁶

Protection efforts are largely country-specific, with limited support available to those who choose not to register as asylum seekers in hopes of continuing on to Northern and Western Europe. The lack of legal pathways for migration coupled with establishment of stricter border control regimes have effectively increased risks of violence and exploitation associated with smuggling and trafficking networks.⁴¹ Relevant authorities and civil society organizations have struggled to provide adequate information on protection options and access to individualized health care and psychosocial support due to limited response capacity and lack of interpreters in most settings. Response plans for 2017 include expansion of existing services with a focus on establishing or strengthening mechanisms to identify vulnerable populations (including victims of trafficking, GBV survivors, and unaccompanied minors or separated children), communicate rights and protection options, tailor assistance to their needs, and establish pathways for referral to specialized services.⁶

Access to services and durable solutions are also recognized as persistent and emerging protection issues, but strategies for longer-term support to refugees and migrants remain uncertain. Negative attitudes and hostility towards asylum seekers and migrants have increased in many locations, in part stemming from a

lack of information about national authorities' plans, but also from limited contact between refugees in temporary accommodations and local communities in most countries.^{6, 28}

In Greece, there is an active Protection Working Group, co-chaired by UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council, with national and sub-national meetings to coordinate activities. Efforts are underway to move relocation candidates and vulnerable people referred to UNHCR into safe shelter, but needs continue to outweigh capacity. Activities designed to increase access to information about protection options for those not eligible for relocation include development of a 'communicating with communities' handbook with tools and practical advice on communicating legal rights and basic services, a pre-registration campaign that resulted in 28,000 individuals obtaining appointments with the Greek Asylum Office, and an SMS campaign and web-finder providing individuals with information about these appointments.⁶ UNHCR reports that in 2016, more than 25,000 individuals were provided with legal assistance and social services. However, agencies involved in legal assistance report that frequently changing policies, lack of political will, and inconsistent application of procedures make it difficult to provide accurate and transparent information.^{42,28} Hubs have been established to provide psychosocial support, child friendly spaces, legal assistance, and family reunification services, and referral pathways for GBV survivors have been established. The 2017 response plans highlight a need for continued outreach in urban areas and awareness campaigns providing cultural- and language-specific information on asylum procedures, rights, obligations, and services available, as well as for strengthening of GBV prevention and response services, including case management services for survivors.⁶ Public hospitals, where asylum seekers are entitled to access free services and cases from humanitarian health service providers are referred, lack capacity to absorb increasing client loads; there are also widespread needs for translators and cultural mediators to ensure patients understand their health needs and treatment or case management options.⁴³

In Serbia, there is an active Refuge Protection Working Group co-chaired by UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans, and Social Policy and as many as 20 government and non-governmental agencies providing protection services in Belgrade and Presevo, and fewer in other border towns around the country.⁴⁴ Activities conducted in 2016 include training of state officials and police on protection issues; transportation and in some cases, translation, support in accessing health services; and information sharing on trafficking and smuggling risks, rights of asylum seekers, and services available.¹⁴ A new Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection is currently under consideration, which will clarify and strengthen protection mechanisms, placing an emphasis on integration.^{14, 45} Agencies monitoring protection issues report, however, that although the current and pending laws both call for efficient integration of individuals granted asylum, practical mechanisms for this are limited due to availability or resources, translators, and cultural mediators.⁴⁶ The 2017 response priorities for Serbia include strengthening institutional response capacity, improving identification of individuals with special needs, and ensuring access to services with a focus on facilitating access to asylum procedures, psychosocial support, and support for long-term integration.⁶

In Albania and Bulgaria, monitoring mechanisms have been established with focus on freedom of movement, reception conditions and asylum procedures. In Albania, there is a Protection Working Group, chaired by UNHCR that has developed guidelines and SOPs for humanitarian assistance. Although guidelines exist, limited reception capacity is recognized as a gap, particularly along the Southern border with Greece.²⁶ Due to reliance on smugglers, many new arrivals are likely to have faced risks during their journey and may be in need of medical or psycho-social attention. Referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking are in place, but the need to strengthen identification procedures and referral pathways for unaccompanied minors and separated children, GBV survivors, and trafficking victims, as well as disabled persons is acknowledged as a priority by all actors.⁶ In Bulgaria, a Protection Working Sub-Group has been established under the State Agency for Refugees Coordination Mechanism, with a focus on monitoring of

border areas and reception facilities; however, asylum system capacity, problematic detention policies, and abuse of power by border authorities remain serious concerns.^{9,10,47} Reports from agencies monitoring protection issues indicate that mechanisms for identification and referral of individuals with specific needs, including GBV survivors and victims of trafficking, are lacking and that child protection efforts are largely ineffective.^{10, 11, 28}

Similarly, in fYR Macedonia, the number of migrants and asylum seekers staying in the country is relatively low, as they want to move onward as soon as possible.¹⁴ Agencies involved in border monitoring have reported an increase in smuggling-related security incidents, including GBV, extortion, kidnapping, and trafficking. Procedures for registration of asylum seekers remain unclear, and adherence to protocols inconsistent. UNHCR reports that in some cases, registration has involved the fingerprinting and photographing of apprehended persons, without the issuance of registration documents; individuals are then 'pushed back' to Greece after registration.⁴⁸ After entering into fYR Macedonia from Greece or Serbia, most refugees/migrants are moved to Vlnojugo reception centre and Tabanovce transit centre, where freedom of movement remains limited and people remained confined in semi-detention-like conditions.¹⁴ A few NGOs operate mobile teams to provide legal counselling, psychosocial support and information on services, and refer particularly vulnerable individuals for additional services when needed.¹⁴ During 2016, SOPs for accommodation and service provision were established, including procedures for child protection and GBV prevention and response. National actors, however, do yet not have the technical expertise or resources to ensure that persons of concern receive the protection and specialized services that they need.²⁸

There were no documents identified that evaluated or reviewed lessons learned from protection programming, although many reports noted that more effort is needed to promote refugee and migrant participation and ensure the voices of those most vulnerable are heard and subsequently inform planning and response as well as to strengthen community-based protection mechanisms.

Gender-Based Violence

Many women and girls that are fleeing conflict have been repeatedly displaced and have reported experiencing various forms of GBV during their journey to and within Europe, including domestic violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, forced prostitution, survival and transactional sex, early and forced marriage, sexual harassment, and physical assault.^{15,16,49,50} Recent border closures, uncertain asylum policies, and reliance on smugglers increases vulnerability to exploitation, trafficking, and sexual violence.⁵¹ According to Europol, refugee smuggler networks have expanded into a multi-billion dollar industry, and there is growing crossover between networks involved in smuggling and those involved in human trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation.⁵²

Identifying and addressing the needs of GBV survivors is challenging in any context, and particularly challenging within the European refugee response. Migrants are unlikely to report crimes or appeal to authorities for help in escaping criminal networks because of a lack of information on availability of support services, widespread distrust of security forces, and in many cases, hopes of reaching their final destination.^{53,39} Recent assessments suggest that, as in many settings, GBV survivors avoid disclosing their experience and seeking assistance unless there is a severe and visible health implication.^{16,37} Although there are many female-headed households, the majority of women and girls travel with family members or within a group of relatives or friends. If women travel independently or with only their children, for instance to join their husbands who may already be in their destination country, they usually attempt to join a group to minimize risks.^{15,38} In all cases, men in the group are more likely to receive information from humanitarian agencies; both language and cultural barriers limit the ability of many women to directly access information about the services that are available to them.^{14,15}

Measures intended to protect newly arrived migrants who may be vulnerable to and/or are survivors of GBV include infrastructure and housing measures (i.e. separate accommodation for single women and others identified as vulnerable to GBV; separate toilet and bathroom shelters for men and women; locking doors; cameras in common areas; security staff at shared accommodation centres); establishment of referral pathways for legal, medical, and psychosocial services; access to special shelters or safe houses for GBV survivors; training of reception and border control staff on case identification and referral mechanisms; and inter-agency coordination.^{6,28,36,54} In most countries, action plans and procedures for identifying and assisting GBV survivors are in place or being developed; however, Familiarity with these procedures and capacity to implement them varies.⁴¹ In practice, governments and humanitarian agencies face challenges in identifying individuals in need of assistance and in providing adequate protection and support to the small percentage of the affected population that seeks assistance.^{14,36,38}

In Albania, referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking are in place, but there is a need to strengthen identification procedures and referral pathways for GBV survivors and women at risk.⁶ In Bulgaria, SOPs for identification and referral of GBV survivors have been in place since 2007 and are currently being updated. According to procedures, individuals wishing to report GBV can notify any person who they consider may be of help (e.g. police, NGOs, community leaders) – and that person must notify the State Agency for Refugees and refer the individual for assistance. GBV survivors rarely disclose experiences at reception or during the asylum registration process though, and both lack of interpreters needed for effective screening and strict reporting requirements may disincentivize medical providers from reporting potential cases of GBV for follow up.^{28,41} Moreover, the limited availability of female physicians in some camps likely contributes to the reduced likelihood of GBV reporting. Priorities outlined in the 2017 response plan for both Albania and Bulgaria include formalizing referral mechanisms to ensure medical, legal, and psychosocial support is available, as well as establishing mechanisms to ensure survivor confidentiality is respected at all times.⁶

In FYR Macedonia, the first multi-sectoral SOPs for GBV prevention and response were drafted in 2016, and 30 local officials have since been trained on gender-sensitive approaches to protection.⁶ Accommodation facilities have been improved to include separate toilet and shower facilities for men and women, and the small number of NGOs with GBV prevention and response experience have increased outreach activities.¹⁴ Response priorities for 2017 include finalizing procedures, as well raising awareness of GBV risks, psychosocial support in women-only spaces, improving GBV identification and referral mechanisms, and strengthening of medical, social, and legal response services.⁶

In Greece, a national action plan for GBV prevention, response, and coordination was finalized in 2016, and referral pathways were established in 24 locations across the country.^{6,30} Information on shelters and services available to GBV survivors is made available at reception and registration facilities, and frontline service providers have been trained on guiding principles for survivor-centred care and case management. UNHCR reports that an average of 45 GBV survivors receive safe shelter, medical, psychosocial, or legal support through these service delivery points each month.⁶ Most individuals receiving services are those who were identified at reception and transferred to special facilities for protection and support; few living outside of camps report GBV or seek assistance, and humanitarian actors do not have common criteria or practices for screening and referral.^{6,16,19} The 2017 response priorities include capacity building of national and local authorities, UN agencies, and NGOs to increase the coverage and quality of GBV prevention and response, including mainstreaming GBV considerations into other basic assistance activities, increasing the availability of translators, and training actors at all stages of the referral pathway on cultural dimensions of support to survivors.⁶

In Serbia, a government-led GBV working group is in the process of finalizing SOPs detailing procedures for identification, referral, and response to GBV. The majority of case management and support services

are provided by one civil society organization, with a few others providing complementary legal support, interpretation, and psychosocial support services; few camp management staff and frontline humanitarian agency staff have received training on GBV.^{14,15} Referral pathways remain informal yet effective where agencies are familiar with available services.⁵⁵ In 2016, 192 GBV survivors received medical and/or psychosocial support, and 58 GBV survivors and trafficking victims were sheltered in safe houses. Priorities for 2017 include expanding response networks and strengthening capacity of national institutions to provide services to survivors.⁶

Child Protection

Child protection efforts are coordinated by sub-working groups under each country's protection coordination mechanism with a specific child protection working group established in Greece.⁶ Unaccompanied minors are children who arrive without any adult responsible for them. Separated children are children who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members. The accompanying adult(s), who could also be unrelated, may or may not be suitable or able to assume responsibility for their care.⁴³ Anecdotal evidence suggests that most separated children are boys between the ages of 13 and 17 from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.¹⁴ In many cases, these adolescent boys travel with a sibling, relative, or neighbour while parents stay in the country of origin to protect property, other family members, or save money for others to travel.¹⁴ Age assessment procedures are lacking in Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, and Serbia and unaccompanied minors and separated children often go undetected.¹³

According to international and EU standards, an unaccompanied minor or separated child's best interests should be assessed in all cases to identify a durable solution. Priority should be given to reunifying a child with their family, unless this is not in the child's best interests. The entity responsible for 'best interest determination' varies from country to country; in most cases, it is the responsibility of state asylum or migration authorities, though in some cases, child protection authorities, humanitarian agencies, and designated guardians may play a role.⁴³ In many countries, there is still a lack of clear guidance on how to identify children at risk and a lack of qualified staff at registration and reception to identify and address needs from arrival. Border officials and reception centre staff are not adequately trained to identify children at risk, inform them of their legal options in a child-friendly manner, or respond to their protection needs.²⁸ Few countries have SOPs addressing children as victims and perpetrators of GBV.⁴¹

Child-friendly and child-specific information material has been progressively becoming available for unaccompanied minors and separated children, but challenges remain in ensuring unaccompanied minors and separated children have access to this information as well as access to international protection and/or family reunification procedures.^{6,14,56} In 2016, UNHCR, UNICEF, and ICRC together established 20 "Blue Dot" Child and Family Protection Support Hubs across Greece, Serbia, and FYR Macedonia with child friendly spaces, mother/baby areas, psychosocial support, legal counselling, and family reunification services. In addition, shelters were established to provide both temporary and long-term accommodation for unaccompanied minors in Greece and more than 100 frontline humanitarian service providers were trained on interagency child protection case management tools.⁶

There was limited information reported on other country-specific child protection activities. Priorities highlighted in 2017 response plans were similar in all countries and include establishment of education and psychosocial support programs targeting adolescents and young people, strengthening mechanisms for 'best interest determination' and family tracing/reunification, and building capacity of national institutions for child protection case management, documentation, monitoring, and follow-up.⁶

Qualitative Risk Assessment

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative risk assessment is to improve understanding of context-specific protection risks to women, girls, and other vulnerable groups migrating to Europe.

Populations and Subject Areas of Focus

The assessment focused specifically on Greece and Serbia, which are the primary areas of operation for the SAFERR project. In Greece, the risk assessment focused on migrants residing in Athens. In Serbia, the assessment included migrants residing in three of 13 government-run accommodation centres.

Data Collection

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and group key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to understand the perceived and experienced risks of migrants and refugees, with emphasis on the specific risks faced by migrant and refugee women and girls. A total of 31 FGDs with migrants and three group KIIs with SAFERR partner staff were conducted across the two countries during March and April 2017. FGD locations were purposively selected by consultation with CRS and SAFERR partner staff to capture a range of living conditions and participant demographics (i.e. country of origin, language of participants, asylum status, living conditions, etc.). Table 3 presents FGD locations by participant group. KII participants included representatives of all SAFERR implementing partners in Athens and Serbia.

Table 3: Locations of FGDs with migrants and refugees, by participant group

Location	Participant Characteristics	Number of FGDs	Locations
Athens, Greece	Adult men (Syrian)	2	Acropolis, Gkazi,
	Adult women (Syrian)	3	Acropolis, Gkazi, Patisia
	Adolescent girls (Syrian)*	1	Patisia
	Adult men (Iraqi)	2	Averof
	Adult men (Afghan)	2	Kipseli Square, Parnithos
	Adult women (Afghan)	4	Parnithos, Kipseli Square 1, Kipseli Square 2, Imvrou (Female HoH)
	Adolescent girls (Afghan)*	1	Kipseli Square
Serbia	Adult men living in government-run accommodation centres (Syrian/ Iraqi/ Kurdish)	3	Bujanovac, Kranjaca, Presevo
	Adult women living in government-run accommodation centres (Syrian/ Iraqi/ Kurdish)	3	Bujanovac, Kranjaca, Presevo
	Adolescent girls (mixed)*	1	Bujanovac
	Adult men living in government-run accommodation centres (Afghan/ Iranian)	3	Bujanovac, Kranjaca, Presevo
	Adult women living in government-run accommodation centres (Afghan/ Iranian)	3	Bujanovac, Kranjaca, Presevo
	Adolescent girls (Afghan/Iranian)*	1	Presevo
	Unaccompanied minors or separated children (Afghan)**	2	Bujanovac, Presevo

*Adolescent girls included those between 11 and 17 years of age

**1 Iraqi minor participated in UASC FGD held in Presevo. All other participants were Afghan.

In Greece, 15 FGDs were conducted in seven residential buildings in Athens where CRS and partners provide shelter and social services to refugees seeking relocation or asylum. All buildings house refugees seeking relocation or asylum, and not migrants “in transit.” A total of 95 refugees and asylum seekers (61 women and girls, 34 men and boys) participated in FGDs. Separate gender and age-specific focus group discussions were conducted with Afghan, Syrian, and Iraqi migrants.

In Serbia, FGDs were conducted in government-run accommodation centres in Krnjaca, Presevo, and Bujanovac. Krnjaca is one of the largest camps in Serbia, housing approximately 1,000 migrants on the outskirts of Belgrade. Presevo is another large camp, housing approximately 1,000 migrants 381 km south of Belgrade near the border with Macedonia. Bujanovac is a smaller camp, housing less than 200 migrants approximately 25 km away from Presevo in southern Serbia near the Macedonian border. A total of 110 migrants (46 women and girls, 64 men and boys) participated in FGDs. Separate gender and age-specific focus group discussions were conducted with Farsi-speakers (Afghan and Iranian migrants) and Arabic-speakers (Syrian and Iraqi migrants).

All FGDS were conducted by two team members: a facilitator fluent in the language spoken by participants and a note taker. Following each interview, detailed notes were typed, reviewed by both the interviewer and note taker, and translated to English. FGDs lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, depending on the time participants had available and their interest in participation.

Group key informant interviews were also conducted with SAFERR partner staff directly involved in provision of protection and/or psychosocial support services to migrants and refugees (Table 4). Two group interviews were conducted with service providers in Athens, and one with service providers in Serbia. Interviews with service providers were conducted by CRS staff members in Greek and Serbian, respectively, with notes and field reports typed in English.

Table 4: Group interviews with SAFERR service providers

Location	Number of FGDs	Number of partner organizations	Number of participants
Athens, Greece	2	2	12
Serbia	1	4	6

Oral informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to initiating the group discussion. Semi-structured interview guides asked participants open-ended questions about current challenges, safety and security concerns, coping mechanisms, and access to services. Facilitators probed to understand differences in perceptions and experiences of women, men, girls, boys, and specific vulnerable groups.

Analysis

Individual and group key informant interview summaries and field notes were analysed by the JHU team, using content analysis methods with the aim of identifying key themes, consensus viewpoints and viewpoints of a minority (within groups), as well as views that were unique to certain contexts or locations. FGD and interview notes were analysed separately for each participant group and country, comparing self-reported risks, vulnerabilities, and coping mechanisms with those perceived by other migrants and service providers. Findings were then analysed across participant groups and countries to further examine common and context-specific themes. Preliminary findings were reviewed in a workshop with SAFERR project staff and partners in May 2017, and additional contextual information provided by participants was incorporated in final analyses.

Context-Specific Risks, Vulnerabilities, and Coping Mechanisms

Greece

In Greece, FGDs with migrants were conducted in buildings that were leased, renovated, refurbished, and furnished to accommodate families in ‘apartment-like’ conditions with private living space and shared communal areas. Each family has their own room that has a lock; some families have individual kitchen and bathrooms, while others have shared bathroom and kitchen areas. At the most, two families share one bathroom and one kitchen. All of the buildings are located in Athens (either central Athens or outlying neighbourhoods) near amenities and public transportation and house refugees seeking relocation or asylum, and not migrants “in transit.” One of the buildings provides accommodation to single women (women traveling alone) and female-headed households, while others provides accommodation to single men and families; all other buildings house families, with residents selected based on vulnerability and eligibility criteria agreed upon by humanitarian agencies and assigned to buildings with other families from the same country of origin. Based on eligibility criteria for accommodation, it can be assumed that all FGD participants arrived in Greece after 2015 and are legally in the country (registered with UNHCR) and that most are seeking relocation elsewhere in Europe. Before moving into apartment buildings, most or all were residing in camps, on the streets, or in staying in unused properties without permission.

Protection Concerns: Athens, Greece

THREATS TO SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Fear of harassment or exploitation
- Domestic violence

THREATS TO DIGNITY

- Lack of social interaction and recreation opportunities for women/girls

MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Language barriers
- Discrimination

BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION

- Few structured opportunities for interaction
- Waiting for family reunification

When asked about challenges, risks faced, and unmet needs, several common themes were expressed by participants from different population groups and locations. These included uncertainties about legal status as well as ability to access services and feel comfortable living in Athens while awaiting relocation elsewhere in Europe. Worries about being able to meet basic household needs were expressed along with references to the challenges of communal living, feelings of isolation, and fears associated with past experiences or exposure to violence.

Afghan FGD participants reported greater concerns about living conditions than Syrian or Iraqi participants, particularly with regards to shared space. Afghan female FGD participants expressed concern about lack of privacy and generally felt uncomfortable sharing living space with men, particularly those outside their immediate family. Common bathrooms and kitchens were a noteworthy area of concern for many women and girls, not only because of the overcrowding in small shared spaces, but also, and primarily, due to discomfort with the presence of men and boys congregating in these areas. Afghan men reported similar concern about shared accommodations, “*not because of safety but for religious reasons.*” Though the “religious reasons” for their discomfort were not explicitly specified, presumably this refers to social norms about interactions between men and women that are often difficult to adhere to in their current accommodations. Arabic speakers who live in buildings with similar conditions did not express similar tensions, likely reflective of Afghan culture’s more strict approach to purdah[§], but possible also suggesting that Syrian and Iraqi migrants may place higher priority on other issues or feel more comfortable expressing other concerns than Afghan participants.

[§] the Muslim practice of female seclusion from men, whether through physical separation or veiling

Arabic-speaking women voiced concern and confusion over legal processes, which were not as prominently expressed by other groups. They expressed frustration with the limited information they receive about registration and relocation processes, and worry about the anticipated wait time. SAFERR partner staff also reported frustration with a lack of information on relocation and asylum procedures, which hinders their ability to address beneficiaries' inquiries and worries. Ambiguity about residence permits, family separation, and nervousness what the future holds were common themes shared by Syrian women, as were fears of getting "kicked out" of their residence if they are denied relocation support and issued asylum in Greece.

"I don't understand; when I get the license to stay, what will happen? Since they say that we can host you only for 15 days after your license [is granted]. Since you cannot help us as a country, why are you giving us asylum? Where should I go with my husband and children?"

Syrian women, Athens, Greece

Access to education was a challenge highlighted in many FGDs. Difficulties enrolling children in school, as well as challenges getting children to and from school safely every day further participants' other concerns. Women and girls discussed their distress with treatment at school, feeling discriminated against, and facing risks traveling to and from school. These concerns were raised by women about children generally regardless of the child's gender; however, given the greater number of adolescent girls included in FGDs as compared to boys, the concerns discussed directly with children related to girls rather than boys. Adolescent girls discussed challenges related to learning Greek at length. Girls are unsure whether to learn Greek because they do not know if they will stay in Greece or move on to another country. Because of this, many adolescents tried to learn and use English, but because they are only spoken to in Greek, this did not help their current situation. The perception is that learning Greek is a condition for learning and communicating in English; however, nearly all FGD participants mentioned the limited availability of Greek language instruction. Many girls cannot understand Greek, yet school instruction is almost exclusively in Greek. As a result of this discord, many girls "*do not bother going*" to school because they cannot understand lessons. They fear the impact of their limited education on their ability to continue education and have fulfilling careers.

Similarly, concerns related to accessing medical care were expressed in many FGDs. Language barriers were a common challenge reported across all groups. Although SAFERR partner staff reported that hiring of interpreters at hospitals has improved access to health services for migrants, FGD participants consistent reported limited availability of interpreters as a barrier to accessing services. Arabic-speaking participants' concerns about accessing medical care focused on long wait times and difficulty getting and keeping appointments. Afghan women, however, reported feeling discriminated against by medical staff and feeling uncomfortable with a male interpreter, as gender norms in Afghanistan dictate that women can only be cared for by female health workers. Other barriers to accessing services and meeting basic needs include transportation costs and limited knowledge of exactly what services are available, to whom, and where/how to access them.

When asked about risks to safety and security, the vast majority of participants reported that they feel safe in their current residence, particularly in comparison to the dangers faced in camps. SAFERR partner staff explained that many women were raped during their journey to Greece, along the borders, and there were many reports of rape in the camps in Greece, leaving extensive trauma and psychosocial effects.

"We feel secure inside the shelter, but we have seen so many things that we are afraid to go outside on our own. We have faced so many difficulties, even our elders cannot imagine."

Adolescent female, Athens, Greece

Although few FGD participants reported experiencing threats or violence in Athens, many expressed fears of harassment, theft, kidnapping, rape, and violence and discussed measures taken to mitigate risks and

keep family members safe. Participants shared numerous stories of children almost being taken or lost, a fear that seems quite common. In an effort to minimize security risks, nearly all women avoid travel at night and in areas that are known to be unsafe. Women also do not travel alone, often ensuring a man accompanies any woman leaving the building. Syrian and Iraqi participants also reported more proactive measures to mitigate safety risks like carrying pepper spray at all times, and expressly requested martial arts/self-defence training to help them feel more capable of defending themselves if they were ever threatened.

FGD participants had mixed opinions about whether women or men faced greater risks. Many Arabic-speaking FGD participants felt that women are more vulnerable to harassment because wearing hijab makes it immediately apparent that “they are Muslim.” Though this was not explicitly mentioned by other groups, many of the male participants felt that women and children are relatively safe, especially because they are more likely to remain at home, while men must go out to try to provide for their families, and face risk of encounters with criminals or targeted harassment from Greek authorities. In contrast, some women reported that they felt vulnerable, and that “*men are safe, they are men!*”

SAFERR partner staff also identified the prevalence of domestic violence as a major risk for migrant and girls. Both male and female FGD participants mentioned intimate partner violence in a way that suggests it is a normalized and accepted practice, particularly among Afghan households. Few participants reported personally facing violence within or outside of their family, but most had numerous stories of friends, family, and neighbours experiencing domestic abuse. Many women and girls reported high levels of violence in the camps, and though most denied that it was still occurring. Service provider reports and attitude towards the matter among male participants indicate that domestic violence is far more common than women’s reports suggest.

Women associated violence (domestic and otherwise) with bringing shame and a need for secrecy, largely to protect themselves from family members’ and their husbands’ reactions. This finding was supported by much of the discussion with male participants and was aptly summarized by one Syrian male participant who said, “*no one cares about [domestic violence].*” When asked about the services available for those who have experienced threats or violence, many participants indicated that they were not aware of available services, but even if services were available, they would not use them.

“No, we are not aware of specific services. If a woman experience some kind of domestic violence the only thing one can do is to yell.”

Syrian woman, Greece

SAFERR program staff infer that lack of information about relocation and asylum procedures, challenges in accessing services, and fears of exposure to urban crime, harassment, and discrimination all impact on mental health. Social workers noted that migrants in shelters “act like they are institutionalized” and request assistance from NGOs for simple needs. Living in urban Athens without employment or an ability to plan for onward migration has had a substantial impact on both men and women’s sense of dignity and worth. Many have sought income in various ways, but their efforts were not sustainable and many fear for their ability to survive long-term in the current situation. Despite reports from some service providers that beneficiaries do not take initiative and are overly reliant on services provided for them, FGD participants expressed a genuine desire to work for money, to send their children to school for a proper education in a language they can understand, and to be able to plan for their futures. With no knowledge of what the future will bring or where they will end up, refugees and migrants feel ashamed of their current condition and suffer profoundly, feeling both a lack of dignity and “destiny.”

Serbia

Living conditions, access to basic services, and community dynamics vary from location to location in Serbia. This is partly because accommodations in the north and south of the country are managed by two different state agencies (the State Commissariat for Refugees in the North and Ministry of Social Affairs in the South), and partly due to the size, location, and reason for establishment of each accommodation centre. For example, Krnjaca is one of the largest accommodation centres in Serbia, housing approximately 1,000 migrants on the outskirts of Belgrade. The vast majority of residents (~90%) are Afghan. Residents are free to come and go from the centre without any restrictions, and to attend school or access other services in Belgrade. On site, residents have access to cooking and laundry facilities.

Presevo is another large accommodation centre, housing approximately 1,000 migrants in a rural area of southern Serbia near the Macedonia border. Approximately half of the residents are Afghan and one-third are Iraqi with small numbers of other nationalities. Bujanovac, approximately 25 km from Presevo, currently houses less than 200 migrants. Iraqis and Syrians comprise most of the population, with Afghans accounting for less than 15%. Both Presevo and Bujanovac are 'closed' centres, meaning that residents require permits to leave. Children do not have any opportunities to attend school yet, and there are no cooking facilities (food is catered).

As a SAFERR partner staff member noted, *"There are no standardized procedures across the camps. The rules depend on the good will of the camp manager."* This causes frustration among migrants who have received or heard about different food, non-food item, and/or cash distribution procedures in other camps, and tensions between residents who feel they are treated differently because of their gender or nationality. FGD participants from minority groups reported feeling that they receive unequal treatment. For example, in Bujanovac, Afghans reported that Iraqi and Syrian women are given preference in non-food item and cash distributions. In Presevo, Arabic speaking women reported they do not have access to health care because priority is given to Afghan women, many of whom are pregnant, and men reported a perception that, in general, Afghans get more information on what is happening inside and outside of the camp because they have better English.

While decisions about movement restrictions and mechanisms for distribution of humanitarian assistance may be governed by individual management styles, an underlying factor is the systemic assumption that the refugee crisis is temporary. Descriptions of living conditions, quality of food, and awareness of available services varied substantially within and across camps, but frustrations with lack of privacy and tensions associated with communal living with people of many different cultural backgrounds and different household structures was common across all participant groups. SAFERR partners noted that shelters and services were designed as a rapid response to the emergency needs of thousands of migrants transiting through Serbia before the borders were closed in 2016 but state responses have not evolved to reflect the fact that many have been living in accommodation centers for nearly a year, and, particularly in closed camps, are wholly dependent on the state and NGOs to meet basic needs.

The greatest frustration expressed by FGD participants is a lack of information about onward migration opportunities and lack of certainty about the future. Migrants nearly universally perceive their time in

Protection Concerns: Serbia

THREATS TO SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Lack of mental health / psychosocial support
- Domestic violence
- Fear of harassment or abuse
- Tensions and conflict among residents

THREATS TO DIGNITY

- Living conditions
- Lack of social interaction and recreation opportunities for women/girls

MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Resource limitations
- Language barriers
- Restricted movement

BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION

- Closed camps
- Desire to continue journey to EU

Serbia as temporary, with the hope to continue onwards to the EU. The only option for legal border crossing, however, is to enter Hungary through transit zones controlled by Hungarian authorities who manage a list of families and individuals wishing to cross the border, only issuing permission for 5-10 individuals to enter each day. Criteria for selection are unclear to humanitarian agencies as well as the thousands of migrants hoping to cross the border. As one Arabic-speaking woman in Presevo explained, *“The biggest problem is the Hungarian list. There is no transparency. There is no information on the situation in Hungary and so we are very confused on what to do... We do not want to stay in Serbia because it is not an EU country.”*

FGD participants expressed disappointment that they have come so far and are unable to proceed on their journey, and with the lack of information available to them. This uncertainty is a major cause of stress, anxiety, and depression for both men and women. FGD participants in all locations mentioned wanting guidance on family reunification or migration procedures, and expressed concerns about the effects the situation has on the mental health and well-being of their family members and fellow residents:

“Men are very nervous, both young and adult men. They are under a lot of stress.... Nothing is happening, everyone is waiting, is nervous, and taking medicine to stay calm. The biggest problem is that the border is closed.”

Syrian woman, Krnjaca, Serbia

“Everyone is under stress because we don’t know about what is going to happen. Some are thinking about death because there is no hope, no way out.”

Afghan woman, Presevo, Serbia

“Children in general are very tense. They need some kind of psychological support.”

Afghan man, Bujanovac, Serbia

When asked about the main challenges faced in accommodation centres, both men and women discussed the need for health services, including mental health services, gynaecological services, and specialists to assist children with special needs and adults with chronic conditions. In closed camps, limited mobility, lack of privacy, and communal living conditions were also reported as challenges contributing to anxiety and depression. Some men noted that they feel huge pressure to guide their families to the desired destination and saw inability to do so as a personal failure. Others expressed concerns about the ability of their wives and children to cope with the uncertainty of their situation and the inability to ensure their children receive a good education. Both men and women expressed interest in language classes for themselves and their children, and in some cases, they were not aware of opportunities provided by NGO-run programs in the accommodation centres. Others expressing a desire to learn English or German because they are not planning to stay in Serbia. In Krnjaca, where children can attend Serbian schools, one Arabic speaking women noted that she has stopped sending her children because instruction is only in Serbian, and it will not help them after they leave the country.

The stress, anxiety, anger, and frustration that migrants associate with uncertainty about onward migration options is further exacerbated by forced cohabitation with migrants of different cultural backgrounds, genders, ages, and family structures. In a few FGDs, both men and women voiced concerns about the large number of single men staying in the same camp as families. Female FGD participants also noted that disagreements and physical fights among adult migrants are commonplace, particularly in the more crowded camps.

“Every day people are fighting, especially when two kids start fighting and then the families start arguing and fighting.”

Afghan adolescent girl, Bujanovac Serbia

“The goal is to keep safe is to avoid conflict with neighbors and everyone. We are just trying to cope with this situation and trying to control the kids so they do not bother others”

Syrian woman, Krnjaca, Serbia

“Ten days ago, two men harassed my kid and my husband came and asked why are you doing that and more men came and beat my husband. I had to ask an organization to come and help separate them. These men are making problems for us.”

Afghan woman, Krnjaca, Serbia

Nevertheless, FGD participants unanimously reported feeling safe in the accommodation centres, particularly in comparison to the risks, physical trauma, and violence many faced on their journey to Serbia. Male FGD participants referenced witnessing and experiencing violence, in some cases perpetrated by smugglers and in others by police or border patrols, while in transit:

“While we were on the road, we never knew whether we were going to live or die.... We were threatened at all times. Police shot at us on the road, smugglers extorted money from us.... There were even cases of women being raped and abused in front of their families...We are safe here “

Arabic speaking men, Presevo, Serbia

“On the whole route, we were in danger but we didn’t feel afraid. I grew up with bullets flying all around me so that’s why I didn’t feel afraid.”

Unaccompanied Afghan male, Bujanovac, Serbia

Female FGD participants did not describe past trauma, but some reported fears of harassment by men within and outside of the accommodation centre, as well as concerns about the vulnerability of single women and safety of children. Only a few women reported having received unwanted comments or attention from male migrants, but many noted that women spend most of their days inside, and do not feel safe to walk to toilets at night (husbands or other male family members escort them). Women’s descriptions of social dynamics and tensions arising from communal living also suggest a normalization of domestic violence, ranging from verbal to psychological and physical abuse. For example, one female FGD participant noted that her husband tries to control who she speaks to, and others noted a perception that domestic violence has increased “because men have nothing to do” and “wives are blamed for everything.”

SAFERR partner staff noted that while state authorities are reluctant to address issues such as GBV because “migrants are in transit, and problems like GBV can only be dealt with if people settle in Serbia.” Domestic violence is pervasive and more extreme forms of GBV, including honour killings, have taken place in accommodation centre with little reaction from state authorities or migrant residents. Migrants have become passive, waiting for their turn to cross the border. Residents of Presevo and Bujanovac, the closed camps, reported feeling trapped by mobility limitations, and women in all locations reported feelings of boredom, loneliness, and isolation. In a few FGDs, female participants could identify names of humanitarian organizations providing social services and organizations or individual staff members that women could go to for assistance if they are threatened or experience violence, but most were not aware of any support services provided specifically for women and girls, or survivors of violence.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Unclear pathways for durable solutions

One of the leading causes of distress for migrants in both Greece and Serbia is uncertainty about the future. FGD participants in all locations mentioned wanting to continue further into Europe, but being limited by border restrictions and their limited knowledge of migration procedures. They also expressed concerns about the effects their situation has on the health and well-being and of their family members and neighbors. The mental health effects of uncertainty were most evident in Serbia where FGD participants described feelings of hopelessness, depression, and escalating stress related to “being stuck” on their journey, whereas in Greece FGD participants expressed feelings of nervousness and frustration with lack of information on migration procedures and available assistance.

Access to services

Access to education and medical care were clearly expressed priorities for migrants in both Greece and Serbia. Although there are ongoing efforts to enrol migrant children in local schools, these have not come to fruition in all areas, and interests in onward migration, language barriers, and lack of support for effective integration remain barriers to access. Similarly, while there are health services available for migrants in both countries, FGD participants described challenges in accessing services, as well as dissatisfaction with the availability of interpreters and quality of care received.

Trauma, resilience, and mental health

Another major issue affecting migrant well-being in both countries is mental health. Many migrants have witnessed or survived both war-related and migration-related trauma and loss. In some cases, distress caused by these experiences is further exacerbated by family separation and uncertainties about the potential for onward migration. Pre-existing social and mental health problems can be exacerbated, and access to care is limited. Although many may demonstrate extreme resilience, it is important to recognize that mental distress can manifest in many ways. FGD participants reported a variety of common indications of mental health and psychosocial support needs, ranging from extreme feelings of fear and anxiety to numbness, detachment, and inability to focus on day-to-day household responsibilities or caring for family members.

Protection of women and girls

Migrants living in apartment buildings and accommodation centres reported feeling safe in comparison to the risks, physical trauma, and violence faced and/or feared on the journey to Europe and in reception camps. This relative sense of safety should not be mistaken for a lack of need for protection support, particularly for women and girls. Men, women, and children may cope with uncertainties of migration, exposure to violence, and concerns about the safety and well-being of family members in different ways. Many female FGD participants in both countries described feeling isolated and alone, with limited opportunities for social interaction, recreation, or education.

“We all carry inside us a huge box of experiences and pain and this is from where all of our fears come. The dangers are not outside, it all comes from the inside world. Inside us there is a sea... the thing we want is security.”

Adult female, Athens, Greece

Evidence shows that women and girls who are survivors of violence or other abuses rarely report them and that gender-responsive measures need to be taken to prevent GBV, including providing information on what GBV is and how to report it, and ensuring that survivors have access to client-centred medical, legal, and social support services. As noted above, many migrant women and girls have experienced sexual and gender-based violence and may be struggling to cope with these past traumas. In both Greece and Serbia, FGD participants and SAFERR partner staff reported that domestic violence is common among migrant households, and often accepted as a normal practice.

Protection of unaccompanied minors

Assessment team members were only able to meet with one group of unaccompanied male minors in Serbia and were not able to meet with a similar group in Greece, so first-hand accounts of experiences and concerns are limited. Many FGD participants in both countries, however, identified unaccompanied minors and other adolescents as particularly vulnerable populations in need of protection. SAFERR partner staff in both countries also highlighted the need for greater understanding, awareness, and actions to address the needs of this group that may be particularly vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation or abuse, and long-term impacts of breaks in family and social support networks.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Documented protection needs

The March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement and related border closures significantly reduced migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean and along the Western Balkans route. This had the effect of lowering the number of arrivals to the SAFERR countries while simultaneously increasing the size of the populations stranded in these countries as well as the size of populations facing protection risks associated with clandestine border crossing and undocumented migration. In response to evolving population needs, humanitarian assistance strategies are shifting to focus on a more static population of potential asylum seekers and to strengthen mechanisms for addressing needs of GBV survivors, victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied minors and separated children on the move.

Countries hosting larger numbers of refugees and migrants, notably Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, tended to have more documentation of the situation and population needs whereas information on Albania and FYR Macedonia was quite limited. To some extent, country-specific risks vary by the size of the migrant and refugee population as well as the government's border control and asylum policies. For example, in countries with smaller migrant populations and restrictive border policies, protection concerns are focused on access to legal and social services for refugees within the country, as well as risks associated with use of smuggler networks and push-backs across borders if clandestine migration is not successful. The same protection concerns are also present in Greece, but these issues are further complicated by additional risks associated with insufficient accommodation and services to meet basic needs of refugees in hotspots and urban areas, as well as differences in legal pathways for individuals arriving before and after the EU-Turkey agreement.

In all SAFERR countries, there is a recognition that current mechanisms for identification, referral, and support of child protection and GBV cases are not sufficient. SOPs guided by global best practices are in place or under development in most countries, but capacity of national actors to provide support services tailored to affected population needs remains limited. Situation reports suggest that shelter and basic assistance programs are helping to mitigate risks faced by those living in overcrowded reception or transit centres, but there are few mechanisms to address risks faced by individuals who choose not to register or seek asylum and therefore are ineligible for services provided. Strategies for longer-term support and integration of asylum seekers also remain uncertain; humanitarian response priorities for 2017 remain focused on strengthening systems and coordinating activities to address immediate population needs.

Risks to migrant women, girls, and other vulnerable groups

Focus group discussions and group key informant interviews conducted in Greece and Serbia provide insights into the perceived and experienced risks facing migrants and refugees living in NGO-supported shelters. When asked about challenges, risks faced, and unmet needs, several common themes were expressed by participants from different population groups and locations. These included feelings of relative safety, coupled with uncertainties about onward migration opportunities, concerns about livelihood opportunities and children's education, and fears associated with past exposure to violence. Fears of harassment (by other migrants or by host communality members) and general acceptance or normalization of domestic violence were also common.

Although stress, anxiety, and language barriers affect all migrant groups, there was consensus among both migrants and SAFERR partner staff that these have a disproportionate effect on women and girls who have more limited opportunities for independent movement and social interaction. There was also consensus that women traveling on their own (with or without children), unaccompanied minors (including children and teenagers), and minority groups are most vulnerable to exploitation and in need of protection.

A major factor exacerbating risks of mental distress and hindering access to services is the reluctance by both authorities and migrants to recognize the need for longer-term planning for integration and support to asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. Without clarity on migration procedures and investment in efforts to support effective integration or the facilitation of safe onward migration, efforts to mitigate risks may have limited effects.

Recommendations

Increased understanding of population and context-specific protection issues

Most needs assessments conducted to date focused on new arrivals and populations in transit before the EU-Turkey agreement. Only a few rapid assessments focused specifically on protection issues or risks to women and girls, and none examined risks specific to migrants by country of origin or legal status. These distinctions may be of greatest concern in Greece, where individuals arriving prior to the EU-Turkey agreement have the right to legal stay, asylum, and the possibility of relocation to other countries while those arriving after the agreement have few legal options for onward travel. Such distinctions are also important to inform programming in other countries along the Western Balkans route, especially those where a high proportion of migrants choose not to register or seek asylum in hopes of continuing to destinations in Northern or Western Europe.

Systematic documentation of humanitarian assistance strategies, program coverage and effectiveness

As humanitarian assistance strategies shift to focus more on longer-term needs of asylum seekers, there is also a need for documentation of program implementation approaches, coverage, and effectiveness. In many cases information on refugee and migrant populations and policies was available, but there were gaps in information on the implementation of policies and services, and where there was evidence, quality was low. Other gaps observed across countries included little or no information on the specific needs of men and boys, and livelihoods opportunities and programming. Documentation of current program coverage and gaps is limited, particularly with regard to protection assistance, including GBV prevention and child protection programming.

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Annex 1: Documents Included in The Literature Review

Doc #	Author	Year	Title	URL / Citation	Country	Topic(s)
A100 Cash						
A101	Platzmann M, Katastrophenhilfe D (International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC))	2015	Cash Transfer Programming: Feasibility and Appropriateness in the Context of IOCC's Humanitarian Response to the Refugee and Migrants' Crisis in Greece [Kos and Chios Island].	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1834	Greece	Cash transfer programming
A102	Caritas Sofia	2016	Cash Assistance and Housing/Integration Program: Notes and Ideas.	Received from CRS	Bulgaria	Cash assistance (shelter)
A103	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	2016	Cash Consortium Research: Technical Findings & Recommendations.	Received from CRS	Greece	Cash assistance
A104	Greece Cash Working Group	2016	Cash Working Group Greece: Lessons Learned from Cash Transfer Programmes in 2015-6.	Received from CRS	Greece	Cash transfer programming
A105	IRC	2016	Scale Right. Coordinating Improved Cash Assistance in Greece.	https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/1357/scaleright-coordinatingimprovedcashassistanceingreece.pdf	Greece	Cash assistance
A106	CRS	2017	TDY Mission Report in Sofia, Bulgaria.	Received from CRS	Bulgaria	Cash for rent
A107	Glasgow A	2017	Mercy Corps Cash Programming in the Greece Migrant Crisis Response.	http://www.enonline.net/fex/54/mercycorps	Greece	Cash assistance
A200 Protection						
A201	PRO ASYL	2015	Humiliated, Ill-treated and without Protection. Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Bulgaria.	https://www.proasyl.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Bulgaria_Report_en_Dez_2015.pdf	Bulgaria	Protection
A202	La Strada Macedonia	2016	Human Trafficking in Context of Migration and Refugee Crises. Needs Assessment 2015.	http://www.lastrada.org.mk/mainarchive/Human%20trafficking%20in%20context%20of%20migration%20and%20refugee%20crises%202015.pdf	fYR Macedonia	Human trafficking, unaccompanied children
A203	IRC, Atina	2016	Women and Children's Protection Assessment Report- Serbia.	Received from CRS	Serbia	Child protection; Women's protection and empowerment
A204	Mouzourakis M (European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)), Papadouli M (The Advice on Individual Rights in Europe Centre)	2016	With Greece: Recommendations for Refugee Protection.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/with_greece.pdf	Greece	Protection
A205	Petkova M	2016	Violence and Abuse Against Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Europe.	http://sharqforum.org/2016/07/01/violence-and-abuse-against-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-in-europe/	Europe	Abuse
A206	Oxfam	2016	Closed Borders: The Impact of the Borders Closures on People on the Move, with a Focus on Women and Children in Serbia and Macedonia.	https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/closed_borders_eng_low.pdf	Serbia, fYR Macedonia	Women, children
A207	Center for Legal Aid – Voice in Bulgaria (CLA)	2016	Who Gets Detained? Increasing the Transparency and Accountability of Bulgaria's Detention Practices of Asylum Seekers and Migrants.	http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Detention_Report_CLA_2016_EN_final.pdf	Bulgaria	Detention
A208	Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)	2016	Greece in 2016: Vulnerable People Get Left Behind.	http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/report_vulnerable_people_201016_eng.pdf	Greece	Vulnerable groups
A209	Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) Program for Legal Protection of Refugees and Migrants	2016	Detention Mapping Report: Bulgaria.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/2016-10_detention_mapping_report_2016_en.pdf	Bulgaria	Detention
A210	Balkan Centre for Migration and Humanitarian Activities	2016	DfID - Women and Girls Protection Fund for Europe and the Mediterranean Region. November 2016 Narrative Report.	Received from CRS	Serbia	Protection (women and girls)
A211	IRC		GBV Risk Assessment (Draft Report).	Received from CRS	Serbia	GBV
A212	Atina		Refugee Crisis from Women's Perspective (Open Letters).	Received from CRS	Serbia	Women and girls

Doc #	Author	Year	Title	URL / Citation	Country	Topic(s)
A213	NRC, Oxfam, IRC	2017	The reality of the EU-Turkey statement: How Greece has become a testing ground for policies that erode protection for refugees.	http://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/oxfam/bitstream/10546/620217/4/bn-eu-turkey-statement-migration-170317-en.pdf	Greece	Policies for protection
A214	Arsenijević J, Schillberg E, Ponthieu A, Malvisi L, Elrahman Ahmed WA, Argenziano S, Zamatto F, Burroughs S, Severy N, Hebting C, de Vingne B, Harries AD, and Zachariah R.	2017	A crisis of protection and safe passage: violence experienced by migrants/refugees travelling along the Western Balkan corridor to Northern Europe.	Conflict and Health. 11:6. DOI: 10.1186/s13031-017-0107-z.	Serbia	Protection
A215	Oxfam; Belgrade Centre for Human Rights; Macedonian Young Lawyers Association	2017	A dangerous 'game': the pushback of migrants, including refugees, at Europe's borders.	https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-dangerous-game-pushback-migrants-refugees-060417-en_0.pdf	Europe	Pushbacks
A300 Gender						
A301	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Women's Refugee Commission	2016	Initial assessment report: Protection Risks for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis.	http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/operations/569f8f419/initial-assessment-report-protection-risks-women-girls-european-refugee.html	Greece, FYR Macedonia	Protection (women and girls)
A302	UN Women	2016	Gender Assessment of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in Serbia and Fyr Macedonia.	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=446	Serbia, FYR Macedonia	Gender
A303	WRC	2016	No Safety for Refugee Women on the European Route. Report from the Balkans.	https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/gbv/resources/1265-balkans-2016	Balkans	Women
A304	Freedman J	2016	Sexual and Gender-based Violence Against Refugee Women: A Hidden Aspect of the Refugee "Crisis."	Reproductive Health Matters. 31;24(47):18-26	Europe	GBV
A305	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)	2016	Monthly Data Collection on the Current Migration Situation in the EU. Thematic Focus: Gender-based Violence.	http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-june-2016-monthly-migration-gender-based-violence-1_en.pdf	Europe	GBV
A306	CARE	2016	On Her Own: How Women Forced to Flee Syria are Shouldering Increased Responsibility as they Struggle to Survive.	http://www.care-international.org/files/files/CARE_On-Her-Own_refugee-media-report_Sept-2016.pdf	Host Countries (including Greece)	Gender
A307	UN Gender Theme Group in Serbia	2016	Gender Brief for Serbia (vol 5).	http://rs.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/serbia/docs/Publications/Gender_Brief_Issue_5-2.pdf	Serbia	Gender
A308	Mixed Migration Platform	2016	Women and Girls on the Move: A Gender Analysis of Mixed Migration from the Middle East to Europe. Briefing Paper #01.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20161215_MMP_Briefing%20Paper_Women%27s%20migration%20to%20the%20EU_December%202016.pdf	Europe	Gender
A309	UNFPA, Oxfam, International Medical Corps, WRC	2016	A Summary of Assessment Findings and Recommendations The Situation of Refugee and Migrant Women, Greece 2016.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Women%27sRightsBriefingPaper_Greece2016.pdf	Greece	Women
A400 Children						
A401	IOM	2016	Addressing the Needs of Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) in Greece.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iom_greece_uam_final.pdf	Greece	UASC
A402	Human Rights Watch (HRW)	2016	"Why Are You Keeping Me Here?" Unaccompanied Children Detained in Greece.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/greece0916_web.pdf	Greece	Children
A403	UNHCR	2016	Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Europe.	http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=2241	Europe	UASC
A404	CRS	2016	Trip Report - Nichole Bohl/TA Child Friendly Spaces CRS Greece.	Received from CRS	Greece	Child friendly spaces
A405	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)	2016	Current Migration Situation in the EU: Separated Children.	http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/december-monthly-migration-focus-separated-children	Europe	Separated children
A406	IRC, Save the Children	2017	Out of Sight, Exploited and Alone: A Joint Brief on the Situation for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia.	https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/Out%20of%20Sight.pdf	Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia	UASC

Doc #	Author	Year	Title	URL / Citation	Country	Topic(s)
A407	Digidiki V & Bhabha J (Harvard University)	2017	Emergency within an emergency: The Growing Epidemic of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Children in Greece.	https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/04/Emergency-Within-an-Emergency-FXB.pdf	Greece	Sexual exploitation/abuse of migrant children
A500 Shelter						
A501	CRS	2016	Refugee & Migrant Emergency in Europe - City of Athens Shelter Analysis.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CRSShelterAssessment_RefugeeCrisis_FinalReport_public.pdf	Greece	Shelter
A502	Deprez S, Labattut E (ETC)	2016	Study on Adequate Urban Housing for Refugees (Thessaloniki, Greece).	https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/adequate-housing-study-report_etc_18-11-2016_final.pdf	Greece	Shelter
A600 General Needs / Overview						
A601	Iliana Savova (Refugee and Migrant Legal Programme, BHC)	2015	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Bulgaria.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_bulgaria_report_third_update_final_january_2015.pdf	Bulgaria	Situation report
A602	Pollet K, Soupios-David H (ECRE)	2015	What's in a Name? The Reality of First "Reception" at Evros. AIDA Fact-Finding Visit in Greece.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/eu-greece-ecre-evros.pdf	Greece	Reception overview
A603	Koulocheris S (Greek Council for Refugees (GCR))	2015	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Greece.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_-_greece_final.pdf	Greece	Situation report
A604	Save the Children	2015	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Migrants and Refugees in Greece.	http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/greece_assessment_report.pdf	Greece	Overall needs
A605	UNHCR	2015	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a Country of Asylum.	http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55c9c70e4.pdf	fYR Macedonia	Overview
A606	Savova I (Refugee and Migrant Legal Programme, BHC)	2015	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Bulgaria.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_bg_update.iv_.pdf	Bulgaria	Situation report
A607	Koulocheris S (GCR)	2015	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Greece.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_gr_update.iv_.pdf	Greece	Situation report
A608	Solidarity Now	2015	Rapid Assessment of the Refugee Crisis in the Aegean Islands during August and September 2015.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ASSESM ENT%20REPORT.pdf	Greece	Overall needs
A609	Cummings C, Pacitto J, Lauro D, Foresti M (Overseas Development Institute (ODI))	2015	Why People Move: Understanding the Drivers and Trends of Migration to Europe.	https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10485.pdf	Europe	Migration trends, push/pull factors, social networks
A610	REACH	2016	Situation Overview: European Migration Crisis.	http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/srb_situation_overview_european_migration_monitoring_monthly_overview_january_2016_0.pdf	Europe (focus Western Balkans)	Profile
A611	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	2016	Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean and Beyond: Compilation of Available Data and Information - Reporting Period 2015.	http://doe.iom.int/docs/Flows%20Compilation%202015%20Overview.pdf	Europe	Migration flows
A612	UNHCR	2016	Profiling of Afghan Arrivals on Greek Islands in January 2016.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Profiling January2016FactsheetonAfghans.pdf	Greece	Profile
A613	UNHCR	2016	Profiling of Syrian Arrivals on Greek Islands in January 2016.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Profiling January2016FactsheetonSyrians.pdf	Greece	Profile
A614	Kilibarda P, Kovačević N (BCHR)	2016	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Serbia.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_sr.pdf	Bulgaria	Situation report
A615	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations: Synthesis Report.	http://migration4development.org/sites/default/files/16_59_migration_synthesis-report_def_en.pdf	Europe (select countries)	Overview
A616	EESC	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations. Mission Report - Austria.	http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/austria_migration-mission-report_en.pdf	Austria	Overview

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A617	EESC	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations. Mission Report - Bulgaria.	http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/bulgaria_migration-mission-report_en.pdf	Bulgaria	Overview
A618	EESC	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations. Mission Report - Croatia.	http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/croatia_migration-mission-report_en.pdf	Croatia	Overview
A619	EESC	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations. Mission Report - Greece.	http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/greece_migration-mission-report_en.pdf	Greece	Overview
A620	EESC	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations. Mission Report - Hungary.	http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/hungary_migration-mission-report_en.pdf	Hungary	Overview
A621	EESC	2016	EESC Fact-Finding Missions on The Situation of Refugees, As Seen by Civil Society Organisations. Mission Report - Italy.	http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/italy_migration-mission-report_en.pdf	Italy	Overview
A622	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	2016	Greece Mainland Needs Assessment.	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1897	Greece	Overall needs
A623	UNHCR	2016	Profiling of Afghan Arrivals on Greek Islands in February 2016.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Factsheet_Afghanistan__february_v6.pdf	Greece	Profile
A624	UNHCR	2016	Profiling of Syrian Arrivals on Greek Islands in February 2016.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Factsheet_Syrians__february_v2.pdf	Greece	Profile
A625	REACH, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)	2016	REACH Situation Overview: Rapid Assessment of the Humanitarian Impact of New Border Policies in the Western Balkans.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rapid_situation_overview_march_western_balkans.pdf	Western Balkans	Overall needs
A626	REACH	2016	Situation Overview: European Migration Crisis.	http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/srb_situation_overview_monthly_migration_monitoring_march_2016_0.pdf	Europe (focus Western Balkans)	Profile
A627	Kyuchukov L (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung)	2016	Impact of the Refugee Crisis on Bulgarian Society and Politics: Fears But No Hatred.	http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sofia/12570.pdf	Bulgaria	Impact
A628	UNHCR	2016	Profiling of Afghan Arrivals on Greek Islands in March 2016.	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1398	Greece	Profile
A629	UNHCR	2016	Profiling of Syrian Arrivals on Greek Islands in March 2016.	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1393	Greece	Profile
A630	UNHCR	2016	Questionnaire Findings for Afghans in Greece.	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1728	Greece	Overall needs
A631	UNHCR	2016	Questionnaire Findings for Syrians in Greece.	https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1727	Greece	Overall needs
A632	IOM	2016	Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) - Mixed Migration Flows from Afghanistan and Pakistan towards Europe: Understanding Data-Gaps and Recommendations - Desk Review Report.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DTM%200%282016%29%20-%20MIGRATION%20FLOWS%20FROM%20AFGHANISTAN%20AND%20PAKISTAN%20TOWARDS%20EUROPE.%20Understanding%20Data%20Gaps%20and%20Recommendations..pdf	Europe	Profile (Afghans and Pakistanis)
A633	Vuletic V (UNDP)	2016	Impacts of the Migration Crisis on the Local Governments and Communities in Serbia and Possibilities for Integration: An Assessment from Focus Groups.	http://www.rs.undp.org/content/dam/serbia/Publications%20and%20reports/English/Resilience/UNDP_SRB_Advocacy_Report_EN_Crisis_fin2.pdf?download	Serbia	Host community, perceptions, impact on host countries
A634	IOM	2016	Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys the Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Survey, (Reporting Period : June 2016 - September 2016).	http://migration.iom.int/docs/Analysis_Flow_Monitoring_and_Human_Trafficking_Surveys_in_the_Mediterranean_and_Beyond_3_November_2016.pdf	fYR Macedonia, Greece, Serbia, Hungary, Italy	Human trafficking and other exploitative practices

Doc #	Author	Year	Title	URL / Citation	Country	Topic(s)
A635	UNHCR	2016	Site profiles - Greece (31Oct2016).	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SiteProf_ilesasof31October2016_v4.pdf	Greece	Overview
A636	FRA	2016	Key Migration Issues: One Year on from Initial Reporting.	http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/key-migration-issues-one-year-initial-reporting	Europe	Migration issues
A637	IRC	2016	Learning from Lesbos: Lessons from the IRC's Early Emergency Response in the Urban Areas of Lesbos between September 2015 and March 2016.	https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/1175/learningfromlesbos.pdf	Greece	General program implementation
A638	Internews	2016	In the Loop Refugee Feedback Review.	http://www.internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/in-the-loop	Europe	Perceptions
A639	ECRE	2016	The Implementation of the Hotspots in Italy and Greece.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HOTSPOTS-Report-5.12.2016..pdf	Italy, Greece	Assylum system
A640	IOM	2017	Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean and Beyond: Compilation of Available Data and Information - Reporting Period 2016.	http://migration.iom.int/docs/2016_Flows_to_Europe_Overview.pdf	Europe	Migration flows
A641	Hellenic Republic General Secretariat for Media & Communication	2017	Refugee Crisis Fact Sheet Jan 2017.	http://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/fact-sheets/6305-greece-the-refugee-migrant-crisis-in-numbers	Greece	Overview
A642	Savova I (Refugee and Migrant Legal Programme, BHC)	2017	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Bulgaria.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_bg_2016update.pdf	Bulgaria	Situation report
A643	Kilibarda P, Kovačević N (BCHR)	2017	Asylum Information Database Country Report: Serbia.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_sr_2016update.pdf	Serbia	Situation report
A644	ACAPS	2017	Middle East–EU Migration Scenarios.	https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/middle_east_eu_migration_scenarios_mmp_acaps.pdf	Europe	Possible scenarios
A645	Frontex	2017	Frontex Annual Risk Analysis 2017.	http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2017.pdf	Europe	Risk Analysis
A646	Amnesty International	2017	Amnesty International Annual Report 2016/17.	https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1048002017ENGLISH.PDF	Global	Human rights overview
A647	UNHCR	2017	Desperate Journeys: Refugees and Migrants Entering and Crossing Europe via the Mediterranean and Western Balkans Routes.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/58b449f54.pdf	Europe	Overview
A648	ActionAid, JRS, Oxfam, IRC, NRC, Care, Save the Children, Solidarity Now	2017	One Year Stranded & What's Changed? An Update to the October 2016 Joint NGO Policy Brief on the Situation for Displaced Persons in Greece.	https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/1528/jointadvocacynoteoneyearstrandedandwhatschangedmarch2017.pdf	Greece	Overview update
A700 Programming						
A701	CRS	2015	Emergency Response Strategy. Europe Refugee and Migrant Crisis. FY 2016.	Received from CRS	Greece, Serbia, FYR Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria	Response strategy
A702	UNDP	2016	Strengthening Local Resilience in Serbia: Mitigating the Impact of Migration Crisis.	http://www.rs.undp.org/content/dam/serbia/docs/Our%20Projects/ResilientRecovery/UNDP_SRB_Strengthening%20local%20resilience%20-%20JPN%20Migrations.pdf	Serbia	Community cohesion, host capacity building
A703	Start Network	2016	European Refugee Response Final Progress Report (October 26th – April 30th 2016).	Received from CRS	Greece, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia	Response
A704	NGO Voice	2016	VOICE Out Loud 23: Humanitarian NGOs and the European 'Refugee Crisis'.	http://www.ngovoice.org/documents/voice%20out%20loud%2023%20liens.pdf	Greece, Turkey	Implementation
A705	Caritas, CRS	2016	Transitional Shelter and Settlement Strategy for Refugees and Migrants in Greece.	Received from CRS	Greece	Shelter
A706	UNHCR	2016	Greece Community-Based Interventions Factsheet.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR_FactSheet_CommunityBasedProjects_July-August2016.pdf	Greece	Community-based interventions

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A707	UNHCR	2016	UNHCR'S Response to Europe's Refugee Emergency.	http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR-EU-Refugee_Emergency-screen.pdf	Europe	Response
A708	UNHCR	2016	Serbia: 4W Dashboard - General	https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/49576	Serbia	4W
A709	European Asylum Support Office (EASO)	2016	EASO Special Operating Plan to Greece.	https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EASO%20Special%20Operating%20Plan%20to%20Greece%202017_%2014122016.pdf	Greece	Asylum Plan
A710	UNHCR	2016	Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe (January to December 2017).	https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/52619	Europe	Response
A711	CRS	2017	Democracy Commission Small Grants Program CRS Albania Grant Report.	Received from CRS	Albania	Program report
A712	CRS	2017	CRS Albania JVT Full Proposal 2017.	Received from CRS	Albania	Project proposal
A713	CRS	2017	SAFERR Project Report.	Received from CRS	Albania	Program report
A714	UNHCR	2017	European Refugee Situation: Serbia 2016 in Numbers	https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/55029	Serbia	Population and beneficiary overview
A800 Legal / Policy						
A801	Legal Protection of Refugees and Migrants Program of the BHC	2015	Annual Report on The Monitoring of The Status Determination Procedure in The Republic of Bulgaria.	http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/2015_annual_rsd_report_en.pdf	Bulgaria	Status determination
A802	Smilevska M (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA))	2015	Emerging Challenges in Response to the Refugee Crisis. The State of the Macedonian Asylum System.	http://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2015-Emerging-Challenges-in-Response-to-the-Refugee-Crisis-2015-1.pdf	fYR Macedonia	Asylum
A803	General Directorate Border Police, UNHCR, BHC	2016	Bulgaria 2015 Annual Border Monitoring Report. Access to Territory and International Protection.	https://www.bghelsinki.org/media/uploads/documents/reports/special/2015_annual_report_access_to_territory_and_asylum_procedure_en.pdf	Bulgaria	Border monitoring
A804	Thomson Reuters Foundation, IRC, Latham & Watkins LLP	2016	European Refugee Crisis - Legal Analysis of Laws Relating to Border Control and Asylum in Europe.	http://www.trust.org/contentAsset/raw-data/dc6e38f2-0009-4450-bd94-677866ed6e2f/file	Europe	Border control and asylum
A805	European Union, Government of Afghanistan	2016	Joint Way Forward on Migration Issues between Afghanistan and the EU.	https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_afghanistan_joint_way_forward_on_migration_issues.pdf	Europe	Policy (Afghans)
A806	Lilyanova V (European Parliamentary Research Service)	2016	Serbia's Role in Dealing with the Migration Crisis.	http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/589819/EPRS_BRI(2016)589819_EN.pdf	Serbia	Country responsibilities
A807	Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR)	2016	Right to Asylum in The Republic of Serbia – Periodic Report for July – September 2016.	http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/eng-lat/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ENG-FINAL-1.pdf	Serbia	Asylum

Annex 2: Country Risk Profiles

ALBANIA	
Overview of National Context	
Political and situational context	Albania has become an alternative route for migrants heading to North and West Europe. Refugee and migrant arrivals were low in 2016 and slowly increased, though no information on arrival numbers is available. Capacity to manage and accommodate arrivals is limited, from reception to referral mechanisms. Albania has candidate status for membership to the European Union, but is not yet a formal member state. Since 1990, the country has had notable levels of emigration and the highest migration relative to its population in Central/Eastern Europe. Relations with neighboring Greece are historically tense, though Albania has worked to maintain amiable relations with neighboring Balkan countries.
Overview of the population of concern	Populations arriving to Albania, particularly from the border with Greece, are believed to be vulnerable, particularly given reports of smuggling and GBV.
Overview of the response and programming	Response in Albania is overseen by the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MoIA); UNHCR also leads coordination of government, UN, and national/international groups that have worked to establish SoPs for provision of assistance. UNHCR reports that humanitarian efforts are increasing but are still limited. Mentioned services include border monitoring, review of pre-screening procedures, and provision of food and hygiene items.
Key Country Documents	None
No additional information was reported for any of the identified topic areas or population groups in Albania.	

BULGARIA

Overview of National Context

Political and situational context	<p>Bulgaria entered the European Union in 2007. Refugee and migrant flows are a relatively new challenge for Bulgaria, and there are reports the country is unprepared and lacks capacity to register and assist those entering its borders; there are no special procedural arrangements or guarantees for vulnerable groups in place in Bulgaria. In late 2013, Bulgaria established a "containment plan" to reduce undocumented entries, which entailed deploying additional police/guards and erecting a fence along the Bulgarian-Turkish border. In late 2015, numerous components of Bulgaria's national asylum system were changed to unify and accelerate the asylum procedure. In late August 2016, restrictions on movement were put in place allowing for transfer of migrants to be relocated to closed accommodation centers or otherwise restricted to certain areas in the country "if such limitations are deemed necessary by the asylum administration, without any other conditions or legal prerequisites" and they must formally request permission to leave the permitted area.</p>
Overview of the population of concern	<p>In 2016, Bulgaria received 15,962 arrivals and this number is expected to decrease to 10,000 in 2017. As of early February 2017, Bulgaria authorities reported a total of 4,702 migrants and refugees accommodated in the country. The number of undocumented refugees and migrants in Bulgaria is unknown, however, 2017 projections indicated approximately 6,000 refugees and migrants will be in the country at any given time. From the end of 2015 through 2016, it is reported that Bulgarian arrivals shifted from predominantly asylum seekers to economic migrants; among asylum seekers, only a small proportion remain in the country long enough to receive a decision on their case. Refugees and migrants in Bulgaria are predominantly Afghan, Iraqi and Syrian and Pakistanis and include a significant proportion of unaccompanied children (14% of asylum applications).</p>
Overview of the response and programming	<p>The State Agency for Refugees (SAR) of the Council of Ministers lead all issues related to refugees and asylum procedures. A number of inter-agency working groups are operating and the Protection Working Sub-Group was re-established in 2016. Assistance efforts, though limited in scale, are ongoing by a number of organizations, including both local and international NGOs. The vast majority of asylum seekers stay in open reception centers and are intended to be provided with shelter, food, health care, psychological, and interpretation/translation assistance. Under the law, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are entitled to access social benefits and financial coverage of shelter for up to six months from entry; however, in practice, migrants and refugees are able to access very few of the benefits afforded to them on paper. Undocumented migrants are accommodated in closed detention facilities where conditions have been identified as concerning, in particular for unaccompanied children.</p>
Key Country Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Iliana Savova (Refugee and Migrant Legal Programme, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee). (2017-01) Country Report: Bulgaria 2016 Update. http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_bg_2016update.pdf 2. European Economic and Social Committee. (Mar 2016) EESC fact-finding missions on the situation of refugees, as seen by civil society organizations. Mission Report - Bulgaria. URL: http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/bulgaria_migration-mission-report_en.pdf 3. Human Rights Watch. (Apr 2014) Containment Plan: Bulgaria's Pushbacks and Detention of Syrian and Other Asylum Seekers and Migrants. URL: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/bulgaria0414_ForUpload_0_0.pdf 4. Catholic Relief Services. (Jan 2017) TDY Mission Report in Sofia, Bulgaria.[Internal Document]

BULGARIA

Available Information by Topic Area

Demographics / Arrival	Most undocumented entries to Bulgaria in 2016 originated from Afghanistan, followed by Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan. Between January, 2015 and February 2017, a total of 47,184 arrivals to Bulgaria were reported, however arrivals decreased during this time period. In August 2016, there were an estimated 150-200 arrivals from Turkey daily. Since the March 2016 implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement, the number of refugees and migrants stranded in Bulgaria increased substantially and was reported at 4,702 in February 2017.
Border Situation / Departures / Flow	Authorities claim to register most, if not all, refugees entering Bulgaria whereas undocumented arrivals are detained for deportation; both of these are possible deterrents for traveling through the country. There have been numerous reports of pushbacks and forcible return of those entering from Turkey without proper procedures or opportunity to lodge an asylum claim. Established trafficking networks and incidents of violence and abuse by authorities at border crossings are documented concerns.
Locations and shelter arrangements	Bulgaria has four sites with reception centers with a combined capacity of 5,130; as of December 2016, the reception center occupancy rate was 79%. Shelter has been identified as a critical need by both UNHCR and the Bulgarian government and conditions in many reception centers are considered to be poor. In some locations, refugees and migrants are reportedly staying in abandoned buildings near reception centers and elsewhere; however, there is little evidence that this is a widespread practice throughout the country. To be permitted to live outside formal reception centers, asylum seekers must provide confirmation they are able to support themselves; however, in doing so, they are no longer entitled to financial assistance.
Legal status¹	Bulgaria received 19,418 applications for asylum in 2016; however, only 15% of asylum seekers remained in the country long enough to receive a decision on their case. Of the 3,073 protection applications processed in 2016, 25% were declared refugees, 19% other protected status and 56% were rejected. A total of 11,314 asylum seekers were detained in 2016 including 1,821 unaccompanied children. At the end of 2016, a total of 636 were in custody with unaccompanied minors comprising approximately one-fifth of detainees.
Women and Girls	Standard operating procedures for identification and referral of GBV cases have been in place since 2007; however, little information on their implementation or use is available. Measures to prevent GBV are perceived as insufficient and do not properly guarantee the safety and security of the population in reception centers.
Men and Boys	As economic migrants comprise an increasing proportion of arrivals, the population of men and boys is increasing in size. Little information was available on these specific groups, however, concerns for unaccompanied boys include "being attached" to other adults, conditions in detention facilities, lack of separate accommodation in reception centers and failure of social services to assist unaccompanied children.
Unaccompanied Minors	A total of 2,772 (14%) asylum applicants in 2016 were unaccompanied children. There are no legal mechanisms in place for identifying unaccompanied children, nor are any methods applied in practice. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are assigned to a legal representative through the respective municipality; however, it was not until December 2016 that at least one guardian was appointed to each reception center. Furthermore, legal representatives/guardians may oversee over 100 unaccompanied children, resulting in a general lack of representation and protection of children in practice, further limiting children's access to services and assistance. Legal provisions exist for accommodating unaccompanied children in special conditions, most unaccompanied children are housed in reception centers with adults and few safety protections. Lack of government capacity has been significant barrier in protection of unaccompanied children; it was not until December 2016 that a guardian was appointed to each reception center. Unaccompanied children in Bulgaria remain at increased risk of exploitation and homelessness.

BULGARIA

Safety and Security Risks	Refugees are taken advantage of from a number of different parties, including traffickers (reported to take their money and abandon them in remote areas); real estate agencies (double-booking of accommodations and forced evictions); government employees in reception centers (bribery) and printing business (fraudulent documents). There are numerous incidents of policy brutality towards migrants/refugees and speculation that detention has become a "migration management tool." Between January 2015 and May 2016, 36,171 people were apprehended, and the majority subsequently detained; 36% were apprehended upon entry (Turkish and Greek borders), 28% at exit (FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Romania) and 37% in the interior of Bulgaria. Of those detained, 85% were men, 15% women, 20% children 14-17 years and 6% children <14 years; in early 2016, detentions averaged 14 days.				
Access to Services	Besides accommodation, nutrition and basic medical services (which are perceived as inadequate), asylum seekers at reception centers do not receive any other social support. Services such as education, vocational training, hygiene items and other non-food items have been identified as lacking; cash transfers for asylum seekers in reception centers were discontinued in 2015.				
Livelihoods	Though legally permitted to work, high pre-existing unemployment rates and language barriers prevent most refugees from working.				
	Available Analysis by Nationality				
	Syrians	Iraqis	Afghans	Pakistanis	Iranians
Legal status	Of the 2,639 Syrian asylum applicants in 2016. 54% were granted refugee status and 41% subsidiary protection; 5% rejected.	Of the 5,348 Iraqi asylum applicants in 2016, 10% were granted refugee status and 11% subsidiary protection; 79% were rejected.	Of the 8,827 Afghan asylum applicants in 2016, <1% were granted refugee status and 2% subsidiary protection; 97% were rejected.	Of the 1,790 Pakistani asylum applicants in 2016, 3% were granted refugee status and none subsidiary protection; 97% were rejected.	Of the 451 Iranian asylum applicants in 2016, 7% were granted refugee status and 5% subsidiary protection; 88% were rejected.
Safety and Security Risks²	36% of apprehensions (n=12,986) and 14% of detentions were Syrians; 36% of detained Syrians were <14 years.	36% of apprehensions (n=13,077) and 21% of detentions were Iraqis; 40% of detained Iraqis were <14 years.	25% of apprehensions (n=9,025) and 56% of detentions were Afghans; 44% of detained Afghans were <14 years.	3% of detentions were Pakistani nationals.	1% of detentions were Iranian nationals.

¹ Refugee status is consistent with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; "Refugee status in the Republic of Bulgaria shall be granted to an alien who has a well-founded fear of persecution due to his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion or conviction, is outside the country of his nationality and who for those reasons is unable or unwilling to avail of the protection of that country or to return thereto" (Article 8(1) of the Law on Asylum and Refugees)
 Subsidiary protection ("humanitarian status") - "humanitarian status is granted to an alien who has been compelled to leave or remain outside the state because in this state he/she is exposed to a real risk of heavy encroachments, such as: 1) sentence to death or execution; 2) torture or inhuman or humiliating attitude or punishment; 3) heavy and personal threat to his/her life or his/her personality as a civilian due to violence in case of internal or international armed conflict" (Article 9(1) of the Law on Asylum and Refugees)

² Based on 36,171 apprehensions reported between January 2015 and May 2016

GREECE

Overview of National Context

Political and situational context	<p>Greece entered the European Union in 1981. Given its porous borders and ongoing financial crisis, Greece faces considerable challenges in responding to the needs of the sizeable number of refugees and migrants. In response to the financial crisis, many resources have been frozen, including public sector recruitment and closures of health facilities and other public services. In March 2016, the EU-Turkey agreement was enacted in which, Turkey agreed to take migrants arriving to the Greek islands after March 2016 in exchange for resettlement of a similar number of refugees from Turkey to Europe. From March 20, 2016 through December 12, 2016, a total of 777 foreigners of various nationalities were returned to Turkey under the EU-Turkey deal. Those arriving after March 20th 2016 are accommodated in closed facilities, mostly on islands. Those that arrived in Greece before March 2016 have the right to legal stay, asylum and family reunification and are mostly in mainland Greece. In early 2016, efforts began to resume transfers of asylum seekers whose first port of call was Greece but are now in other locations to be returned to Greece in accordance with the Dublin Regulation. Though such efforts have faced pushback in light of "continuing inadequacies of its asylum system [and] the additional pressure of its current situation," in December 2016 the Commission recommended gradual resumption of such transfers (with the exception of "vulnerable applicants", including unaccompanied minors) back to Greece effective March 15, 2017.</p>
Overview of the population of concern	<p>Greece recorded 176,906 arrivals in 2016, which equates to 46% of all arrivals to Europe; this was a significant decrease compared to 2015 -- in large part due to the EU-Turkey agreement which resulted in closures of borders and limited mobility and legal stay options of those arriving after March 20, 2016. As of February 2017, Greek authorities reported a total of 62,590 migrants and refugees accommodated in the country. Of recent arrivals, 36% were men, 36% were women, 16% boys and 12% were girls. The population in Greece has remained fairly static since the March 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement and now that average stays a longer there is a wider range of assistance needs. Most refugees/migrants have moved in nuclear family units and the population includes a large numbers of families with infants and young children and female headed households.</p>
Overview of the response and programming	<p>The Greek Government's Ministry of Migration and Policy (MOMP) is the authority on responding to refugees and migrants in Greece; humanitarian agencies work with/through the ministry. Response is coordinated through 15 sectoral working groups and sub-working groups at the national level, in addition to many more sub-national groups. Coordination and response is hindered by reported lack of trust between government agencies and international actors. The government is leading response efforts in camps and reception facilities and is primarily focused on shelter and basic needs. There are concerns that due to highly dispersed nature of the response that services at all sites may not be in accordance with international standards and that needs of vulnerable groups may not be adequately addressed. The overall response is protection-focused with targeted aid for vulnerable groups; current programming focuses on improvement of reception and provision of aid to meet basic needs. Other programming includes medical assistance, legal counseling, identification and referral systems for unaccompanied children, family reunification, reinforced alternative legal pathways to protection and integration, among others. Refugees and migrants in Greece can access health care, and those fully registered have access to many services and medicines at no cost. Cash assistance is provided in all formal sites as well as off-site, urban areas; as of December 2016, cash assistance was provided in 20 sites and urban areas to 40% of the population of concern and there plans to scale up cash assistance and increase coverage to all sites in early 2017.</p>

GREECE

Key Country Documents	<p>1. UNFPA, Oxfam, International Medical Corps, WRC. (Dec 2016) A Summary of Assessment Findings and Recommendations The Situation of Refugee and Migrant Women, Greece 2016. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Women%27sRightsBriefingPaper_Greece2016.pdf</p> <p>2. MSF. (Oct 2016) Greece in 2016: Vulnerable People Get Left Behind. http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/report_vulnerable_people_201016_eng.pdf</p> <p>3. CRS. (Jun 2016) Refugee & Migrant Emergency in Europe - City of Athens shelter analysis. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CRSShelterAssessment_RefugeeCrisis_FinalReport_public.pdf</p> <p>4. Deprez S & Labattut E (ETC). (Nov 2016) Study on adequate urban housing for refugees (Thessaloniki, Greece). https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/adequate-housing-study-report_etc_18-11-2016_final.pdf1_rt_public.pdf</p> <p>6. Greece Cash Working Group. (Dec 2016) Cash Working Group Greece: Lessons learned from cash transfer programmes in 2015-6. [Internal document]</p>
	Available Information by Topic Area
Demographics / Arrival	As of mid-February, 2017, there were an estimated 33,981 refugees in Mainland Greece which compared to a combined capacity of 64,441 at official, informal, UNCHR and other facilities on the mainland. In addition, there are 13,053 refugees on the Greek Islands which compared to capacity estimates of 9,014. Efforts to move populations to the mainland are ongoing and in the first six weeks of 2017, a total of 2,521 people left the islands for mainland Greece which outpaced the estimated 1,864 new arrivals. Of the 27,592 individuals pre-registered as of July 30, 2016, 22% were women and 46% children; 13% were identified as vulnerable according to Greek law.
Border Situation / Departures / Flow	Following the border closures associated with the EU-Turkey agreement in early 2016, the number of stranded migrants and refugees has increased dramatically, as departures via the Western Balkans route decreased dramatically. In contrast, there has been a significant decrease in arrivals and UNHCR projects 40,000 new arrivals in 2017. Displaced populations in Greece remained largely static through much of 2016 and at the end of the year 50% of refugees and migrants resided at official and unofficial sites on the mainland and 26% on the islands with 20% accommodated in various UNHCR sites throughout the country.
Locations and shelter arrangements	UNHCR Site Profiles (Oct 2016) provide a detailed characterization of all of sites in Greece [Annex 1, Document A635]. According to the Greek Government, 13,333 people were estimated to be hosted in temporary sites set up by the Greek government in Northern Greece in early 2017; the remainder are either living in accommodation for relocation applicants or outside formal camps and official accommodation sites, either in rented accommodation, squatting, or in the streets, though precise figures are not known. Housing types in urban areas include vacant buildings that are rehabilitated to collective centers and individual apartments already on the rental market.
Legal Status¹	Hot spots have been set up quickly identify, register, and process migrants at point of arrival. There is limited knowledge of access to asylum and associated registration processes among refugees and migrants. Of the 26,977 first instance asylum procedures in 2016, 9% were granted refugee status, 1% subsidiary protection, 25% were "negative in substance," 56% were deemed inadmissible and 10% were implicitly or explicitly withdrawn. Those arriving before and after implementation of the March 2016 EU deal have different status, where earlier arrivals have legal stay and the possibility of benefiting from relocation programs. Lack of legal counselling and limited translation services or incorrect translation of information materials contributes to limited knowledge of the asylum process.
Men and Boys	No information specific to the needs and risks of men and boys was identified.

GREECE

Unaccompanied Minors	Based on referrals to the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), as of January 27, 2017, there were an estimated 2,200 UAC in Greece. 1,282 places were available in UAC shelters (including 152 vacant places in the process to of being filled) and 1,350 UAC on the waiting list for shelter. Of these on the waiting list, 317 were being temporarily housed in in closed reception facilities and 4 in protective custody. Of the 5,506 total referrals to EKKA from 1 Jan 2016 to 27 Jan 2017, 92% were boys, 8% were girls, and 9% were under 14 years old. Age assessments are rarely performed at registration, leading many children to be registered as adults. UACs in Greece reportedly face routine, arbitrary detention as well as "unsanitary and degrading conditions and abusive treatment, including detention with adults and ill-treatment by police."				
Safety and Security Risks	There is limited or no security presence at many of the shelter sites and GBV mitigation is not always accounted for in site planning and program implementation. There have been reports of refugees having to pay more than an average Greek person for services and of various forms of exploitation and abuse by individuals falsely claiming to work with NGOs. Refugees and migrants wishing to travel to Western and Northern European countries often do so through smuggling networks and faced associated security risks when attempting to leave Greece.				
Access to Services	Despite refugees' right to free healthcare and medicines in medical facilities and hospitals, accessing these services is difficult due to numerous administrative barriers. Those who are pre-registered must first obtain a tax registration number and social security registration number before receiving free health services. A lack of interpreters (particularly female interpreters) and transportation are also barriers to seeking needed healthcare given the remote/isolated location of many of the camps; lack of trust in service providers and limited community awareness of available services have also been cited as concerns. With respect to sexual and reproductive health, there is limited antenatal and postnatal care, unmet family planning and fear of stigmatization among GBV survivors.				
Livelihoods	No information on livelihoods was identified.				
	Available Analysis by Nationality				
	Syrians	Iraqis	Afghans	Pakistanis	Iranians
Demographics / Arrival	From Jan-Nov 2016, 80,491 arrivals by sea (47% of sea arrivals; decrease of 82% from same period in 2015). The pre-registered population of Syrians, as of mid-2016, was 29% men, 24% women and 47% children.	From Jan-Nov 2016, 26,028 arrivals by sea (15% of sea arrivals; decrease of 57% from same period in 2015). The pre-registered population Iraqis, as of mid-2016, was 24% men, 24% women and 52% children.	From Jan-Nov 2016, 41,655 arrivals by sea (24% of sea arrivals; decreased of 77% from same period in 2015). The pre-registered population of Afghans, as of mid-2016, was 33% men, 21% women and 46% children.	From Jan-Nov 2016, 8,532 arrivals by sea (5% of sea arrivals; decreased of 57% from same period in 2015)	From Jan-Nov 2016, ~5,150 arrivals by sea (3% of all sea arrivals)
Legal Status¹	99.6% of Syrian first instance asylum applications resulted in "decisions in substance"	64% of Iraqi first instance asylum applications resulted in "decisions in substance"	57% of Afghan first instance asylum applications resulted in "decisions in substance"		52% of Iranian first instance asylum applications resulted in "decisions in substance"
Other	Assistance gaps identified in mid-2016 were electricity (25%), cash assistance (18%) and WASH facilities (17%).				

¹ "Decisions in substance" include refugee status, subsidiary protection and negative in substance; those not falling under this category are rejected.

fYR Macedonia

Overview of National Context

Political and situational context	fYR Macedonia has been a candidate for membership to the European Union since 2005, but has yet to begin negotiations for membership. fYR Macedonia has primarily been a transit country to Western Europe for people traveling from Greece to Serbia; few refugees and migrants stayed in the country for extended periods. Since late 2015, there have been increased restrictions on border crossings and the "Balkan route" to Northern and Western European countries has been effectively closed since March 2016. Border closures have resulted in pushbacks, illegal crossings and increased demand for smuggling services. The humanitarian situation in fYR Macedonia has been characterized as deteriorating due to increased exploitation risks, and UNHCR has criticized inadequate transit centers and de facto detention of migrants and asylum-seekers.
Overview of the population of concern	There were 89,773 arrivals in fYR Macedonia in 2016; of arrivals, 40% were men, 22% were women, 38% were accompanied children and <1% were unaccompanied children. According to nonofficial estimates based on the services provided by NGO mobile teams outside of the reception centers, as of mid-year, there were an estimated 100-200 refugees and migrants transiting though fYR Macedonia on a daily basis. UNHCR projects 8,000 people in need of international protection will be assisted in fYR Macedonia in 2017 and 300 persons will be accommodated at government sites. As of early 2017, 215 persons were hosted in various accommodation facilities, primarily two reception centers in Vinojug and Tabanovce. Following the March 2016 closing of the southern border with Greece and subsequent pushbacks, UNHCR stopped registration of new arrivals.
Overview of the response and programming	The fluidity of population movements necessitates adaptability on behalf of response planning and implementation. Efforts have been ongoing to achieve minimum humanitarian standards in reception and assistance sites, and in 2016 standard operating procedures for accommodation and treatment of refugees and migrants in reception centers were developed. While there have been improvements in reception conditions such as access to primary care, mobile health clinics, improved WASH facilities and non-formal education, they remain inadequate for longer-term stay and freedom of movement is limited. Overall, there are insufficient services and facilities to meet the magnitude of needs in the current crisis with a particular deficit in protection experts and capacity to address GBV protection risks.
Key Country Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNHCR, UNFPA, Women's Refugee Commission. (Jan 2016) Initial assessment report: Protection Risks for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis. URL: http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/operations/569f8f419/initial-assessment-report-protection-risks-women-girls-european-refugee.html 2. UN Women. (Jan 2016) Gender Assessment of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in Serbia and Fyr Macedonia. URL: https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=446 3. Oxfam. (Sep 2016) Closed borders: The impact of the borders closures on people on the move, with a focus on women and children in Serbia and Macedonia. URL: https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/closed_borders_eng_low.pdf
Available Information by Topic Area	
Demographics / Arrival	No additional information was available, apart from what is reported elsewhere in the summary.

fYR Macedonia

Border Situation / Departures / Flow	In November 2015, selective admission practices were put in place allowing only Syrian, Afghan, and Iraqi nationals to enter, leaving thousand of asylum seekers from Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, and Somalia stranded at the border with Greece for several months. In February 2016, fYR Macedonia and Serbia issued a joint decision to permit entry to only Syrians and Iraqis; following this, migration flow through the Western Balkans was officially closed in March 2016 with the EU-Turkey agreement. The situation of refugees and migrants is precarious as most use smugglers to transit through the country and avoid contact with authorities and UNHCR. Push-backs across borders with Greece and Serbia are not uncommon.
Locations and shelter arrangements	fYR Macedonia established reception centers and asylum systems in 2015, however, the systems were designed for small numbers and services are perceived as inadequate. There are two reception centers in Vinojug and Tabanovce, asylum center in Vizbegovo and a safe house in Skopje which have a combined capacity of several hundred. Emergency plans have focused on provision of accommodation and winterizing shelters; there have been efforts to improve conditions at reception sites; however, they are not appropriate for long-term stay.
Legal status	There have been cases where new arrivals who wanted to seek asylum were unable to do so because authorities allow access to the asylum procedure only on a selective basis with the intention of keeping the number of asylum claims low.
Women and Girls	The response in fYR Macedonia has been criticized as lacking in gender focus and GBV is an increasing concern. There are no comprehensive services available for GBV and though SOPs have been adopted, they are not fully operationalized; there is also a lack of GBV expertise among staff. There is a safe house in Skopje with limited capacity and services for vulnerable persons including unaccompanied minors, single mothers, and victims of trafficking and GBV. Women's corners and children's playgrounds have been added in reception centers, however, conditions remain inadequate for longer terms stays.
Men and Boys	No information specific to the needs and risks of men and boys was identified.
Unaccompanied Minors	The greatest concern noted for unaccompanied minors was proper identification and referrals. Specific difficulties in identifying unaccompanied children occur in part because they tend to travel in groups accompanied by 1-2 adults who, regardless of kinship, are referred to as their "aunts/uncles." Such cultural concepts relating to guardianship and kinship increase challenges identifying unaccompanied minors. Additionally, due to the limited time spent in the country, most legal protections and procedures are not practiced, placing unaccompanied minors at greater risk of human trafficking.
Safety and Security Risks	Refugees and migrants that pass through the country using smuggling networks face numerous risks and protection challenges. Occurrences of GBV are reportedly increasing, in addition to cases of extortion, kidnapping and trafficking. Safety and security risks are most pervasive in smuggling hubs in the north of the country. Access to asylum procedures is sometimes limited.
Access to Services	Relatively little information is available on services in fYR Macedonia. Services were perceived as inadequate which prompted development of an emergency plan in late 2015, though the plan was criticized as failing to address special assistance to vulnerable groups, protection and gender concerns. In 2016, efforts were ongoing to achieve minimum standards in reception and assistance sites and access to WASH, health, education and other services were expanded.
Livelihoods	No information on livelihoods was identified.

fYR Macedonia

	Available Analysis by Nationality				
	Syrians	Iraqis	Afghans	Pakistanis	Iranians
Demographics / Arrival	In March 2016, 76% of Syrian groups interviewed in Serbia and fYR Macedonia were nuclear or extended families.	In March 2016, 73% of Iraqi groups interviewed in Serbia and FYROM consisted of nuclear or extended families.	In March 2016, 59% Afghans were travelling with immediate or extended family members.		
Border Situation / Departures / Flow			Pushbacks and denied entry of Afghan migrants were put in place in February 2016.		

SERBIA

Overview of National Context

Political and situational context	<p>Serbia has candidate status for membership to the European Union, but is not yet a formal member state. Serbia is primarily a transit country on the Western Balkans route; most arrivals are from FYR Macedonia and Bulgaria. Serbia was previously the main route for those traveling from FYR Macedonia and Bulgaria to Croatia, a re-routed path since the Serbia/Hungary border closure in 2015, but border closures in March 2016 stranded many in Serbia and FYR Macedonia and forced others to find alternate routes such as the land route between Serbia and Bulgaria.</p>
Overview of the population of concern	<p>In 2016 there were 98,975 arrivals to Serbia; arrivals decreased over the course of the year and had virtually come to a halt by the end of the year. Of 2016 arrivals in Serbia, 85% originated from refugee producing countries; 39% were men and 61% women and children. The size of the stranded population has increased as a result of limited exit opportunities. In February 2017, there were an estimated 7,800 total migrants and refugees in Serbia, of whom 6,500 were accommodated in government facilities. There are increasingly more women, children, and other vulnerable groups including, unaccompanied and separated minors, elderly persons, pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities and people with chronic illnesses.</p>
Overview of the response and programming	<p>The response in Serbia is led and coordinated by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Mixed Migration Flows, comprised of a number of government bodies, UN agencies, and both local and international organizations. Interagency sectoral working groups have been established for protection; food, shelter, NFI, transportation and logistics, and WASH; health and nutrition; and support to local communities. As populations becoming increasingly static with border closures and tightened regulations the response in Serbia has shifted, but has largely focused on supporting the Serbian government's efforts including support for reception/transit facilities and registration systems, and provision of basic services including, but not limited to shelter, healthcare, food, WASH, and NFIs. In 2016, in light of continued arrivals, assistance efforts focused increasingly on long-term planning.</p>
Key Country Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNHCR, UNFPA, Women's Refugee Commission. (Jan 2016) Initial assessment report: Protection Risks for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis. URL: http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/operations/569f8f419/initial-assessment-report-protection-risks-women-girls-european-refugee.html 2. UN Women. (Jan 2016) Gender Assessment of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in Serbia and Fyr Macedonia. URL: https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=446 3. International Rescue Committee, Atina. (Feb 2016) Women and Children's Protection Assessment Report: Serbia. 4. Oxfam (Sep 2016) Closed borders: The impact of the borders closures on people on the move, with a focus on women and children in Serbia and Macedonia. URL: https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/closed_borders_eng_low.pdf 5. Pavle Kilibarda and Nikola Kovačević (Belgrade Centre for Human Rights) (2017-01). Country Report: Serbia 2016 Update. http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_sr_2016update.pdf

SERBIA

Available Information by Topic Area

Demographics / Arrival	Since the early border closures, daily arrivals from FYROM to Serbia are estimated between 150-200 individuals. Shifts in demographic trends have been observed since October 2015 with increasingly more women, children, and other vulnerable groups. Of the 12,821 asylum applicants in Serbia in 2016, 56% were men, 29% were women, 10% were accompanied children, and 5% were unaccompanied children. The majority of those expressing intentions to apply for asylum were from Afghanistan (44%), Iraq (21%), Syria (18%) and Pakistan (8%).
Border Situation / Departures / Flow	In February 2016, FYR Macedonia and Serbia issued a joint decision to permit entry to only Syrians and Iraqis and denying entry to Afghans. The only legal exit from Serbia is to apply for asylum in Hungary, where only 30 people are accepted per day; this process is managed via a list of applicants, with many waiting months for permission to enter. There is substantial pushback into Serbia from the border with Hungary, as asylum seekers [not on the list] are rarely accepted unless they require urgent medical care; options for those pushed back into Serbia are apply for asylum in Serbia, or return to the border with FYR Macedonia. Refugees and migrants in Serbia often rely on smugglers and face numerous protection risks.
Locations and shelter arrangements	There are 13 government facilities for refugees and migrants in Serbia, including five asylum centers, five transit centers and two reception centers; in January 2017, the combined capacity of government facilities was estimated at 4,000. 6,21 Crowding is a concern at both temporary and permanent government facilities where capacity is exceeded with approximately 6,200 refugees and migrants were in government facilities at the end of 2016. Five new shelters were opened in 2016 to expand capacity; conditions at government facilities are variable and many do not satisfy Sphere Humanitarian Standards. More than 80% of the refugee and migrant population in Serbia are in government facilities, the remainder reside in Belgrade or the border areas with no shelter or informal/temporary arrangements.
Legal status	Serbia's asylum system is a single asylum procedure in which applicants first express the intention to seek asylum and are then recorded by the Ministry of the Interior and obtain a certificate. Asylum seekers are then placed in an asylum center to wait for the Asylum office to register their application, and provide necessary documents acknowledging their status as an applicant. Legally, the Asylum Office has up to two months to reach a decision, but often decisions take between four and six months. Limited access to asylum procedures is a concern, including denial of access to asylum procedures and refusal to issue certificates of having expressed the intention to seek asylum. Of the 108 first instance asylum applications in 2016, 13% were granted refugee status, 16% granted subsidiary protection, and 71% received a negative decision; however, 52% of the 31 appeals in 2016 received positive decisions.
Women and Girls	Identified protection risks specific to women and girls in transit include family separation, psychosocial stress and trauma, health complications (particularly for pregnant women), physical harm and injury, and risks of exploitation and gender-based violence. Reports of GBV incidents have increased though formal GBV referral mechanisms are not in place. There also has been an increase in violence and harassment of women in transit and reception centers. Many shelters have inadequate privacy for sleeping quarters, no separate sleeping areas for women traveling alone, and little, if any, separation of WASH facilities for women and girls. Access to female translators and information are identified needs for women.
Men and Boys	No information specific to the needs and risks of men and boys was identified.

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Unaccompanied Minors	Reliable policies and procedures are not in place for managing unaccompanied children. Legal representation procedures for unaccompanied children have been criticized and unaccompanied minors must be assigned a temporary legal guardian before expressing the intention to seek asylum. Formal referral mechanisms between Serbian authorities and humanitarian agencies working on child protection are inconsistent and there is a lack of appropriate alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children. Travel arrangements vary and include extended family or friends, alone, with smugglers, a partner, or stranger(s); there is speculation that many claiming to be extended family traveling with a child are smugglers. In addition, there are reports of groups taking children at border crossings so they can obtain registration/admission to other countries more quickly.				
Safety and Security Risks	Pushbacks across the border with FYR Macedonia, prevention of crossings of migrants from Bulgaria into Serbia and collective expulsions have been reported. Procedural guarantees against refoulement and forced return are not in place. Border closures have resulted to increased use of smugglers which has increased vulnerability to protection risks such as GBV, physical violence, trafficking and exploitation.				
Access to Services	Asylum seekers and those granted asylum have the right to free primary and secondary education, and equal rights to health care as Serbian nationals. Asylum seekers housed at asylum centers receive accommodation, food and free health care but cannot access government social welfare benefits; some vulnerable groups receive cash transfers. Infrastructure in Serbia can only respond to basic needs of migrants and struggles to cope with longer term needs of an increasing population with more extended stays.				
Livelihoods	Asylum applicants are not inherently granted permission to enter the labor market in Serbia; however those awaiting asylum decision for nine months or longer and those with a work permit on other grounds may legally work in the country. A Decree on the Manner of Involving Persons Recognized as Refugees in Social, Cultural and Economic Life ("Integration Decree") was enacted in January 2017 intended to improve access to education and the labor market for formal refugees, though little is yet known about its application.				
	Available Analysis by Nationality				
	Syrians	Iraqis	Afghans	Pakistanis	Iranians
Demographics / Arrival	Of the total Syrian asylum seeking population in Serbia, 51% are men, 17% are women and 32% are minors. In March 2016, 76% of Syrian groups interviewed in Serbia and FYR Macedonia consisted of nuclear or extended families; the majority of	Of the total Iraqi asylum seeking population in Serbia, 57% are men, 15% are women and 28% are minors. In March 2016, 73% of Iraqi groups interviewed in Serbia and FYR Macedonia consisted of nuclear or extended families, with the majority	Of the total Afghan asylum seeking population in Serbia, 60% are men, 12% are women and 28% are minors. In March 2016, 59% Afghans were travelling with immediate or extended family members. The majority of Afghans traveling	Of the total Pakistani asylum seeking population in Serbia, 95% are men, 1% are women and 4% are minors. The majority of Pakistanis traveling alone enter from Bulgaria.	
Border Situation / Departures / Flow			Pushback and denied entry of Afghan migrants were put in place in February 2016.		