

# actalliance

Church of Sweden 



## NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR ACT ALLIANCE RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN EUROPE - GREECE, MACEDONIA (FYROM), SERBIA & HUNGARY

# Contents

- Background ..... 2
  - Situation analysis..... 2
- Justification ..... 4
  - The assessment team: ..... 5
  - The timeframe and schedule of the mission: ..... 5
    - Greece ..... 5
    - Macedonia..... 5
    - Serbia..... 5
    - Hungary ..... 5
- Methodology and approaches..... 6
- Findings and recommendations ..... 7
  - Greece ..... 7
    - Institutional capacity to respond..... 7
    - IOCC..... 7
    - Management of transit centres on Samos and Chios..... 7
    - Initial findings and recommendations- Chios and Samos..... 7
    - Chios reception center and waiting areas ..... 7
    - Other recommendations in Greece ..... 9
    - Greek-Macedonian border (Greek side Idomeni)..... 9
  - Macedonia..... 9
  - Serbia ..... 10
    - Institutional capacity to respond..... 10
    - Coordination..... 11
    - Transit centres management..... 11
    - Philanthropy ..... 11
    - Zaječar (border to Bulgaria)..... 12
    - Preševo (border to Macedonia)..... 12
  - Presevo and Zajecar- findings and recommendations..... 12
    - Presevo Refugee Aid Point..... 12
  - WASH sector..... 13
  - Zajecar transit point ..... 15
  - Belgrade and Sid transit centre ..... 16
  - Other recommendations ..... 16
- Hungary ..... 16
  - HIA..... 16
  - Röszke reception centre and Hungary / Serbia border ..... 17
  - Vámoszabadi refugee camp..... 18
  - Keleti train station and central Budapest ..... 19
  - Coordination..... 19
- Conclusion..... 22

## Background

### Situation analysis

Europe is facing the most intense refugee emergency since the World War II. The numbers of refugees crossing the borders of Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary are 100 times higher than in the past years. According to UNHCR Operational Update from August 2015, the number of refugees crossing the border to Greece has increased since January 2015 by 850% compared to 2014. Number of 205 000 refugees have arrived to Greece since January 2015 (by 28<sup>th</sup> August), 91% of them from Syria (142 500), Iraq and Afghanistan. It is expected that the stream of refugees will further increase in September and October by 70%. There are 1, 7 million refugees awaiting transit in Turkey.

The large flow of refugees since June 2015 is exhausting the capacity of the governmental structures in the transit countries. The cuts in the public sector funding in both Greece and Serbia further limits the resources of the local authorities and service providers.

In all countries refugees are entering, they are required to register and receive travel documents to enable them to travel onwards on legal basis. They have then the possibility to seek for asylum within limited time, for example 72 hours in Serbia and 30 days in Greece. The registration process varies from few hours to several days. As per government practice in Greece, Syrian nationals are usually proceeded faster than refugees who are from other countries of origin. On Greek islands, the Syrian refugees travel further the same day as arrival (if they get the ferry ticket), while other nationals can wait up to 6 days.

At several the transit/registration centre in Greece, Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia & Hungary, the refugees receive food kits, baby kits, hygiene kits and health check, if needed. The facilities of the centres vary largely. Some facilities are a safe environment to stay and rest, while in others refugees have been met with few services and in some case violence. As the resources of the local authorities are limited and new spending threatens local budgets, international and local NGOs (or volunteers) supply the centres with relief materials.

In Serbia & Greece NCA Assessors have experienced that the local authorities (incl. police and military forces) are treating the refugees in calm manner and patiently, no serious security incidents have been reported. However, the lack of local resources challenged by accumulating numbers of new arrivals creates chaotic environments, indignity, exploitations and danger, to people already suffered from the realities of conflict zones. There have been reported incidents of teargas and water cannons in Hungary.

The coming autumn, rain and lower temperatures will present new challenges for the refugees and the transiting countries.

It is clear that the situation requires a common effort from ACT Alliance, not several fragmented approaches in limited sectors. It is crucial to focus on support to the capacity of ACT members in the transiting countries to face new influx of refugees in the coming years.

Increasing numbers of refugees and migrants take their chances aboard unseaworthy boats and dinghies in a desperate bid to reach Europe. The vast majority of those attempting this dangerous crossing are in need of international protection, fleeing war, violence and persecution in their country of origin. Every year these movements continue to exact a devastating toll on human life.

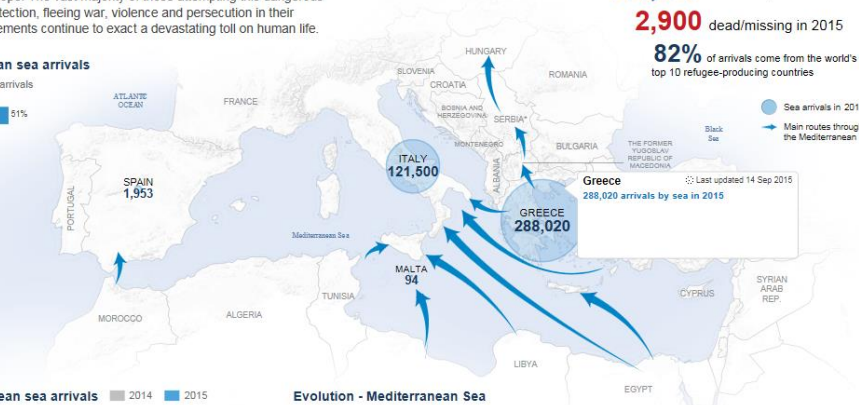
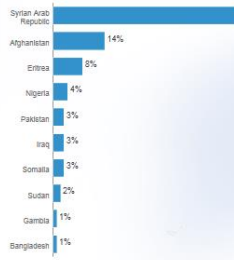
**411,567** arrivals by sea in 2015

**2,900** dead/missing in 2015

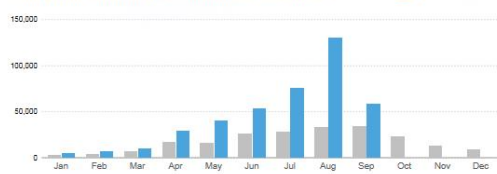
**82%** of arrivals come from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries

**Top-10 nationalities of Mediterranean sea arrivals**

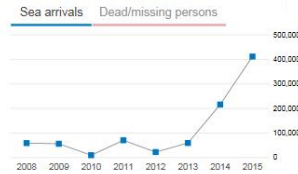
Top-10 nationalities represent 89% of the sea arrivals



**Comparison of monthly Mediterranean sea arrivals**



**Evolution - Mediterranean Sea**



**Demographics**



\*Series (AND KOSOVO): S/REG/1244 (1999)  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
Click here to view sources and disclaimer

Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>; 14.9. 2015

**Sea arrivals and onward movements along the Greece-Western Balkans route**

Average of daily arrivals as of 31 August 2015



Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/documents.php?page=1&view=grid>; 14.9. 2015

## Justification

On the Nordic meeting of Directors in Copenhagen, 25-27 August 2015, the ACT Alliance Agencies have agreed to support jointly the efforts of ACT Alliance members in Hungary, Serbia and Greece to manage the transit of such a high number of refugees, through the regional ACT Appeal. The Nordic ACT Alliance Agencies work toward an efficient mobilization of ACT fast resources with DCA, CoS, NCA and FCA without overloading partners.

On 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2015, the Emergency Humanitarian Team and the Humanitarian Team Leader in Church of Sweden made the decision to send an assessment team to Hungary with following aims:

- Have detailed conversations with HIA (Hungarian Interchurch Aid, ACT alliance partner) regarding their experiences and challenges of providing psychosocial support to refugees and people migrating through Hungary.
- Determine with HIA if and what kind of capacity building is needed and desired
- Assess the current situation in Hungary, how HIA is working with the government to respond and how CoS might be of help.

On 27 August 2015, the Emergency Committee in Norwegian Church Aid made the decision to send an assessment team to Serbia and Greece with following aims:

- To assess implementing capacity of ACT Alliance members, Philanthropy and IOCC as basis for discussing modalities for cooperation with them (funding needs, surge support, technical support, visibility).
- To assess humanitarian needs on the ground with Philanthropy and IOCC and contextual factors.
- To offer ACT/NCA fast surge support to have quick impact visibility for both fundraising purpose and the purpose of supporting a scalable quality response.

On 28. August 2015, Danish Church Aid made the decision to send an assessment team to Hungary with following aims:

- To assess the humanitarian situation in Serbia, Macedonia and Hungary and the local partners capacity to respond
- To determine DCAs response and level of engagement
- To document the situation and show the Danish public the humanitarian situation

On 31 August 2015 the Head of Humanitarian Assistance at Finn Church Aid made the decision to send an assessment team to Hungary with the following aims:

- Conduct a needs assessment to get a first-hand overview of the current operational context in Hungary,
- Have detailed conversations with HIA (Hungarian Interchurch Aid, ACT alliance partner) regarding their capacity to respond, strengths, weaknesses and needs,
- Determine, together with HIA, what kind of assistance FCA could provide (financial, capacity-building and/or personnel support), in particular as regards to education in emergencies,
- Filming, editing and producing communications material to be used in advocacy and campaigning in Finland, and to be shared with other ACT members.

## The assessment team:

- Renata Marie Ellingsen- NCA Senior Humanitarian Advisor
- Andres Miguel Espana-NCA Humanitarian Advisor
- Sonja Hemberg – FCA Humanitarian Advisor
- Kathy Angi- CoS Psychosocial Adviser, Initial Emergency Support Humanitarian Response Team
- Therese Jonsson – CoS Communications Officer
- Eriikka Käyhkö – FCA Communications Officer
- Ville Rätty – FCA Communications / Cameraman
- Christer Lænkholm – DCA Humanitarian Advisor
- Nikolaj Søndergaard – DCA Communication officer

## The timeframe and schedule of the mission:

### Greece

04.09.2015- 08.09.2015 NCA (hosted by IOCC)

- 05.09. Chios (Refugee transit centre, Police Department of Chios, Regional administration of the Islands)
- 06.09. Samos (monastery, Refugee transit centre, Port authorities, Police Department of Samos)
- 07.09. Athens (IOCC, Eleonas/Votanikos Temporary accommodation center)
- 08.09. Departure to Oslo

### Macedonia

- 5.09 Arriving in Macedonia (hosted by MCIC)
- 06.09 Gevgelija (Macedonia) Refugee registration center and transit zone & Idomeni (Greece) Refugee waiting area
- 07.09 Skopje – Red Cross and interior ministry & Slanishte – Refugee transit zone before entering Serbia

### Serbia

30.08.2015- 04.09.2015 NCA (hosted by Philanthropy)

- 30.08.-01.09. Belgrade (Philanthropy, UNHCR, NGO coordination meeting, WASH and shelter emergency meeting- Presevo, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Red Cross Serbia,)
- 02.09. Presevo and Miratovac
- 03.09. Zajecar
- 04.09. Belgrade (UNHCR, Royal Norwegian Embassy), departure Athens

### Hungary

07.09.2015 – 11.09.2015 FCA & CoS (Hosted by HIA)

- 07.09.2015 Budapest (Meeting) and Röszke (Hungary/Serbia border, refugees 'collection point' and reception centre at Röszke 2).
- 08.09.2015 Budapest (Meeting)and Röszke (Hungary/Serbia border and refugees 'collection point')
- 09.09.2015 Városszabadi refugee camp ('open facility' near Austrian border) and central Budapest (Keleti train station)
- 10.09.2015 Budapest (meetings with bishops of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, Office of Immigration and Nationality)

### Methodology and approaches

- Desk research
- Coordination with local and national authorities.
- Coordination with national and international NGOs.
- Interviews with key informants, beneficiaries and direct observations.
- NCA Field visit to Presevo and Zajecar transit centres in Serbia and to transit centres in Chios, Samos and Athens in Greece.
- CoS Field visits to Serbian/Hungarian border and Városszabadi refugee camp.
- FCA Field visit to Röszke 'collection' point and reception centre (border to Serbia), Városszabadi refugee camp (near the border to Austria), Keleti train station in Budapest
- DCA Field visit to Serbia: Presevo and Zajecar transit centres in Serbia and Belgrade park
- DCA Field visit to Macedonia Gevgelija (Macedonia) Refugee registration center and transit zone Idomeni (Greece) Refugee waiting area and Slanishte – Refugee transit zone before entering Serbia

## Findings and recommendations

### Greece

#### Institutional capacity to respond

With economic crisis and cuts in the public sector, the response capacity of the local activities and service providers is limited. The NCA team has visited together with IOCC/Apostoli staff two islands, Chios and Samos. On both islands, the local authorities expressed that the lack of support from the national budget lines, forces them to use own budget lines, originally planned for improvement of infrastructure or other projects and further strangulate their economies. In the coming months this means that the services provided to the refugees will be limited if not cancelled. On both islands, the main struggle is provision of food and water to refugees staying on the islands for more than a few hours. They report of catering companies getting bankrupt, having debts up to 1 mill EUR.

#### IOCC

IOCC is responding in Greece through its local partner, Apostoli /the philanthropic arm of the Holy Archdiocese of Athens. The first initial assessment was conducted in April 2015 and followed with response in the sectors of water, sanitation and hygiene, food security and distribution of hygiene and baby kits. IOCC is responding on Chios, Samos and Kos and is planning to also conduct needs assessment on Lesbos. IOCC is planning to engage an IOCC WASH coordinator currently engaged with WASH program in Lebanon, as technical support for response on the islands.

On the national level, IOCC/Apostoli are participating on sectoral coordination meetings organized by UNHCR. On the islands, they cooperate closely with local and regional authorities and national and international NGOs. In May 2015, IOCC signed a memorandum of understanding with the Greek Ministry of the Interior's Department for Immigration.

#### Management of transit centres on Samos and Chios

In Greece, the refugees originating from Syria undergo an express registration procedure, which allows them to leave the island the same day (if ferry tickets are available). The reception centers are therefore mainly accommodating refugees from other countries- Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Asian and African countries. The waiting time varies from 24 hours to several days. The centers have therefore sleeping quarters.

The centers are managed by the local police and are not "open" centers. The refugees cannot leave the centers until their registration process is finished.

#### Initial findings and recommendations- Chios and Samos

##### Chios reception center and waiting areas

###### *Findings*



The refugees arriving on the coast of Chios are picked up by coastal authorities and transported to the port. From there buses are organized to the Mersinidi reception center, where the refugees get registered. The center is ca 10 km from the city center.

IOCC/Apostoli has been renovating existing sanitation facilities and electric wiring in Mersinidi reception center. The assessment team did not get enough access to the center to assess the current conditions of the facilities. IOCC has also provided rubbish bins, hygiene items, school kits, portable mattresses and other supplies. The distribution was conducted by the police department.

The upper center on Chios had considerably worse conditions. A small tent city was erected, however the capacity is not sufficient and people are sleeping on mattresses under trees. The portable showers are leaking water, presenting possible health risk. Waste management is not exercised properly.

The local police department and local authorities are currently identifying new location for the center with higher capacity. Landslides can threaten the upper center during the autumn rains.

The fact that the refugees are staying at the centers for several days, requires regular provision of meals. For the time being, the refugees get 3 meals a day including bottled water (on Chios the tap water is too salty).

The Syrian refugees, who have finalized their registration process, can wait for available ferry tickets from a few hours to a few days. They are concentrated at the main park in the city center of Chios. There are sanitation facilities for the refugees, however they are not part of the support system and do not receive meals. Since there is a perception that Syrian refugees have enough money to purchase food. There are no shelters available in the park, this will be a challenge in the autumn and winter.

#### *Recommendations:*

- There is a plan of the local authorities to replace the current upper center with new facilities in coming weeks, therefore only reparation and system for cleaning of sanitation facilities is recommended.
- The provision of meals, water and distribution of hygiene items and baby kits.
- Solution for shelter and sanitation facilities for refugees, who are already registered and wait for the transport to the continent, should be sought.
- Provision of meals to the refugees, already registered and waiting for the transport to the continent.
- Distribution of clothes and shoes, as well as blankets and portable mattresses.

### **Samos reception center and port facilities**

#### *Findings*

The reception center on Samos is managed by the First Reception Service of the Department of Immigration, Ministry of Interior. The center is fenced and guarded by the police. The center hosts nationals of countries other than Syria. The standard in this center is considerably better than on Chios, it is clean and well managed. There is also a playground for children and a basketball yard. Increasing influx of refugees will be a clear challenge due to limited capacity of the center. IOCC is

planning to provide the center with an additional water tank and the repair of bungalow shelters & electrical systems.

On Samos, the Church of Greece, through its monasteries also provides support to the refugees, as they pass by.

The refugees are waiting for the transport to the continent in the port. The Port Administration has constructed sanitation facilities, including laundry facilities at the port. There is a plan to also provide temporary shelter.

### *Recommendations*

- Provision of meals, water and distribution of hygiene items and baby kits.
- Provision of meals to the refugees, already registered and waiting for the transport to the continent.
- Distribution of clothes and shoes, as well as blankets and portable mattresses.

### Other recommendations in Greece

It is expected that the influx of refugees will increase by more than 70% in the coming months and it is not expected anymore that the number of new arrivals will rapidly decrease during the winter, following other response modalities are recommended:

- Distribution of meals, food kits, hygiene and baby items, clothes and other supplies at unofficial temporary settlements of refugees
- Leaflets with practical and legal information to the refugees, information about their rights.
- Distribution of winterization items- clothes, shoes, mattresses, blankets etc. (Unfortunately the cash programming is not relevant here.)

### Greek-Macedonian border (Greek side Idomeni)

#### General observation

- 4 Km from official border crossing, deserted railway station. One old supermarket (3 hour queue)
- More than 10.000 people waiting for up to 4 days to cross.
- People form groups of 50 persons and get number
- One group of 50 allowed to cross every half hour
- Less than 20 toilets. (some Chemical Toilets from MSF)
- Few water sources (5)
- People sleep in their own tents or in the open

### Macedonia

Macedonia is generally a short term transit country. Immigration authorities process registration relatively fast meaning only a few hours waiting time at the registration center. After registration refugees proceed with, trains, busses and taxis to the northern border with Serbia. The journey takes

between 2 and 5 hours (longest with trains) Refugees pays 10 EUR for the train, 20 EUR for the bus and 25 EUR per person for a Taxi. Because there is no congestion on the route the refugees generally takes care of themselves and have the means to do it, if they are able to access shops. Which is not always the case as the border crossings are unofficial and far from the official route.

#### Greek-Macedonian border- Gevgelija (Macedonian side)

- People line up outside in groups of 50,
- Immigration check papers group leader hands (no fingerprints no individual interview or check
- Camp well organized – UNHCR shelterbox tents for resting and storage of health items
- Inside camp Red Cross, UNICEF local NGO with child friendly space, UNHCR.
- Local NGO distribute food bags a few times a day
- Water and toilets available
- Up to 1200 people in the camp or outside (saw only 400)
- 5-7 special trains a day directly from camp
- Busses and taxis 1 km across the border in Macedonia
- Partner Macedonian center for international cooperation (MCIC) has capacity to respond if needed

#### Macedonia-Serbian border- Slanishte (Macedonian side)

- Location is outside a in a remote village in old railway station
- Up 5000 refugees arriving per day in 5-6 special trains and busses
- Red Cross is present with medical aid (but have 2 hours between shifts without staff)
- Local organization Legis distributing food and water 24/7
- With Arabic speaking person informing and answering questions
- Local food companies, shops and other organizations come sometimes and distribute as well
- Food varies – chips, bread, milk, yoghurt, biscuits, local pastry, juice
- Few toilets available but cannot accommodate a full train (5-600 people)
- Most people continue to Serbia within 30 min. Only sick or vulnerable stay longer
- UNHCR shelterbox tents available
- Mobile charging station available
- Partner Macedonian center for international cooperation (MCIC) has capacity to respond if needed

## Serbia

### Institutional capacity to respond

The Government of Serbia has already alerted international community on its limited capacities to respond to this crisis. Apart from responsive ministries, the government also deployed local authorities, communal services, centres for social work, medical institutions, etc. All available resources have already been engaged, and so far the response of the Serbian government and Serbian society has been highly positive and very supportive towards the refugees. However, substantial, long-term support, from European countries will be needed in order to provide relief to additional hundreds of thousands of people who are transiting from the Middle East and Africa.

At the moment following programs and facilities have been developed:

- Refugee Aid Point in Presevo (Serbian-Macedonian border) – transiting site
- Refugee Aid Point in Subotica (Serbian-Hungarian border) – transiting site
- Processing point of refugees in Zajecar (Police department) – transiting site
- Temporary location in Kanjiza (Serbian-Hungarian border) – transiting site
- Refugee Aid Points in Belgrade and most probably Sid (Serbian-Croatian border), expected to be open by mid-October at latest – transiting sites
- Serbia has 6 Asylum Centres, active since 2008, with total capacity of 810 beds.

### Coordination

Main coordinator of the response on the governmental level is the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Issues, and operational coordinator is the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations.

UNHCR and Commissariat have done the efforts to organize coordination meetings on the national level, however the challenging context and rapidly developing emergency has made it difficult.

Philanthropy has invited NGOs active in the response to refugee crisis for coordination meeting on the 31.8., where 9 NGOs participated (IOCC Serbia, ASB, IDC, Adra, Caritas Serbia and Caritas Germany, Balkan Center for Migration, CRS and Help). The NGOs shared information about their responses, scaling up and geographical preferences. This meeting will be organized every 2<sup>nd</sup> week.

The UNHCR has made another effort to coordinate on the national level with the government and NGOs in the sectors of shelter and WASH, on the 01.09. 2015. However, as UNHCR did not coordinate their site planning and response planning with the Commissariat in forehand, no consensus was reached.

There was no new national coordination meeting scheduled when the team was leaving the country.

### Transit centres management

Transit centers are meant to be only registration centers and centers for temporary presence of the refugees during their journey to destination countries. There are no night-over facilities in the centers, only resting areas. The refugees stay here only for few hours in majority cases, however also groups of refugees staying for 24 or 48 hours were observed (mainly originating from African countries, Palestine or South Asian countries. The rations in food, hygiene items and baby kit distribution are accommodated to short-term needs.

The centers are managed by Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and local police departments. Following the IMF requirement for loan from February 2015, the public sector in Serbia cannot employ new public servants. This is a clear challenge. To speed up the registration of new arrivals and avoid large accumulation of refugees waiting for processing, new personnel is needed.

### Philanthropy

Philanthropy has started responding to refugee influx to Serbia in mid-June 2015. By 30.08.2015, the response was as following:

### Zaječar (border to Bulgaria)

- renting of mobile sanitary containers (one with showers and one with toilets) placed in police center (agreement with the police for operation and maintenance of the containers)
- 680 food packages, 300 hygiene kits (male and female), 55 baby kits distributed
- police support- paying salaries of additional police staff to enable quicker progress in the registration process

### Preševo (border to Macedonia)

- 850 Food kits, 53 baby kits, 336 hygiene kits. Upscaling- Winterization cloths & boots for children distributed
- 20 tons of firewood
- Renting of mobile sanitation facilities – containers (three with showers (6 each) and three with toilets (5 each) (agreement with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, management of the center, for operation and maintenance of the containers)

The response capacity of Philanthropy is already overstretched and will require additional recruitment.

The comparative advantage of Philanthropy as a partner is the good confirmed relationship with both national and local authorities, UNHCR and international and local NGOs.

In addition to Zajecar and Presevo, Philanthropy is also planning to respond in transit center in Beograd (to be defined in the beginning of October) and in Sid (to be defined in the beginning of October), including focus on winterization.

## Presevo and Zajecar- findings and recommendations

### Presevo Refugee Aid Point

Since July 2015 the Refugee Aid Point (RAP) in Presevo has seen 1200 to 1500 people per day enter Serbia. Over the past weeks this number has increased to approximately 5000 people per day. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is managing the center. The center has currently capacity to register 750- 1000 individuals daily.

Philanthropy has in mid-August provided the center management with 2 containers with showers (6 showers per container) and 2 containers with toilets (5 toilets per container). Additional container with showers and container with toilets were placed in the center at the end of the month (and not connected to the sewer system and water system during the team's visit.) Philanthropy has signed written agreement with the management of the center to provide all necessary services- desludging, regular cleaning and disinfection, maintenance.

NCA assessment team has visited the center on the 2.9. 2015. There were approximately 700 individuals present in the center at the time. The situation in the center was quite calm and seemed to be managed well. There was not a long queue in front of the center at that point. However it was reported that in cases of larger influx of new arrivals, the queue can stretch in several hundred meters. There were no shades and no facilities for those waiting.

Majority of the refugees in the center were families with children (in average up to 10 years, many infants and babies).

The team also visited Miratovac, the border crossing next to Presevo. A new group of refugees coming from train/bus from Macedonia has arrived (estimated as 1 000 individuals). At Miratovac, there is only a health check point, water tank and few tents for resting. No sanitary facilities are in place. According to the information from UNHCR site planner, the current “center” at Miratovac will be moved to other location, due to possible flooding.

At Miratovac are the refugees sorted by the police forces to groups. Men are going to Presevo on foot, while families with children, elderly and people with disabilities are transported to Presevo by UNHCR organized buses.

### WASH sector

Both the Commissariat and the UNHCR has expressed interest to Philanthropy being a watsan actor in Presevo and other transit centers, with technical support from NCA. At the point of the assessment there were no other major WASH stakeholders present.

#### Findings:

1. None of the toilets were functioning.  
The toilets are sitting flush toilets connected to the sewer system. The users are in general used to squat toilets. Bottles and large amount of paper are disposed in the toilets. The sewer system has most probably not sufficient capacity.  
The toilet containers were used only for charging mobile phones.  
The users are practicing open defecation behind the containers and in small forest behind the center, accessed through a cut whole in the fence.  
High health risk due to presence of excrements outside of the containers close to a source of drinking water.
2. The maintenance/cleaning was not in place.  
The management of the center, the Commissariat and local authorities do not have capacity to follow up on the cleaning, disinfection and maintenance of the sanitation containers. Regular routines are not developed and most probably there is not enough knowledge amount emergency sanitation and hygiene management.
3. The handwashing facilities next to the sanitary containers are functioning and in use. The six taps with large sinks are used for personal hygiene, laundry and as a source of drinking water.
4. The two containers with showers- one male and one female, are in use and people were queuing outside.
5. The team has also visited Miratovac, the border crossing from Macedonia. There were no toilets or washing facilities available.

#### Suggested action:

1. The capacity of the sanitary system in the Presevo senter:

The plans for expansion of the center need to be finalized and clarified. In preferable situation, the ration of the toilets per person is recommended to be 1:50. The center is a transit point with a few thousands of people expected to pass through every day. The expansion of the center should be

done in agreement with Commissariat and center management. The capacity of the sewage system needs to be tested before a solution is provided. Temporary emergency solution should be provided in order to improve the situation immediately. The current containers need to be cleaned, disinfected and repaired. The new containers should be connected to the water and sewage system. The proper routine for cleaning and maintenance needs to be developed. It is recommended to provide squat toilets with flush and possibility for personal wash after using the toilet. These are easier to maintain and more suitable for a center with so high number of transiting individuals. The solution will depend on capacity of the sewer system, placing of the toilets (inside of a building or outside) and planned capacity of the center.

## 2. The maintenance and cleaning

Proper routine for cleaning and disinfection of the containers is necessary several times daily and needs to be developed. The eventual desludging and maintenance needs to provide regularly. The area behind the containers should be cleaned and disinfected.

## 3. The handwashing facilities

In addition to handwashing facilities, already present on place, drinking water tapstands should be provided.

## 4. The showers and laundry facilities

It is recommended to provide the shower containers with shade/plastic sheeting around, to prevent insight when the door is opened. The new container needs to be connected to the water system.

The number of toilets, showers and hand washing facilities will be decided, when the site planning is finalized and approved by all relevant actors.

### *Funding issues:*

As Philanthropy does not have a Partner Agreement with UNHCR, eventual support to watsan activities has to be negotiated with DRC, which has partner an agreement with UNHCR and is implementing partner in shelter sector. There is also possibility to seek funding from the Royal Norwegian Embassy. Some of the costs will be covered by NCA contribution to ACT Appeal, earmarked Philanthropy.

### *Preliminary planned technical support by NCA:*

NCA will provide Philanthropy with necessary technical competence. On the 8.9. a watsan engineer and emergency coordinator are deployed in Presevo.

Their tasks are as following and will be exercised in close coordination with DRC, UNHCR, center management and local and national authorities:

- Develop and start implementation of temporary quick impact solution for current sanitation situation (Presevo/Miratovac).
- Develop and start implementation of semi-permanent solution for sanitation situation (Presevo/Miratovac).
- Develop a monitoring plan and plan for routines regarding cleaning, disinfection and maintenance of the sanitation facilities.

- Facilitate a new agreement between the authorities and Philanthropy.
- Monitor proper implementation of the routines. The wages of the cleaners and maintainers and other necessary expenses should be supported, as the authorities do not have sufficient funds anymore.

#### *Other sectors:*

There is a clear need to support food security sector, distributions, management of the centers and other sectors like psychosocial support. As already mentioned, the national authorities do not have both human and financial resources to manage increasing influx of refugees. The situation is unbearable.

The Red Cross Serbia had only hygiene and food kits available for next 20 days (until 22.9.) and has expressed need for additional support. Red Cross Serbia is by the national authorities defined as the only agency with permission to distribute at the transit centers. However monitoring of distributions and branding/visibility can be agreed upon.

#### *Recommendations:*

- It is recommended to provide the centers, where Philanthropy has or is planning distributions and in coordination with other stakeholders, with safe places for women and children with possible psychosocial support possibilities.
- It is recommended to distribute food kits, baby kits and hygiene kits (1 day portions, contents agreed with UNHCR).
- Winterization items, like blankets, warm clothes and shoes will be of great need in the coming months.
- It is recommended that Philanthropy recruit additional staff to handle the emergency response. The current staff is quite overstretched and it is expected that the refugee situation will get more acute in the next months.
- It is recommended that the Philanthropy staff is trained in management of emergency responses and Core humanitarian standards.
- Support to the local authorities in form of “seconding” personnel for the registration process.

#### *Zajecar transit point*

During the assessment visit, there were not more than 100 new arrivals per day. The registration was managed by the local police department, in their own facilities. There were no urgent needs observed at that point, however if the influx of refugees through this border crossing will increase rapidly, immediate support will be needed.

The refugees passing this center are in majority originating from Syria and rather groups of men than families.



## Belgrade and Sid transit centre

Belgrade transit center is planned to be opened in the beginning of October, due to negotiations with owners of buildings and land at the planned location. The center is crucial for winterization purposes. By the time being, the refugees transiting through Belgrade, stay overnight in the parks in center of Belgrade, if they do not have resources to stay at hotels or hostels. This will be challenge with coming rains and colder weather in autumn and winter months.

The Sid transit center will be crucial if the border to Hungary will be closed and the stream of refugees will aim for Croatia. The Commissariat is negotiating to use an old hospital building in Sid as transit center.

At the time of the assessment, none of those locations was confirmed, therefore no site visit took place. New assessment can be organized when the situation occurs.

## Other recommendations

It is expected that the influx of refugees will increase by more than 70% in the coming months and it is not expected anymore that the number of new arrivals will rapidly decrease during the winter, following other response modalities are recommended:

- Support to local and national authorities by “seconding” additional personnel for registrations.
- Distribution of meals, food kits, hygiene and baby items, clothes and other supplies at unofficial temporary settlements of refugees (like parks in Belgrade)
- Leaflets with practical and legal information to the refugees, information about their rights.
- Distribution of winterization items- clothes, shoes, matrasses, blankets etc. (Unfortunately the cash programming is not relevant here.)

## Hungary

### General Observations Hungary – Serbian Border (Hungary side)

- People crossing through a gap in the fence on railway tracks from Serbia. The Hungarian army was aiming at completing the fence by 15 September.
- Approx. 2500-3000 persons per day crossing over the border from Serbia during the assessment week (compared to 2-3 persons per day in May).
- Local org., private people and int. org handing out – food, water, blankets, clothes etc. Completely uncoordinated. Refugees just go around to different org. and pick things they want.
- Half eaten food, water and blankets lying around
- Massive media presence
- Refugees confused and frustrated, don’t know the process. Afraid of having fingerprints taken.

## HIA

### Assessment of HIA and its cooperation with the Hungarian Government

HIA has worked in Hungary for more than 20 years. It has many projects internationally and a number domestically. Their funding is diverse but some comes from the Hungarian Government, especially to run 'social programs' for vulnerable populations within Hungary. HIA is one of a number of organizations with such contracts. In addition, HIA ran the program for unaccompanied minor refugees for several years on behalf of the Office for Immigration and Nationality. In the present crisis, HIA is in conversation with the OIN to lease to them one of their properties to be used as another refugee camp for approximately 300 people. All of these contracts with the Hungarian government from different departments appear to be typical competitive contracts. During the assessment week, HIA received daily phone calls from OIN requesting HIA assistance in different locations in the country (e.g. blankets and hygiene kits for Rösztke, water for 700 refugees onboard a train to Austria which had been halted at the border). HIA also had meetings with the Hungarian Red Cross and the Maltese Order to coordinate assistance and avoid duplication.

Additional Actors in this response including Churches

In surveying the other non-ACTalliance actors in Hungary, particularly the church related actors several were found to be active in this emergency. The Lutheran Church in Hungary is quite active collecting food, clothes and money and channeling their efforts primarily through HIA. The Reformed Church Aid group is responding with food, clothing and medical care – especially gynecological care. Baptist Aid is working with food, blankets and other immediate support. Kalunba (formerly Reformed Church Refugee Ministry) is responding with an emergency shelter for families in addition to its ongoing work with education, housing and psychosocial support for refugees and asylum seekers in Hungary.

In addition to the church related actors, there are several other organizations working. Migrant Aid is a newly organized volunteer organization providing food, support and most importantly information for migrating people at the train station in Budapest. Menedek is a large NGO that has been working with refugees and migrant people for more than 20 years in Hungary providing social work services and education for professionals working with them. Cordelia Foundation provides clinical mental health services for refugees and migrants. They are associated internationally with the Centers for Victims of Torture and have years of experience. Finally the Helsinki Committee represents refugees legally and is currently filing legal charges against the Hungarian Government protesting the treatment of the migrating people.

### Rösztke reception centre and Hungary / Serbia border

- The camp had been set up on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September (three days before the assessment) and had at the time of the visit a capacity of approx. 800 in green army tents.
- The facility, run by the police, is a 'closed reception centre' i.e. that the refugees are not allowed to leave, that visitors have to apply for permission to visit, and no journalists / photographs are allowed.
- The purpose of facility was to receive / collect refugees crossing the border from Serbia a couple of kilometres away from the border and to conduct medical checks and 'light registration' – i.e. name, origin and some other details.
- The refugees receive an armband upon completion of registration and then get taken away by bus to an open refugee camp/facility where the asylum-seeking process begins.
- The police stated that their aim is to have refugees in and out in approx. 5 hours. (Food and water is provided every 5 hours). However this changed during the week when the centre reached its capacity and refugees had to camp outside the centre.

- HIA had applied and managed to get permission for HIA and FCA to enter.
- Approximately 70% of people coming through are of Syrian origin, and the rest Afghans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and some – but from what we saw very few – from African countries (DR Congo was mentioned).
- The majority of Syrians are families – parents or grandparents travelling with children. The majority of single men were seemingly of non-Syrian origin.
- The majority carry very few items – on average one small rucksack/bag each, and many have a tent bag.
- Many were very confused asking whether they were in fact in Hungary, and almost everyone asked where the police was, and said they wanted to avoid registration.
- The vast majority said they did not want to stay in Hungary, but rather continue on to Germany – and some to Sweden, Holland, Denmark (and a couple to the UK, Belgium, Norway or Finland). Everyone seemed very aware of the Schengen rules and the Dublin convention according to which the country where a refugee first arrives (and is registered) becomes the country where they must apply for asylum, and could be returned to.
- The rumours and information (whether true or false) is spreading very fast – and is probably exacerbated by the smugglers in whose interest it is if the refugees avoid the registration process and try to enter Austria illegally. There was heavy media (both national and international) presence at the border. NB – on the other side of the motorway (i.e. 500m away from the reception centre) there is a petrol station where we stopped for refreshments. There were approx. 30-40 cars and taxis parked – which reportedly belong to smugglers.

### Vámoszabadi refugee camp

- The camp is an open facility i.e. refugees are able to leave freely. By time they arrive, they have registered and applied for asylum. Refugees are able to come and go freely, and thus the number of people at the facility varies hugely (1000 at midnight, 400 at 8am – average stay in May: 8 days, now: some hours).
- The facility is an old workers camp (there is a big industrial plant nearby). 3 months ago the facility had a capacity for 250 which the Office for Immigration had requested to be gradually increased to up to 1500 on 7 September.
- Three meals a day are provided (+2 extra snacks to pregnant women and children). Also a community kitchen – those with special diets receive financial assistance instead of food, and bus transportation into the city centre is arranged 6 times per day.
- Pocket money is provided to those who stay a minimum of 25 days.
- There are washing facilities and some toilets, and in general the facility looks relatively clean. 11 staff including 5 social workers (1 speaks Arabic, 1 speaks Persian).
- Medical staff is present 8am-8pm.
- There is a child friendly space which HIA uses once a week for psychosocial activities for children (2 hours, 10:00-12:00). Psychologists & Social workers play with children, and draw, make handicraft. The same room is used by the school/teachers (education is compulsory in Hungary). HIA has permission from the OIN to operate at the facility.

- The day of the visit, HIA staff had been informed that the school would start operating daily at the centre (teacher arranged and paid for by the authorities) – only 2 children had been present in lessons that morning.
- HIA staff noted that they would coordinate timetables with the teacher, since there is only one space in the centre that is suitable for children. HIA staff members walk around the family floor before the activities begin to invite children (and a guardian) to come.
- The number of children taking part varies hugely depending on how many people are staying at the centre. HIA could increase the frequency of the activities – but this is a question of capacity; would need to recruit more staff.

### Keleti train station and central Budapest

- During the time of the visit, there were some refugees waiting at the station, however, compared to media reports from the previous week, the station was fairly empty since the trains were running again to Austria.
- There are volunteers providing food, water, clothes and shoes at the station.
- There were posters posted on the station walls recommending refugees/migrants not to register with the Hungarian police noting that the Dublin convention would mean that other EU countries could return people to the first country where they had registered.

### Coordination

#### Overview of Actors in Hungary

**Government:** Annamaria Veres – the Deputy Director at the Directorate of Refugee Affairs. She gave an overview of the authorities’ response and process: Röskze border crossing – collection point – reception centre / registration – open facility / waiting for asylum processing.

There has been a dramatic increase in the amount of asylum applications since 2013: e.g. 1600 applications in 2005, 42 800 in 2014 and by 10 September 2015: 161 884. This has been a big change, and all official plans have had to be modified – working to meet the new needs. In July 2015 alone there were over 30 000 applications in Hungary (second highest amount in Europe, only Germany had more – versus 2014 when Hungary was the 5<sup>th</sup> on the list of asylum applications in the EU).

The origin of the persons seeking asylum in Hungary in 2015:	Decisions made so far in 2015:
1) Syria (55 942), 2) Afghanistan (42 091), 3) Kosovo (24 567), 4) Pakistan (14 074), 5) Iraq (7613).	1) Applications under process (89 855), 2) Granted asylum (131), 3) Cancelled procedure / applicant disappeared (50 534), 4) People under subsidiary protection (2), 5) Application denied (1839).

**Police/Border Police:** Responsible for registering/checking each person entering the country. Responsible for keeping order.

**Army:** Responsible for protection of the country from external threats. They were called in by the police to help secure the borders when the borders were closed to migrating people.

**Office of Immigration and Nationality:** Responsible for asylum applications, residency permits, etc. Also responsible for care of all asylum seekers in camps in Hungary and those who choose to live in the community. Provide food, housing, medical care etc. for all asylum seekers, resettlement package for those accepted as legal refugees (granted asylum).

## **NGOs**

**HIA:** ACT alliance partner organization. Has both domestic and international projects ongoing. Receives funding through ACT mechanisms and others including Hungarian government. Hungarian government pays for projects within Hungary helping impoverished etc and HIA is implementer. HIA also works in cooperation with OIN in several projects including opening a new camp on HIA property, administering the program for unaccompanied minors for a while and recruiting and providing social workers for another new camp. They are also doing a 'psychosocial' program for children in 2 or 3 camps. In the last days, they have opened an "Information Point" at the border to help migrating people have correct information about transportation, registration requirements and asylum applications in the EU countries.

**Kalumba:** Member CCME. Formerly the Refugee Ministry of the Reformed Church until last weekend. The church closed this program in June, laying off 16 staff. The remaining 3 staff finish their employment with the church this weekend. However, they have formed an NGO and are continuing to work as an independent organization. They are presently providing a shelter for migrating refugee families and continuing with ongoing psychosocial programs supporting asylum seekers living in Hungary. Seeking funding to restart 4 programs focused on the integration of refugees into Hungary. Work with both professional staff and large number of volunteers.

**Reformed Church Aid:** Small disaster response program providing immediate humanitarian relief. Currently providing food, water, blankets, mattresses etc. One staff person, volunteers.

**Lutheran Synod in Hungary:** Congregations providing support at many levels- Collecting donations of clothes, medical supplies, blankets, volunteers etc. Supports HIA as their professional implementer. Has published simple pamphlets in Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, French, and English to assist migrating people with information to orient them.

**Baptist Aid:** Quite large NGO with capacity. Works internationally as well as some in Hungary. Now doing Humanitarian Relief for migrating refugees but no history of doing refugee work/support in Hungary.

**Migrant Aid:** a new spontaneous organization staffed by volunteers providing humanitarian aid to migrating people. Staffed by volunteers.

**Cordelia Foundation:** Representative of Center for Victims of Torture in Hungary. Provides level 4 psychiatric and psychological support for refugees and asylum seekers in Hungary. Good, responsive to refugee needs, advocates when system contributes to the problems.

**Menedek:** Large NGO providing social services for refugees. Also does significant training for professionals in Hungary about how to work with refugees. Does research on refugee issues. Funded by UNHCR. [www.menedek.hu](http://www.menedek.hu)

**Helsinki Committee Lawyers:** Provide free or low cost legal representation for asylum seekers appealing decisions, facing discrimination, etc. Funded by UNHCR.

### *Findings:*

HIA organized an enlightening visit for ACT partner organizations. We first visited the Serbian/Hungarian border where a very large number of migrating people were crossing into Hungary. Determining how to best be of support to these people has been a challenge since they are moving quickly to pass through Hungary, taking with them only the very small amount they can carry. Food and water are being provided by a number of actors though there is great need. Medical support is provided by the Red Cross and Medicines sans Frontiers. The gap area that HIA chose to fill is in providing accurate information to people about where they can get help, transportation options, the official government registration process and warnings about smugglers who were parked in large numbers less than a kilometer from the border, waiting for people.

The second day included a visit to the Vámoszabadi Refugee camp located near to the Slovak and Austrian borders. Following the registration process at the Serbian border, the police move people by bus to one of the 6 refugee camps in Hungary. They may choose to request asylum in Hungary or move on in hopes of gaining asylum elsewhere. Many of the people arriving do not even go into the camp where they are provided with beds, 3 meals daily (5 for vulnerable populations), medical care and education for children. The director reported that he needed to count how many people were present in the camp several times a day to know how many would be eating meals because the numbers were changing so quickly.

During a meeting with three Bishops of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, they elaborated on what their congregations were doing to support the migrating people including collecting clothes, food and supporting the work of HIA.

The Office of Immigration and Nationality are responsible for persons seeking asylum. This office works in cooperation with the police whose job is to manage Hungary's borders and keep order. The Office of Immigration and Nationality runs all of the refugee camps, registers asylum seekers living outside of camps and makes the determination on all applications for asylum. This visit was particularly enlightening since the statistics of people arriving, applications for asylum and numbers granted or rejected are determined here. Many statistics were shared but the one most stunning was that in the month of July 2015, Hungary received 31,287 applications for asylum. For a country of 9 million, this is a huge number, even if more than half of them move on and re-apply in Germany or Sweden.

### *Suggested action:*

#### Planned Appeal and Capacity

HIA has planned in its appeal to provide food, non-food items, and hygiene packages for women, psychosocial support, education and shelter (renovate an existing facility owned by HIA). In reviewing their capacity and the plans, there seems to be good strength in administrative skills required to implement the plans. They have a strong financial department, good communications, and good logistics.

Gabor Balint, the head of international responses, asked for support from Church of Sweden through training and mentoring to develop the skills in psychosocial support needed in this situation

For the moment, HIA is able to procure everything that they need from within Hungary, and they have also received large donations from corporate donors such as Tesco. As it stands, HIA has submitted their part to the ACT Regional Appeal and will program as needed and depending on the level of funding received. In terms of personnel, HIA noted that they would welcome an extra pair of

hands who could physically help in distribution – or Arabic/Dari speakers to provide information e.g. at the border to new-comers.

## Conclusion

DRC Conclusion for Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary:

- Support Philanthropy in Serbia
- Support Hungarian Interchurch aid
- Monitor situation in Macedonia and support MCIC if needed
- Not push for a cash based response – generally not appropriate or properly politically acceptable

NCA Conclusion for Serbia and Greece

- Support IOCC in Greece through the ACT Appeal
- Support Philanthropy in Serbia to develop their WASH program through seconded technical and management staff and contributions to the ACT Appeal

CoS Conclusions for Hungary, Greece & Serbia

- Support IOCC in Greece through the Appeal
- Support for Philanthropy in Serbia
- Support for HIA in Hungary
- Discussing CBPS training

FCA Conclusion:

- Support for HIA in Hungary
- Support for Philanthropy in Serbia
- Support for IOCC in Greece
- Monitor the situation in Hungary and could, at the request of HIA, deploy an education specialist in the next phase if the refugees are staying longer in Hungary
- Willing to look into personnel support from the FCA Roster mechanism should the implementing agencies request

*Signed*

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Sofie Grundin – Church of Sweden

Sonja Hemberg- Finn Church Aid

Christer Lænkholm – Danish Church Aid

Renata Marie Ellingsen – Norwegian Church Aid

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