UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN VIA MIXED MIGRATION ROUTES IN EUROPE

Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated

OVERVIEW OF TRENDS – 2023

Children in a reception center in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ©IOM BIH 2023

Highlights

55,700 children

arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Cyprus and Malta in 2023 **(23% girls and 77% boys)**[1] – **58%** higher than total number of children arrivals in 2022 (35,170).

35,500 unaccompanied or separated children (64%)

arrived in Europe in 2023. 69% of children who arrived in Italy in 2023 were unaccompanied or separated (UASC).

10,400 children

(25% girls and 27% boys), out of the 20,000 total resettlement submissions, were in Europe in 2023.

Of all the children who sought international protection in Europe in 2023, some 71% were registered as first-time applicants in just four countries: **Germany (39%), France (14%), Spain (11%), and Austria (7%)**.

Arrivals in Europe in 2023[2]

Some **55,704** children arrived in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain. Of these, **35,510 (64%)** were unaccompanied or separated children (UASC).[3] Child arrivals increased by **58% in 2023** compared to **2022 (35,170)**.

Greece

In 2023, 10,612[4] children arrived by land and sea in Greece, including 2,867 UASC (27%). Due to the high number of people arriving in 2023, the number of children also increased – more than a two-fold increase compared to children arriving in 2022 (4,614). The number of children arriving unaccompanied or separated also increased – a 29% increase compared to 2022 (2,231). Most of the children, including UASC, were from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, State of Palestine and Somalia.

Spain

In 2023, 10,287 children were estimated to have arrived by land and sea, a 135% increase compared to 2022 (4,369).[5] Of these, 9,131 were UASC (89%), 163% more than in 2022 (3,466). According to estimates, most of the children, including UASC, were from Mali , Morocco and Senegal.

Italy

In 2023, 27,420 children arrived, a 36% increase compared to 2022 (20,222). Of these, 69% (18,820) were UASC, a proportion consistent with recent years. Most of the children, including UASC, originated from Tunisia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Egypt.[6]

Bulgaria

In 2023, 5,720 children lodged an asylum application in 2023, 67% of whom were UASC (3,845). Most of these asylum-seeking children originated from Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Morocco.[7]

Malta

In 2023, 27[8] children, including 24 UASC (89%), were brought to safety through search and rescue operations at sea. The number of child arrivals, including UASC, in 2023 was 54% lower compared to 2022 (59). Most of the children, including UASC, originated from Bangladesh and Guinea.

Cyprus

In 2023, 1,638 children arrived by sea in 2023, including 828 UASC. All children, including UASC, who arrived by sea originated from the Syrian Arab Republic.

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Demographic of arrivals by country of arrival

Figure 1: Total arrivals by sea and by land, by gender, age and country of arrival (%)

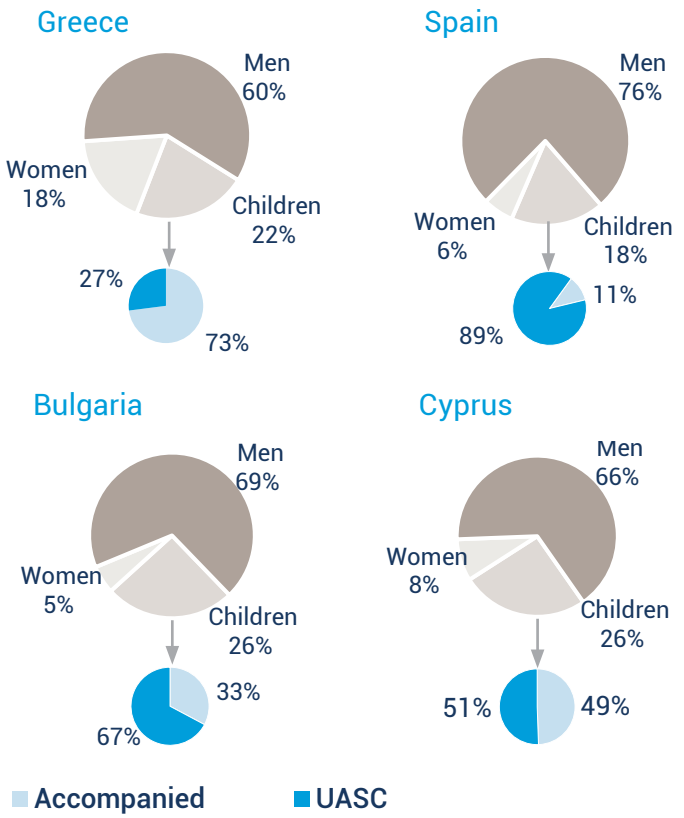
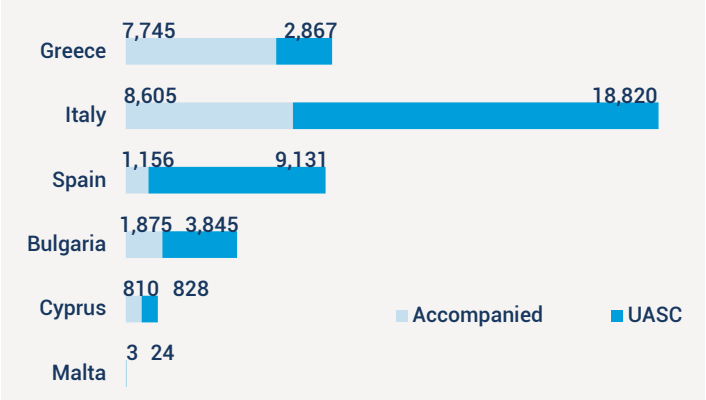


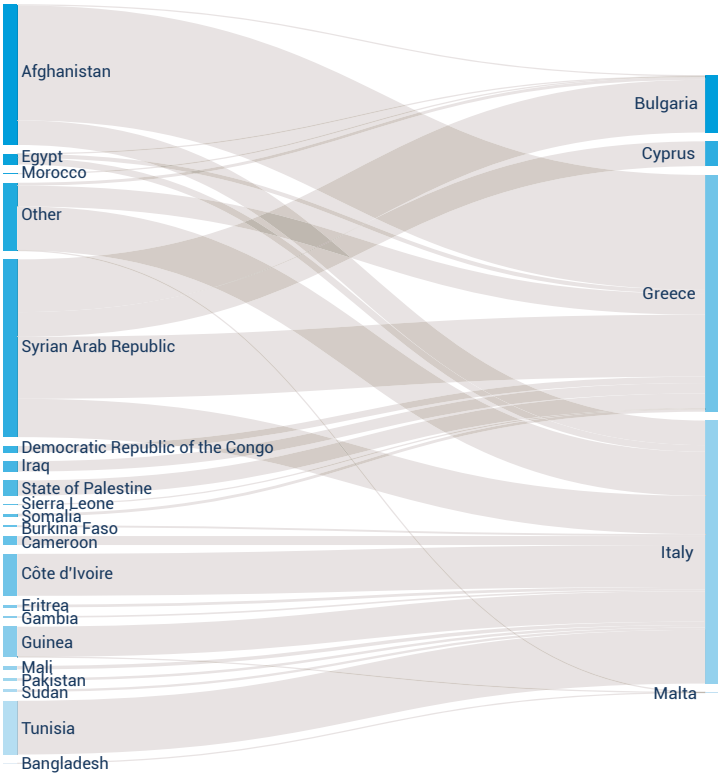
Figure 2: Number of children arriving by sea and by land, by status and by country of arrival



Nationality by country of arrival[9]

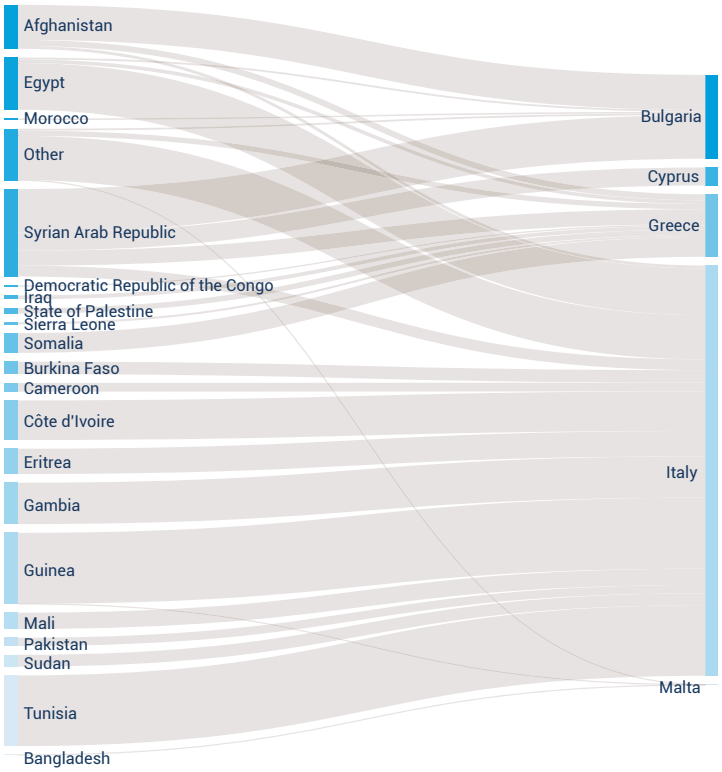
Accompanied Children

Figure 3: Accompanied children arrived in Europe, main countries of origin by country of arrival



UASC

Figure 4: UASC arrived in Europe, main countries of origin by country of arrival



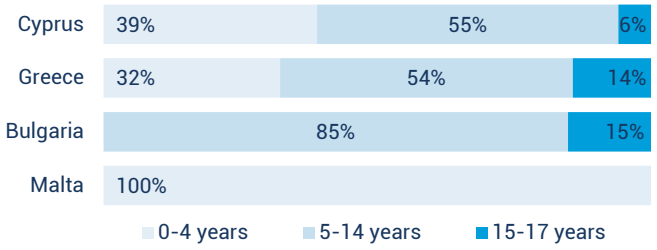
Source: Hellenic Police, EKKA; Italian Ministry of Interior; Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees; Maltese Immigration Police; and Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement (MHSE).

Age and gender breakdown by country of arrival[10]

Accompanied Children

Among the 10,400 accompanied children who arrived in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece and Malta in 2023, 27% were 0-4 years old, 59% were 5-14 years old and 14% were 15-17 years old. The age breakdown for accompanied children in Italy and Spain is not available.

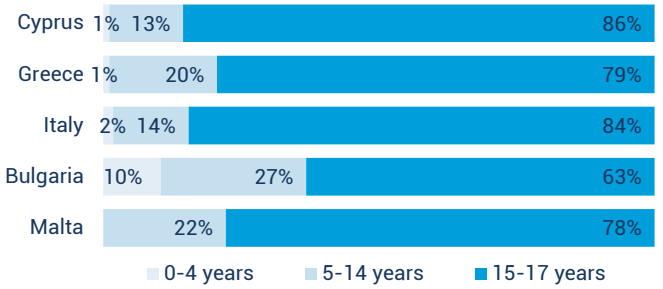
Figure 5: Age breakdown of accompanied children, by country of arrival (%)



Unaccompanied Children

Most UASC who arrived in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta in 2023 were between 15 and 17 years old (81% overall). Age disaggregated data on children arriving in Spain is not available.

Figure 6: Age breakdown of UASC, by country of arrival (%)



Sources: Hellenic Police, EKKA, Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on UASC in reception, Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees, Maltese Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement (MHSE).

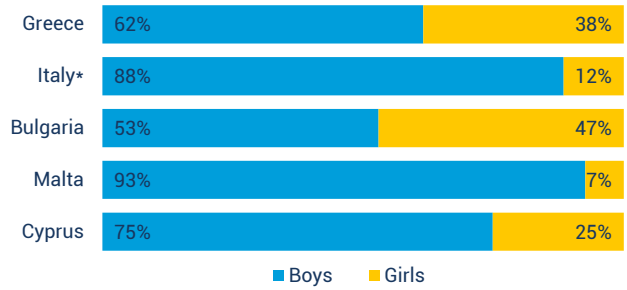
Note: Due to the limited disaggregation or inconsistency of data by age and gender across countries, these graphs refer to estimates.

Gender Breakdown

Overall, the proportion of boys remains high, comprising 77% of all children who arrived via the Eastern and Central Mediterranean routes in 2023. The percentage of boys arriving in Cyprus, Italy and Malta was significantly higher than average: 75% in Cyprus, 88% in Italy, and 93% in Malta. Gender disaggregated data on children arriving in Spain is not available.

Meanwhile, the percentage of girls arriving in Greece increased from 32% in 2022 to 38% in 2023.[11]

Figure 7: Gender breakdown of children arrived in Europe by sea and by land, by country of arrival (%)



* For Italy, the calculation is based on the estimated 23,226 UASC registered in the reception system as of December 2023, according to the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. These also include 4,131 Ukrainian unaccompanied children.

Refugee and migrant children's journey to Europe

In 2023, IOM interviewed 5,029 refugees and migrants who arrived by sea in Greece, Italy, or Spain and by land in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo.[12] This section focuses on the profiles, needs, intentions and vulnerabilities of the 2,082 adolescents and young adults between 14 and 24 years of age who were interviewed,[13] grouped by route: 539 in Italy along the Central Mediterranean Route (26%), 915 (44%) in North-East of Italy, Greece and the Western Balkans (EMR and WBR), and 628 in Spain (30%), 470 with migrants arrived in the Canary Islands (WAAR) and 158 with migrants arrived to the mainland (WMR).

Central Mediterranean Route (CMR)

Sociodemographic profile

Youth and adolescents (14-24 years old) interviewed in Italy and travelling on the CMR (539 respondents) were mostly male (93%), with a smaller share of female respondents (7%). About 17% were below 18 at the time of the interview. Among the male interviewees, the most common nationalities were Bangladesh (12%), Guinea (11%), Gambia (11%), Pakistan (10%), and Côte d'Ivoire (7%). Female respondents were mainly from Côte d'Ivoire (20%), Tunisia (14%), Afghanistan and Guinea (both at 11%), and Ethiopia (8%). About 31% had completed primary education, while 27% had secondary lower education, 19% secondary upper education, 19% had no formal education, and 4% had tertiary.

Journey, reasons and intentions

Almost 29% of respondents left their country of origin while still under 18. This was more common among respondents from Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, and Guinea,. Additionally, 5% of all respondents reported having lived in another country for at least a year before continuing their journey. Some 72% travelled alone, 17% travelled with non-family members, 10% with family or relatives, and a small proportion, about 1% travelled with facilitators.

Youth and adolescents travelling on the CMR left their countries of origin for a variety of reasons. Escaping war and conflict was the leading reason (32%), followed by personal and target violence (30%), economic reasons (30%), limited access to basic services (16%), slow environmental changes or sudden natural disasters (6%).

Main reported country of destination was Italy by far (81%), followed by Germany (6%), France (5%) and others (8%).

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Vulnerabilities during the journey and current needs

Adolescents and young adults travelling on the CMR recounted a journey fraught with hardships. Financial problems were mentioned by 64% of respondents. Also, 63% of respondents reported suffering from lack of food at some point during their journey. Robberies were reported by 59% of children and adolescents. About 42% of them reported lack of shelter, 39% had health problems, while 32% lost their documents during the journey. About 13% reported attacks by strangers during the journey. The survey also covered a set of protection indicators, with eight questions to capture information about whether the respondent had worked without getting the expected payment, was forced to work against will, was offered a marriage (for them or a close family member), was kept closed against their will, had experienced physical violence, was forced or decieved into travel, had access to travel documents during the journey.[14] Physical violence was common, reported by more than half of children and young people interviewed (54%). Some 31% of respondents were held at a location against their will, with incidents very frequently including kidnappings and requests for ransom. Also, more than one third (36%) reported to have worked without getting the expected payment and 14% reported to have been forced to work against their will. Overall, incidents were primarily reported to have happened in Libya, Tunisia and Algeria, at the end of the journey before crossing the Mediterranean and before arriving in Italy.

Upon arrival, almost half of the children and young people in the sample (48%) expressed the need to be assisted with documentation as the primary necessity. Other needs mentioned were support with employment (31%), access to education and trainings for adults (30%) and language courses (21%). Need for support with long-term accommodation (12%), with legal assistance (9%), and with health services (5%) were also mentioned at the time of the survey.

Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR) and Western Balkans (WBR)[15]

Sociodemographic profile

Out of 915 total respondents, 83% were between 18 and 24 years old, while the remaining 17% were under 18. About 90% of the interviewees were male, with 33% of them from Afghanistan, 16% from Pakistan, 10% from Morocco, 9% from the Syrian Arab Republic, 9% from Bangladesh, next to others (23%). Most female respondents (10% of respondents) were from Afghanistan (31%), Iraq (15%), and the Syrian Arab Republic (13%). One third (33%) of the respondents had completed primary education, 33% had secondary lower education, and 12% had secondary upper education. Around 18% had no education, and 4% had tertiary or higher education.

Journey, reasons and intentions

169 respondents (18%) left their country of origin while they were still children, and 30% reported having lived in another country for at least a year before moving again towards Europe. Almost half (48%) travelled with non-family groups, 17% travelled with facilitators, while 15% travelled with family or relatives. Travelling alone reported by only 20% of respondents.

Escaping war and conflict was the main reason for leaving for 44% of respondents, followed by economic reasons (40%), and personal violence (21%). Other reasons included avoiding military service, seeking better education, dealing with limited services in the home country, or slow environmental changes.

Germany (33%) was the top intended destination before departure, followed by Italy (22%), Europe as a general destination (10%), Greece (9%), and France (7%). However, upon arrival, Italy topped the list with 30% of replies, slightly surpassing Germany (29%).

Vulnerabilities during the journey and current needs

During the journey, financial problems were a central concern for 41% of respondents, followed by lack of shelter at some point during the journey (32%), hunger (29%), health problems (14%), robbery (17%) and loss of documents (8%). Among indicators of violence, abuse and indicators, children and young people on the EMR and WBR suffered physical violence in 23% of cases, with several incidents reported in border areas by patrolling authorities. About 12% reported to have been deceived into travel, 11% reported unpaid work along the journey and 6% said they were held against their will. Most incidents were reported in transit countries soon before the one where the interview was carried out: Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Türkiye most frequently. Expressed needs reflected the fact that many respondents were not yet at the intended destination when interviewed: support to find employment (22%), with clothes and shoes (18%), with food supply (18%), with documentation (16%), and financial support (13%) were mentioned as top needs.

Lesvos, Greece © UNHCR/Socrates Baltagiannis

Western Mediterranean Route (WMR)

Sociodemographic profile

Out of the 158 young interviewees (18-24 years of age) in Spain who travelled on the WMR, 89% were male and 11% female. Most males were from Morocco (61%) and Algeria (32%). Similarly, most females were from North Africa, with 11 Algerian nationality, six being Moroccan, and one from the Syrian Arab Republic.

About 53% of the respondents completed secondary lower education, 27% reported to hold a secondary upper education or tertiary and above 15% hold a primary education, and 6% reported no formal education.

Journey, reasons and intentions

About 78% of the interviewees travelled alone while the remainder travelled in a group: 12% travelled with non-related individuals while 8% were with their family or relatives. Three respondents mentioned that they travelled with their facilitators.

Some 62% of the respondents cited the economic situation as a central reason to leave their country of origin, 46% mentioned slow environmental changes, 18% limited basic services, 8% were displaced by personal and targeted violence while 4% cited war and conflict.

The main intended countries of destination were Spain (77%) and France (20%), with few others mentioning Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium.

Vulnerabilities during the journey and current needs

The main challenges faced by young respondents travelling along the WMR included hunger (cited by 12 individuals) and a variety of health issues (eight cases) including fish bites, asthma, or stomach problems. There were also reports of finding no shelter (two cases), financial difficulties (one case), lost documents (four cases), robberies (two cases), and an incident of physical violence (one case). The main protection concern found was that relative to the access to documentation, with only 11% declaring to have access to their documents at the time of the interview.

In line with their prevalent intention to remain in Spain, most respondents identified support with employment as their primary need (58%), followed by the need for documentation assistance (34%), transportation (14%), and legal assistance (14%).

Western African Atlantic Route (WAAR)

Sociodemographic profile

Youth respondents arriving in the Canary Islands were predominantly male (86%), with 14% being female. A notable portion had children, with 28 male and 12 female interviewees reporting to be parents. Most male respondents were from Senegal (26%), Morocco (15%), Mali (15%), Guinea (13%), Gambia (12%), and Côte d'Ivoire (9%). The main nationalities among females were Côte d'Ivoire (40%), Guinea (28%), and Senegal (7%).

More than one third (34%) held a lower secondary education, while 33% had no formal education, 28% completed the primary school, 3% achieved upper secondary education (3%), and 2% had a tertiary or higher education.

Journey, reasons and intentions

About 9% of young respondents left their country of origin when they were below 18, with the majority coming from Côte d'Ivoire (9), Guinea (11) Gambia (7), or Mali (7). Furthermore, 96% of the interviewees travelled alone. Only a handful of individuals travelled in groups and none with facilitators. Also, 39 respondents mentioned that they lived in a country other than their origin for more than one year (especially in Senegal and Mauritania), before moving again towards the Canary Islands.

The main reason for moving was linked to economic circumstances (67%), followed by personal violence (20%), war and conflict (13%) and slow environmental changes (5%).

At the time of departure, Spain was the intended destination for two thirds of the sample. The share of those intending to stay in Spain increased to 78% upon arrival, followed by France (16%) and Italy (2%).

Vulnerabilities during the journey and current needs

About 6% reported financial problems, lack of shelter, health challenges and hunger at some stage of their journey, while 7% experienced theft. The main protection risk was related to the access to documents, with only 23% of respondents having control over their documents during the journey and at the moment of the interview. In line with their prevalent intention to remain in the country of the survey (Spain), support with employment was mentioned as main need by 71% of respondents, followed by support with documents (9%), legal assistance (10%), and training and education for adults (9%).

Lesvos, Greece © UNHCR/Socrates Baltagiannis

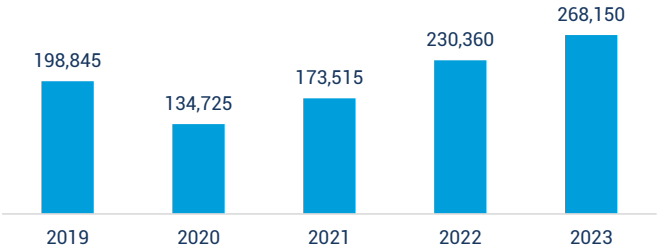
Source: IOM's DTM Europe — Flow Monitoring Surveys in Greece, Italy, Spain, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo* (2023)

Asylum applications and decisions

Asylum applicants

In 2023, European countries[16] reported a total of 1,085,165 new asylum-seekers (first-time applicants), a notable increase of 179,130 (20%) from the previous year. Among these applicants, approximately one-fourth (268,150) were children, indicating a 16% increase from 230,400 asylum applications lodged by children in 2022. Girls represented 41% of all new asylum-seeking children (109,620).

Figure 8: First-time asylum applications lodged by children in Europe, 2019-2023



Source: Eurostat [migr_asyappctza], last update 18 April 2024

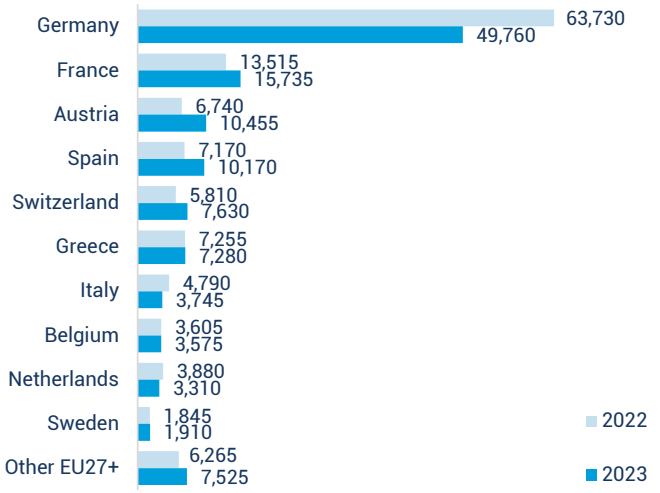
The countries with the highest number of new asylum applications from children were Germany, France, Spain, Austria and Greece, collectively receiving over three-fourths of all first-time child asylum applicants in European countries. Germany recorded the highest number of child asylum applications (103,465 or 39%), followed by France (38,495, or 14%), Spain (30,710, or 11%), Austria (19,275 or 7%) and Greece (13,790 or 5%).

Asylum applicants as unaccompanied children

In 2023, European countries recorded 40,420 new asylum applications from unaccompanied children, marking a 3% increase from 2022 (39,190). Of these applicants, 8% were girls and 92% were boys. Over three quarters of these unaccompanied children seeking asylum were registered in Germany (15,270 or 36%), the Netherlands (5,805 or 14%), Austria (4,945 or 12%), Bulgaria (3,845 or 9%) and Greece (2,670 or 6%). The Syrian Arab Republic led as primary country of origin for these children seeking asylum, comprising 35% of the total, followed by Afghanistan (31%), Somalia (5%) and Türkiye (3%). Together, these three countries contributed to 75% of the total asylum applications lodged by unaccompanied children in 2023.

First-instance decisions on child asylum applications

Figure 9: Top ten country of asylum for children receiving a first-instance positive decision on asylum applications in Europe, 2022-2023



Source: Eurostat [migr_asydcfsta__custom_11497734], last update 18 April 2024

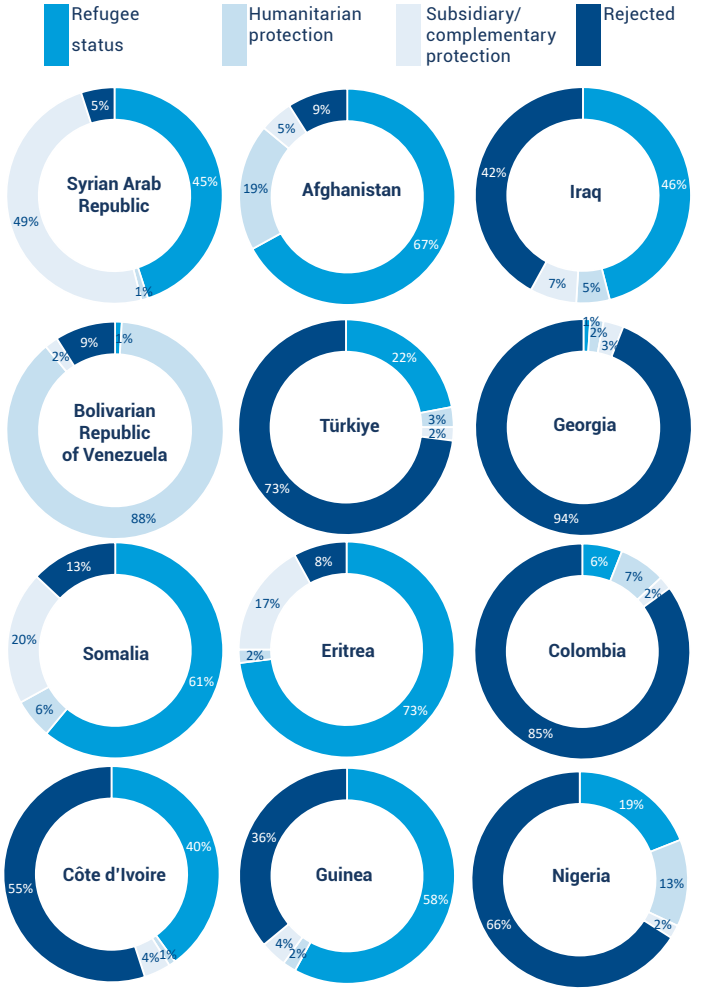
In 2023, European national authorities processed 184,135 first-instance decisions on child asylum applications. Among these, 121,095 accounting for 66% were positive decisions, marking a one percent decrease from 2022. The bulk of these positive decisions, comprising over three-fourths of the total, were issued by Germany (41%), France (13%), Austria (9%), Spain (8%) and Switzerland (6%).

In absolute numbers, Germany led in issuing the highest number of positive decisions (49,760) granting refugee status (53%) and subsidiary protection (35%). Most of those positive decisions were issued to Syrian, Afghan and Eritrean children. Spain issued the most decisions on cases involving Venezuelan children, granting them humanitarian status.

France mostly granted refugee status (80%). Most grants of these decisions were to Afghan, Guinean and Ivorian children. While refugee and subsidiary protection statuses adhere to European Union (EU) regulations, humanitarian status is specific to national legislation and may not be uniformly applied across the EU Member States. Out of the 121,095 children who received a first-instance positive decision in 2023 (EU27+), 57% were granted refugee status (compared to 56% in 2022), 26% subsidiary protection (27% in 2022), and 17% were granted humanitarian status (down from 18% in 2022).

Approximately 62,985 children (34% of all first-time decisions in 2023) were denied international protection at first instance. Notably, among children from the top countries of origin by decisions, a high proportion faces adverse decisions, particularly those from Georgia (94%), Colombia (85%), Türkiye (72%), Nigeria (66%), Côte d'Ivoire (54%), Iraq 42(%) and Guinea (36%).

Figure 10: First-instance decisions on child asylum applications in Europe in 2023, top countries of origin by number of decisions (%)



Source: Eurostat [migr_asydcfsta], last updated 18 April 2024

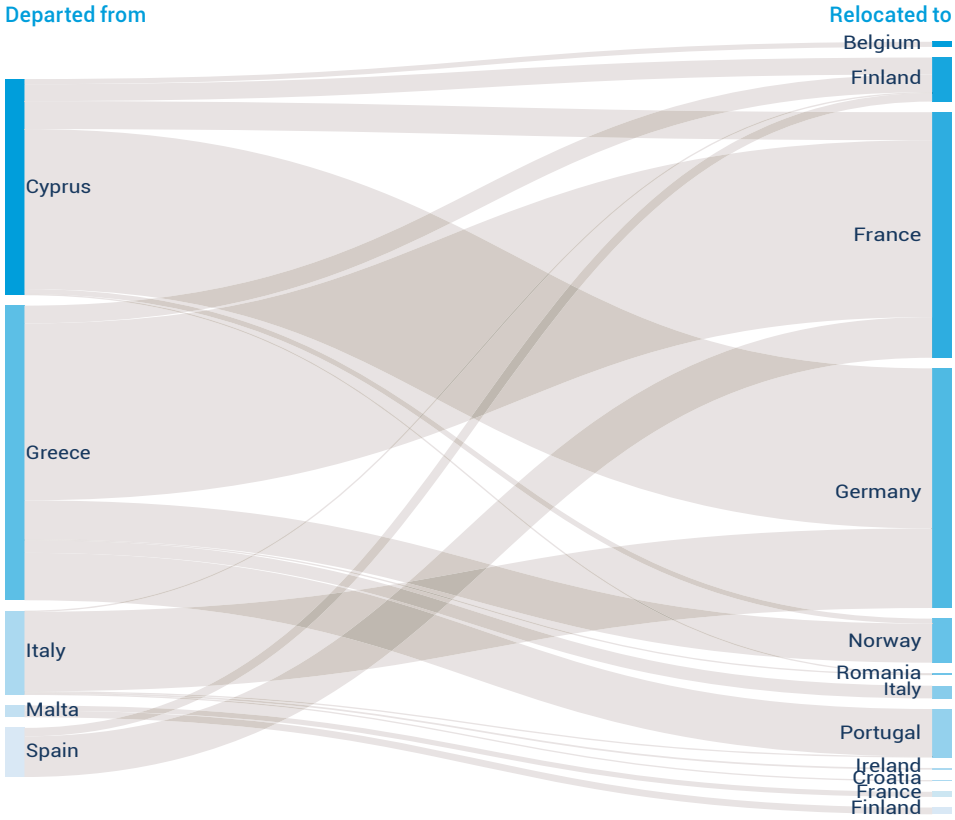
Relocation in Europe

Relocation has remained an important means of supporting vulnerable migrants and refugees in Europe, including UASC, and enhancing solidarity among States.

In 2023, IOM continued its support to relocation under existing schemes and under the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism from Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain. In close cooperation with involved governments and partner agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF and EUAA, and under overall coordination by the European Commission DG HOME, a total of 774 children were assisted with voluntary relocation from Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain to 10 European countries. This is a 160% increase compared to the 297 children relocated in 2022.

Out of the 774 children relocated in 2023, 415 were boys and 359 girls. Among all the relocated children, 56 were UASC (7% of the total) and were relocated from Greece to Portugal. This included 18 cases who reached adulthood during the process.

Figure 11: Children relocated in Europe, by country of departure and country of relocation



Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) for children and UASC

In 2023, IOM provided voluntary return support to 21,407 migrants from European Economic Area (EEA) countries, the United Kingdom and Switzerland (30% of all 72,178 migrants assisted globally) to their countries of origin. Of these, 50% (10,761) were assisted in returning from Germany alone, and about 24% (5,051) were children, including 48 UASC.

Of all AVRR beneficiaries assisted in returning from the EEA region, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, around 58% (12,389) returned to countries in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; 9% (2025) to Asia and the Pacific, 10% (2,105) to the Middle East and North Africa, 15 % (3,154) to South America and the rest, 8% (1,734), to other regions. Among the 5,051 children assisted in returning, the main nationalities were North Macedonia, Georgia, Albania, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Iraq, Türkiye, Moldova, and Colombia.

Children being relocated from Greece. ©IOM Greece 2023

Children resettled in Europe

Of the 20,000 people submitted for resettlement in Europe in 2023, 52% were children (27% boys and 25% girls). Germany, France, Norway, Finland, and Spain were the main countries in Europe considering children's resettlement cases. Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and Iraq were the most common countries of origin of children whose cases were being considered for resettlement by European States in 2023.

Definitions

"A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." [source]

"Separated children are children (...) who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members." [source]

"Unaccompanied children (also called unaccompanied minors) are children (...) who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so." [source]

A "refugee" is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (Article 1 A 1951 Refugee Convention).

An "asylum-seeker" is a person who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision as to whether they are a refugee. Determination of refugee status can only be of a declaratory nature. Indeed, any person is a refugee within the framework of a given instrument if they meet the criteria of the refugee definition in that instrument, whether they are formally recognized as a refugee or not (UNHCR Note on Determination of Refugee Status under International Instruments). [source]

A "migrant" refers to any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. [source]

About the factsheet

This factsheet is jointly produced by UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM with the aim to support evidence-based decision-making and advocacy on issues related to refugee and migrant children.

The document provides an overview of the situation in Europe with regards to migrant and refugee children (accompanied and UASC). It compiles key child-related data based on available official sources: arrival, asylum applications, asylum decisions, profiling of arrivals, relocation from first arrival countries under the EU relocation scheme, as well as returns from Greece to Türkiye under the EU-Türkiye statement.

The present factsheet covers the period January to December 2023, which provide up-to-date information on migrant and refugee children, including unaccompanied and separated children, who arrived via mixed Mediterranean and Western African Atlantic routes in Europe.

Limitation of available data on children and UASC:

There is no comprehensive data on arrivals (both adults and children) in Europe, especially by land and air, as such movements are largely irregular and involve smuggling networks, which are difficult to track. If collected, data is rarely disaggregated by nationality, gender or age. Reliable data on the number of UASC either arriving or currently residing in different European countries is often unavailable. The number of asylum applications filed by UASC is used to provide an indication of trends but does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the caseload due to backlogs in national asylum systems, onward secondary movements or children not applying for asylum at all. In addition, due to different definitions and national procedures and practices, collecting accurate data on separated children specifically is very challenging (e.g. separated children being registered as either accompanied or unaccompanied). Specifically for the European Union context, Eurostat data on asylum applications and decisions on children and UASC have been downloaded on 15 May 2024, and may be subject to consolidation.

Endnotes

1. Age, gender and nationality fully disaggregated data on children arriving in Spain in 2023 is not available.
2. Data on arrivals is partial due to the large scale of irregular movements. The data reflects both sea and land arrivals in Greece, land arrivals in Bulgaria, and sea arrivals in Cyprus, Italy, Malta and Spain.
3. Please check the Definition of unaccompanied and separated children.
4. Arrival figures for Greece are collected in the framework of UNHCR's border activities and National Coordination Centre for Border Control, Immigration and Asylum (ESKESMA).
5. Data for Spain is based on the Ministry of Interior's statistics and UNHCR's estimates.
6. Data on sea arrivals to Italy is based on information received from the Italian Ministry of Interior.
7. Statistics for Bulgaria are collected by the State Agency for Refugees. Observations on data and trends that are not typically compiled by government institutions are collected by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.
8. Estimate on data provided by the Immigration Police and the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement (MHSE), Malta. UASC figures are based on age declared by the refugees and migrants upon arrival. Not all persons who make such a declaration are recognized to be UASC by the authorities after the age assessment is completed.
9. See Footnote 1.
10. See Footnote 1.
11. See Footnote 1.
12. References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
13. Adolescents between 14 and 17 years old were addressed by enumerators in Italy and Greece only after having obtained written consent from the parent or legal guardian. In Spain, only adults of 18 years old or more were approached to participate. IOM staff in the field follows relevant child protection safeguards when engaging with adolescents and has referral mechanism in place to provide further information and support when needed.
14. While these questions are not meant to identify potential victims of trafficking or abuse and exploitation, they provide indications about recurrent instances and risks to which migrants are exposed during their journeys. For more information, please check the Methodology section of the IOM's Report Migrants Travelling to Europe by land and by sea. Journeys, Vulnerabilities and Needs of migrants arriving in Greece, Italy, and Spain in 2023.
15. Findings in this section are based on the interviews held in Greece, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo [1244 (1999)], as well as North-East Italy, covering individuals entering Italy by land via the Western Balkans.
16. European Union 27 Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

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