

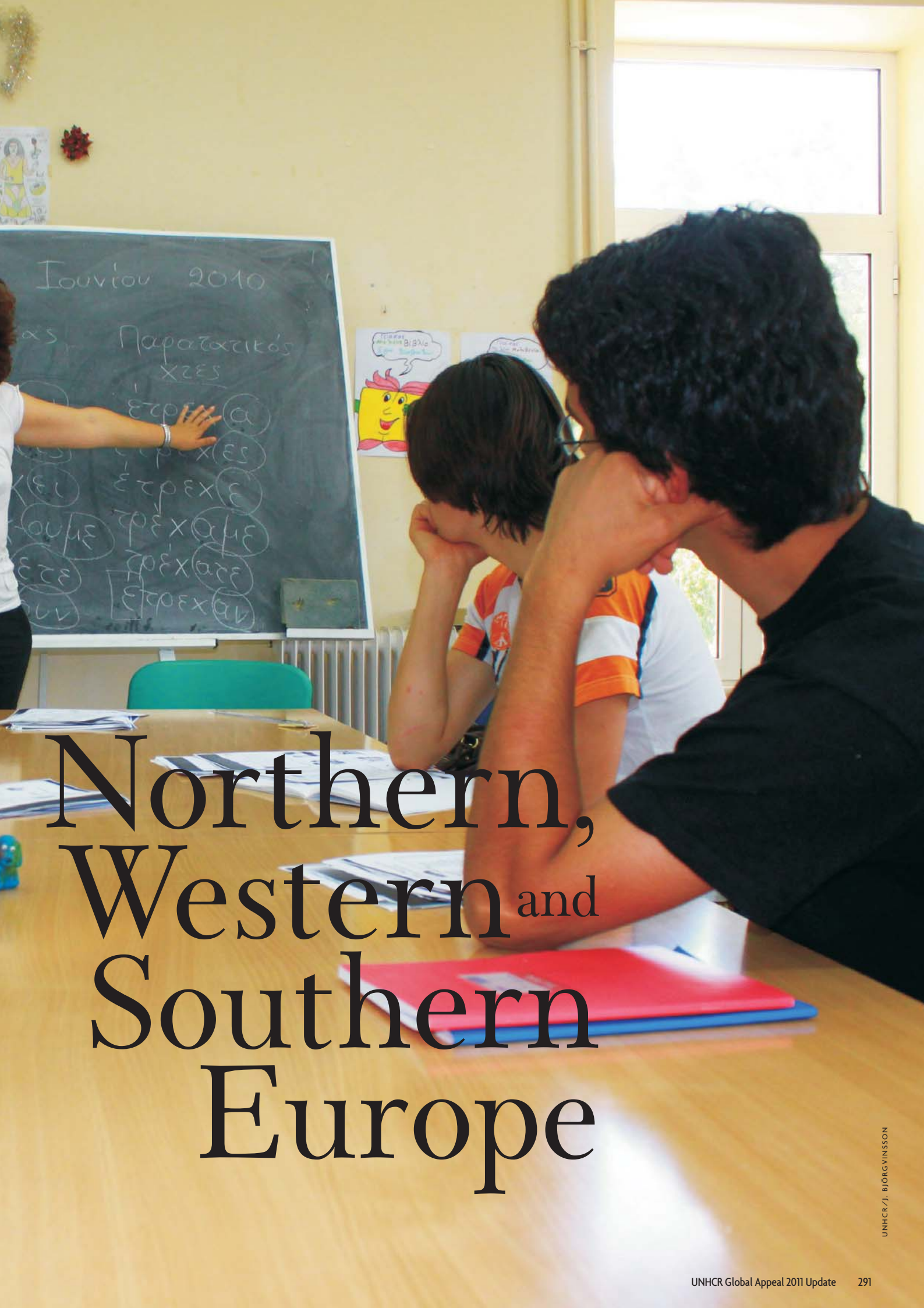
Unaccompanied minors receive Greek language classes at a reception centre.

Albania  
Andorra  
Austria  
Belgium  
Cyprus  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Holy See  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Monaco  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Portugal  
San Marino  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



### | Working environment |

This subregion is critically important to the international protection regime. According to provisional figures, nine out of ten asylum applications in Europe were lodged in countries of this subregion in the first half of 2010. In the same period, more than 90 per cent of decisions in Europe to grant refugee status have been taken here, and the subregion is host to nearly all refugees accepted for resettlement in Europe.



# Northern, Western and Southern Europe



The countries in this subregion face diverse but often interrelated challenges. Twenty of them are EU Member States and therefore actively engaged in the efforts of the European Union (EU) to build a Common European Asylum System. Some are located at the EU's external borders, others are not. All face the challenge of protecting refugees within complex mixed migratory flows.

Furthermore, the subregion includes 15 of UNHCR's top 20 donor countries, accounts for more than 40 per cent of private-sector contributions to UNHCR, and has an active civil society and influential media.

Key concerns for UNHCR are access to territory and to asylum procedures, legislation relating to refugee status and complementary forms of protection, the quality and consistency of asylum decisions, the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and the promotion and successful implementation of resettlement. UNHCR is concerned about differences in standards of protection across the subregion, and by manifestations of racism and xenophobia.

Some countries in the subregion have long offered asylum and resettlement to eligible individuals, while others have become refugee-receiving countries more recently. In the latter, UNHCR is working closely with governments to improve and maintain their international protection regimes.

While the overall number of asylum applications in the subregion has remained generally stable since 2008, there are significant disparities from one country to another. Some have witnessed considerable growth in the number of applications, while others have experienced a significant decline.

The number of asylum-seekers arriving by sea in Southern Europe has fallen sharply. Cooperation between European States and third countries to prevent irregular arrivals, including through interception at sea, appears to have led to this decline. This continues to generate concerns over access to territory and asylum procedures for those seeking protection.

In view of the wide disparities in the numbers of asylum applications received in different States, the implementation of the Dublin II Regulation, which identifies the State responsible for examining an asylum application, has stimulated a wider debate on responsibility sharing within the EU. This debate has centred on Greece, where the Government has initiated an overhaul of its asylum system, with the support of UNHCR. This will be a long-term process in which UNHCR will remain closely involved through 2011 and beyond.

In some countries, there has been a sharp rise in the number of applications by unaccompanied and separated children, mostly from Afghanistan and Somalia. UNHCR will remain fully engaged in the policy debate on proposed responses to this worrying trend.

## Strategy in 2011

Three regional offices – in Brussels, Stockholm and Rome – seek to ensure coherence in UNHCR's work in this subregion. They coordinate with the regional office in Budapest to ensure consistency of strategies with those in countries of Central Europe.

UNHCR's approach in the subregion is oriented toward: i) safeguarding international protection space and building and maintaining effective asylum systems; ii) promoting durable solutions through integration and resettlement; and iii) mobilizing resources and support for UNHCR's work worldwide.

It pursues these aims through collaboration with the EU institutions, the Council of Europe, IOM, as well as NGOs, lawyers, academics and others. UNHCR will continue to emphasize the need for evidence-based policies, and will use participatory assessments to gather information on persons of concern. In view of its statutory responsibility to supervise international conventions for the protection of refugees, UNHCR will stay engaged at the national and regional levels in the development of refugee law and practice.

UNHCR will support the EU as it progresses toward establishing a Common European Asylum System and a European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The Office will be represented on the EASO Management Board, and create a position to ensure constructive liaison with this body. Current working arrangements with the Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency will be maintained.

## | Constraints |

Migration and asylum, along with security considerations, are key issues in the subregion. Political changes can bring policy shifts, which have a direct impact on international protection, including access to territory and asylum procedures, as well as support for integration. Border control measures, penalties for illegal entry and the increased use of detention affect asylum-seekers. Ensuring the consistent application of evolving EU legal norms remains a challenge. The economic situation may also have a negative impact on the attitudes of host communities toward asylum-seekers and refugees. Racism and xenophobia affect persons of concern to UNHCR.

## | Operations |

- **Safeguarding international protection space and building effective asylum systems**

In many countries in the subregion—Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain in particular—UNHCR's activities will be dominated by challenges emerging from mixed flows of irregular migrants. In all these countries, UNHCR will seek to promote protection-sensitive border measures, to make sure that persons seeking protection are properly identified, and have access to territories and procedures where their needs can be assessed.

In France, UNHCR will continue its work in the Calais region, aimed at ensuring that international protection standards are met. Throughout the subregion, UNHCR will advocate for alternatives to detention and appropriate measures for vulnerable individuals.

UNHCR will offer technical advice and support at both national and EU levels, and submit its views to national and regional courts as appropriate, in order to uphold and improve protection standards, and promote improvements and consistency in asylum decisions. The regional project addressing quality of asylum systems, which has been implemented in Central Europe, is extended to Southern Europe. This project is supported by the European Refugee Fund.

The Office will also work with governments in Southern Europe to enhance the fairness and efficiency of asylum procedures and set up mechanisms to evaluate them. Similar projects are also foreseen or ongoing in Austria, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as in Central Europe. UNHCR will continue its operational role in national asylum procedures in France, Italy and Spain, and will take on such a role in Greece in the context of the country's planned reform of its asylum system. In all these countries, UNHCR will continue to advocate for appropriate protection of unaccompanied and separated children.

In order to gain a better understanding of the issue of statelessness in this subregion, UNHCR will strengthen its analysis of the profile and rights of non-citizens and stateless people. It will also work to find solutions for them and advocate for more States to accede to the international Conventions on statelessness.

- **Promoting durable solutions through integration and resettlement**

Finding durable solutions for people of concern, including through the integration and naturalization of beneficiaries of international protection, will remain a key focus for UNHCR. The Office will emphasize the need to take age, gender and other diversity factors into account, and will pay particular attention to the importance of family reunification for successful integration.

UNHCR will also work closely with States and the European Commission to increase resettlement possibilities, and will participate in efforts to promote the sharing of responsibility within the EU. Particular attention will be paid to the need for structured integration support in new resettlement programmes.

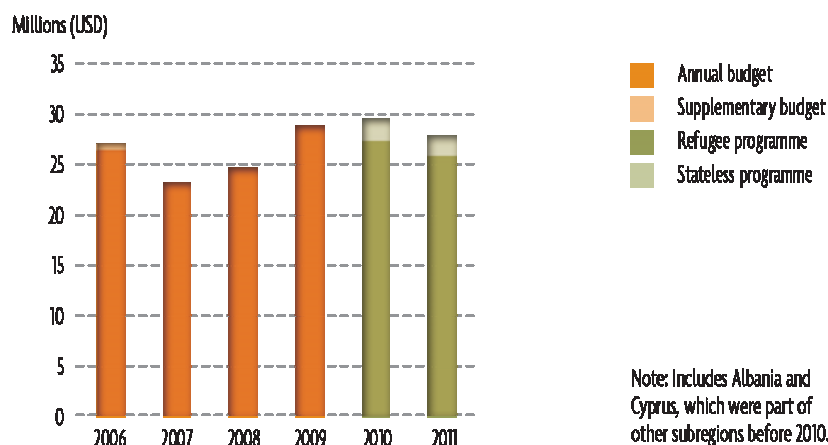
- **Mobilizing support for UNHCR's work worldwide**

Partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations are critical to UNHCR's work worldwide. Many of UNHCR's largest donors as well as implementing and advocacy partners are in this subregion, and provide strong political and financial support for the Office's global work. UNHCR will continue to mobilize resources from governmental, inter-governmental and private sources. Offices across the subregion will seek to gain broad public understanding for UNHCR's work, and to build support for persons of concern.

## Financial information

The level of the budget for 2011 is comparable to that of 2010. Nearly 93 per cent of the budget for the subregion in 2011 will be allocated to activities that concern refugees and asylum-seekers, the remainder to those concerning stateless persons. Main components will remain activities related to the quality of asylum decisions, the promotion of integration and the identification and resolution of situations of statelessness.

### UNHCR's budget in Northern, Western and Southern Europe 2006 – 2011



### UNHCR budget for Northern, Western and Southern Europe (USD)

OPERATION	2010 REVISED BUDGET	2011				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Belgium Regional Office <sup>1</sup>	4,795,258	11,471,349	1,171,946	0	0	12,643,295
France	2,870,188	0	0	0	0	0
Germany <sup>2</sup>	4,032,680	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland	687,263	0	0	0	0	0
Italy Regional Office <sup>3</sup>	11,680,930	10,608,750	81,473	0	0	10,690,223
Spain	1,516,550	1,356,762	234,190	0	0	1,590,952
Sweden Regional Office <sup>4</sup>	2,232,378	2,210,577	469,541	0	0	2,680,118
United Kingdom	1,634,355	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,449,601</b>	<b>25,647,438</b>	<b>1,957,150</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27,604,588</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes activities in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Ireland, UK and the Liaison office in Switzerland.

<sup>2</sup> Includes activities in Austria.

<sup>3</sup> Includes activities in Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Portugal.

<sup>4</sup> Includes activities in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway.