



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2017-0057, 22 February 2017

Unaccompanied children in Greece and Italy

Backbench Business Debate Main Chamber, 23 February 2017

A backbench business debate on a motion relating to unaccompanied children in Greece and Italy will be held in the Commons Chamber on Thursday 23 February 2017.

The debate will be opened and lead by Alison McGovern, Heidi Allen, Tom Brake and Anne McLaughlin.

The original representation to the Committee may be viewed [here](#).

The text of the motion is:

That this House has considered the Government's support for the Syrian refugee crisis; commends the UK on its provision of aid to Syria and the region, the resettlement programmes and support to unaccompanied children in France; acknowledges that in 2016 over 30,000 unaccompanied children arrived by sea in Greece and Italy; notes that only 8 children were transferred from Greece and Italy under the Dublin III Regulation last year and none under the Dubs scheme; expresses disappointment that the Dubs Scheme will be ending after only 350 children benefiting; calls on the Government to work with the Greek and Italian governments to support access to family reunification through Dublin in a timely manner; and calls on the Government to continue to monitor local authority capacity for further transfers of children under the Dubs scheme, consulting with local authorities at least once every financial year.

The proceedings of this debate may be watched on [parliamentlive.tv](#).

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Terry McGuinness and
Sarah Pepin

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1. Background

1.1 Greece

In March 2016 the border between Greece and FYR Macedonia was closed and the [EU-Turkey agreement](#) took effect. The UNHCR states that those refugees who arrived in Greece prior to 20 March 2016 have been almost fully transferred to mainland Greece and have the right to legal stay, asylum, family reunification and the possibility to benefit from the relocation scheme as per previous policy. Since the start of the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement on 20 March 2016, new arrivals are kept at the [Reception and Identification Centers](#) (RICs) or [hotspot facilities](#) in the 5 islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros, until they are registered and processed.¹

Since the border restrictions introduced in March 2016, UNICEF estimates at least 21,000 refugee and migrant children remain stranded in Greece, living in 'extremely inappropriate conditions for months'.²

The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), supported by UNICEF, estimates that as of 27 January 2017 the number of unaccompanied children is 2,200.³ The UNHCR says an average of 190 unaccompanied children arrive in Greece each month.⁴

However there are only 1,282 places available in shelters for unaccompanied children. As of 27 January 2017 there were 1,350 unaccompanied children on the waiting list for shelter.⁵

The UNHCR [Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe](#) for 2017 identifies numerous issues facing refugees and migrants in Greece.⁶ They include:

- National capacity for accommodation of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children remains inadequate
- Child protection case management requires strengthening
- Few programmes target adolescents and young people (up to 24 years of age), a group in 'dire need' of non-formal and skills education, language learning and trainings that can reduce their vulnerability, risk of exploitation and their engagement in illegal activities
- Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are not reporting crimes or seeking assistance due to sites' lack of police and inconsistency in following guidelines to mitigate risk of SGBV
- High risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking of unaccompanied children

Border restrictions introduced in March 2016 have left many stranded in Greece

Unaccompanied children lack accommodation, adequate protection, necessary care and guidance

¹ UNHCR, [Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe: January to December 2017](#), December 2016, page 45

² UNICEF, [Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe Humanitarian Situation Report #19](#), 16 January 2017

³ EKKA, [Situation Update: Unaccompanied Children in Greece](#), 27 January 2017

⁴ UNHCR, [Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe: January to December 2017](#), December 2016, page 50

⁵ EKKA, [Situation Update: Unaccompanied Children in Greece](#), 27 January 2017

⁶ UNHCR, [Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe: January to December 2017](#), December 2016, pages 50-53

The most recent [UNHCR update on the refugee situation in Europe](#)⁷ provides information on the 'operational context' in Greece, including the impact of harsh winter weather. Of the situation faced by unaccompanied children it says at page 6:

- With an average of 190 UASC arrival per month, 277 UASC were stranded in the RICs by end of December, waiting for a referral to an alternative care facility. Lack of security in the RICs and protection risks, such as SGBV is a major concern.
- Survival sex and sexual exploitation of UASC is a major protection concern with different reports on this practice taking place mostly in Athens. UNHCR has carried out a comprehensive assessment on such protection gaps and is strengthening the protection support to UASC to prevent these incidents.

The exposure of unaccompanied children to risk of sexual and gender-based violence is a major concern of aid agencies

1.2 Italy

Whilst the closure of the Greece/ FYR Macedonia border and the EU-Turkey agreement led to a drastic decrease of arrivals of refugees and migrants in Greece and the Western Balkans, UNICEF claims they were followed by the revitalisation of the much more dangerous Central Mediterranean route.⁸

25,846 unaccompanied and separated children arrived in Italy by sea in 2016.⁹ This figure is more than double the 12,360 who arrived during the previous year. Of the 28,200 refugee or migrant children who reached Italy by sea in 2016, 91% were unaccompanied or separated from parents or guardians. (This contrasts with the situation in Greece, where only 17% of the child refugees and migrants who arrived by sea in 2016 were unaccompanied).

Whilst the proportion of children trying to reach Italy by sea is lower than in Greece, 91% of children undertaking Central Mediterranean sea crossings are unaccompanied

Lucio Melandri, UNICEF Senior Emergency Manager, described the presence of so many unaccompanied or separated children in the central Mediterranean as "unprecedented". He said of the figures:

These figures indicate an alarming trend of an increasing number of highly vulnerable children risking their lives to get to Europe. Current systems in place are failing to protect these children who find themselves alone in a totally unfamiliar environment. Because they are on the move, a coordinated European response is needed to keep them safe.¹⁰

The majority of the unaccompanied or separated children who arrived in Italy in 2016 are from Eritrea, Egypt, the Gambia and Nigeria. Most of the children were boys aged 15 to 17 years.¹¹

Girls interviewed by UNICEF in Palermo, Sicily reported being forced into prostitution in Libya as a means to 'pay off' the cost of the boat travel

⁷ UNHCR, [Europe's Refugee Situation Update #33: November-December 2016](#), 20 February 2017

⁸ UNICEF, [Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe Humanitarian Situation Report #19](#), 16 January 2017, page 2

⁹ UNHCR, [Italy: UNCHR Update #10, December 2016](#), 9 February 2017

¹⁰ [UNICEF press release](#), 13 January 2017

¹¹ Ibid

across the Mediterranean. According to UNICEF many boys are forced into manual labour.¹²

The most recent [UNHCR update on the refugee situation in Europe](#)¹³ also provides information on the 'operational context' in Italy.

1.3 The UK response to the Syrian refugee crisis

The Library briefing paper [The UK response to the Syrian refugee crisis](#) looks at the Government's work to resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees in the UK by the end of this Parliament, under its Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme. The Government also committed itself to resettling up to 3,000 vulnerable children currently in the Middle East and North Africa, and 350 unaccompanied children already in Europe (including Syrian nationals).

Of the unaccompanied children already in Europe, the Government has committed itself to resettling 350 in the UK

¹² Ibid

¹³ UNHCR, [Europe's Refugee Situation Update #33: November-December 2016](#), 20 February 2017

2. Media

2.1 Articles and blogs

Financial Times [Registration required]

[Britain's moral failure to admit refugee children](#)

12 February 2017

Telegraph

[The Dubs amendment on child refugees made me proud to be a Tory MP - so why is it being scrapped?](#)

Heidi Allen 9 February 2017

Guardian

[PM accused of closing door on child refugees as 'Dubs' scheme ends](#)

8 February 2017

Border Criminologies, University of Oxford

[Unaccompanied minors in Greece: who can 'save' them?](#)

6 February 2017

Guardian

[Ministers offer unaccompanied child refugees in Europe limited UK help](#)

Patrick Wintour, Rowena Mason and Libby Brooks 28 January 2016

Guardian

[EU met only 5% of target for relocating refugees from Greece and Italy](#)

Jennifer Rankin 8 December 2016

Independent

[EU says member states can start deporting refugees and migrants back to Greece from March](#)

Harriet Agerholm 8 December 2016

Border Criminologies, University of Oxford

[Unaccompanied children and other vulnerable persons](#)

18 November 2016

Greek Reporter

[Visegrad on resettlement of migrant children from Greece and Italy: 'Keep the refugees and we shall send you blankets'](#)

4 November 2016

Border Criminologies, University of Oxford

[The story of 'missing children': unaccompanied minors in the prevailing refugee crisis](#)

12 September 2016

Telegraph

[More than 5,000 migrant children 'disappear' in Italy after crossing the Mediterranean](#)

25 June 2015

2.2 Press releases

Department for International Development

[UK steps up work to protect women and girls from trafficking and provide winter care for vulnerable refugees](#)

3 February 2017

Safe Passage

[Faith leaders call for action on vulnerable refugee children in Greece and Italy](#)

20 January 2017

UNICEF

[Number of unaccompanied or separated children arriving by sea to Italy doubles in 2016](#)

13 January 2017

UNICEF

[Just five refugee children transferred to UK from Italy and Greece in 2016](#)

15 December 2016

ANSAmед

[Rights of unaccompanied minors in Italy, EU agency](#)

31 October 2016

UNICEF

[Record numbers of unaccompanied children arrive in Italy](#)

18 October 2016

Department for International Development

[Prime Minister pledges new UK support to help tackle migration crisis](#)

21 September 2016

Human Rights Watch

[Dispatches: Italy illegally returning migrant children to Greece](#)

26 July 2016

Prime Minister's Office

[Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to be resettled from Europe](#)

4 May 2016

3. Parliamentary Business

3.1 Ministerial Statements

[Immigration](#)

8 February 2017 | Written ministerial statements | HCWS 467

Robert Goodwill (The Minister of State for Immigration):

The Government takes the welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children extremely seriously, and the UK has a proud history of providing protection for those in need, including some of the most vulnerable children affected by the migration crisis. The Government's strategy is to support international efforts to find a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the refugee crisis; we must deal with its root causes, as well as respond to the consequences. That is why the UK has been at the forefront of the response to the events in Syria and the region, pledging over £2.3 billion in aid - our largest ever humanitarian response to a single crisis. We are also one of the few EU countries to meet our commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on overseas aid.

We have a comprehensive approach to tackling these issues both at home and overseas. By the end of this Parliament, we will have resettled 20,000 Syrian nationals through our Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and a further 3,000 of the most vulnerable children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa region under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. We also received over 33,000 asylum claims in the UK last year.

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children arriving in the UK has risen over the last few years, including in response to this Government's commitment to the transfer of hundreds of children from Calais and to address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable children. The UK has contributed significantly to hosting, supporting and protecting the most vulnerable children affected by the migration crisis. In the year ending September 2016, the UK granted asylum or another form of leave to over 8,000 children. This includes those who claimed asylum in the UK, those who were brought to the UK through our resettlement schemes, those transferred from within Europe, and those granted a refugee family reunion visa.

In 2016, we transferred over 900 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to the UK from Europe. This included more than 750 from France as part of the UK's support for the Calais camp clearance. Over 200 of those children met the published criteria for section 67 of the Immigration Act. The remainder were transferred under an accelerated process based on the family reunion criteria of the Dublin Regulation. This was a one-off process, based on the principles of the Dublin framework but operated outside of it, and was implemented in response to the unique circumstances of the Calais camp clearance. All

children not transferred to the UK are in the care of the French authorities.

The UK can be proud of its record of helping refugee children and I can today announce, in accordance with section 67 of the Immigration Act, that the Government will transfer the specified number of 350 children pursuant to that section, who reasonably meet the intention and spirit behind the provision. This number includes over 200 children already transferred under section 67 from France. It does not include children transferred to UK where they have close family here. We will announce in due course the basis on which further children will be transferred from Europe to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act to the specified number.

As required by the legislation, we have consulted with local authorities on their capacity to care for and support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children before arriving at this number. Local authorities told us they have capacity for around 400 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children until the end of this financial year. We estimate that at least 50 of the family reunion cases transferred from France as part of the Calais clearance will require a local authority placement in cases where the family reunion does not work out. We are grateful for the way in which local authorities have stepped up to provide places for those arriving and we will continue to work closely to address capacity needs.

The Government will continue to meet our obligations under the Dublin Regulation and accept responsibility for processing asylum claims where the UK is determined to be the responsible Member State, ensuring that it is in their best interests to come here. We are working closely with European partners to ensure the timely and efficient operation of the Dublin Regulation.

Of the over 4,400 individuals resettled through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme so far, around half are children and last year we welcomed the first families to the UK under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. We are fully committed to an effective response in the affected regions and to resettling the most vulnerable directly from those regions. Within Europe, the UK has also established a £10 million Refugee Children's Fund to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe. The fund includes targeted support to meet the specific needs of unaccompanied and separated children.

Here in the UK, we have launched the National Transfer Scheme to ensure a fairer distribution of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children across England and ease pressure on the children's services of those local authorities with large numbers of unaccompanied children. To implement the National Transfer Scheme the Home Office has established a dedicated team to process the transfer of children quickly whilst at the same time acting in accordance with the child's best interests. The Home Office also published detailed guidance for local authorities setting out the processes involved in transferring unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from one local authority to

another, including the need to ensure that the scheme is driven by the welfare of the child.

As announced on 1 November, the Government will also deliver a safeguarding strategy for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This will ensure the Government puts in place a comprehensive safeguarding strategy for unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children living in or being transferred or resettled to the UK.

To further support the transfer arrangements and underline our commitment to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, the Government significantly increased the funding it provides to local authorities who look after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Local authorities now receive £41,610 per annum for each unaccompanied asylum-seeking child aged under 16 and £33,215 per annum for unaccompanied asylum-seeking child aged 16 and 17. This represents a 20% and 28% increase in funding respectively. In addition, the Government went further and also increased the funding it provides to local authorities for those young people who turn 18 and go on to attract leaving care support by 33%. These significant increases in Government funding will have a very positive impact on local authorities' ability to care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The Government has also announced the £140 million Controlling Migration Fund in England, which is intended to cover a broad range of costs associated with migration. It cannot duplicate or top up unaccompanied asylum-seeking children rates, but it may support short-term costs not included in the mainstream unaccompanied asylum-seeking children grant and costs related to family reunion cases. This could include costs such as the safeguarding assessments, recruitment campaigns for social workers or support workers, specialist counselling or training on the specific needs of unaccompanied children. Additional funding has also been offered to Strategic Migration Partnerships across the UK to help them bolster local structures and ensure they are equipped to deal with the diverse needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The Government has taken significant steps to improve an already comprehensive approach to supporting asylum-seeking and refugee children. This latest announcement provides further evidence of the Government's commitment to playing its part in the global migration crisis. In addition to the tens of thousands of children in conflict regions and in Europe that are benefiting from UK aid and development assistance, we are providing protection to thousands of children in the UK each year.

The UK should be proud of its overall contribution.

[Refugees and Resettlement](#)

21 April 2016 | Written ministerial statements | HCWS 687

James Brokenshire (The Minister of State for Immigration):

Following my statement on the 28 January, the Government has continued to work to provide support to refugee children. We have always been clear that in order to provide the best help to the greatest number of those in need, we need to support the majority of refugees to stay safely in their home region.

That is why we recently doubled our aid for the Syrian crisis to £2.3 billion, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. This support has reached hundreds of thousands of people in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. To galvanise international efforts we co-hosted the “Supporting Syria and the Region” conference in London on 4 February, securing pledges of more than \$11 billion, the largest amount ever raised in one day for a humanitarian crisis. These commitments will create an estimated 1.1 million jobs for refugees and host country citizens by 2018. By the end of the 2016/17 school year, 1.7 million refugee and vulnerable children will be in quality education with equal access for girls and boys.

Today I am able to announce the results of work with UNHCR and informed by a roundtable with NGOs, local authorities and devolved administrations to provide a resettlement route to the UK, specifically designed for ‘Children at Risk’ from the Middle East and North Africa region. On the UNHCR’s recommendation the scheme will not target unaccompanied children alone, but will be extended to all ‘Children at Risk’ as defined by the UNHCR. This broad category encompasses unaccompanied children and separated children (those separated from their parents and/or other family members) as well as other vulnerable children such as child carers and those facing the risk of child labour, child marriage or other forms of neglect, abuse or exploitation.

Through this category we will resettle the most vulnerable children, accompanied by their families, where the UNHCR deems resettlement is in the best interests of the child. We will commit to resettling several hundred individuals in the first year with a view to resettling up to 3000 individuals over the lifetime of this Parliament, the majority of whom will be children. We will also review the scheme at the two year mark. This unique initiative will be the largest resettlement effort that focuses on children at risk from the MENA region and will be over and above the commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees under the Syrian Resettlement Scheme. It will be open to all at risk groups and nationalities within the region, with the best interests of the child at the heart of the scheme. The UNHCR are fully supportive of the launch of this new initiative and the UK’s commitment to assist vulnerable refugee children at risk through further resettlement efforts which uphold the principles of child protection.

The Government is committed to making a full contribution to the global refugee crisis, in particular by helping children at risk. We firmly believe that we can make the biggest difference and add most value by

supporting children and their families in the conflict region whilst providing a route to the UK for the minority of vulnerable or at risk cases where resettlement is judged by the UNHCR to be in the child's best interests.

At the same time we need to shut down the illegal migration routes to Europe, exploited by human traffickers who encourage people to risk their lives to make perilous journeys. The success of the EU-Turkey migration agreement is a vital opportunity to end the misery and lethal risk that smugglers and organised criminals are causing on a daily basis.

Following discussion with the European Commission and the Greek Government I can today announce that the UK will be offering 75 expert personnel to help with processing and administration of migrants in reception centres, act as interpreters, provide medical support and bolster our existing team assisting the Commission to ensure effective and efficient co-ordination. We will also provide vital equipment and medical supplies. This is in addition to the UK maritime contribution, with three Border Force vessels assisting the Hellenic Coastguard to conduct search and rescue missions, and a Royal Navy vessel as part of the NATO mission in the Aegean.

The teams we send to Greece will include experts in supporting vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied children and those trained to tackle people trafficking. This will help ensure that vulnerable people, including children, are identified and can access asylum procedures as quickly as possible. This is in addition to the work undertaken by the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, to visit hotspots and assess what more can be done to ensure unaccompanied children are protected from traffickers.

To increase support to refugees in Turkey the Government is contributing £250 million to the initial €3 billion Turkey Refugee Facility. This is expected to provide immediate humanitarian support as well as funding for schools, hospitals and housing. We are also working with the Turkish government to identify what expert support would best assist their immigration and asylum services in handling migrants returned under the EU-Turkey agreement.

We continue to take action within Europe to assist vulnerable migrant children. The UK is the largest bilateral contributor to the humanitarian response to the crisis in Europe and the Balkans with a total contribution of £65m. This includes nearly £46 million to provide life-saving aid to migrants and refugees including food, water, hygiene kits and infant packs, and protection for the most vulnerable, as well as support to organisations helping governments build their capacity to manage arrivals in Greece and the Balkans. The efforts of the partners we fund are targeted to reach the most vulnerable - including children.

It also includes the £10m Refugee Children Fund the Department for International Development (DFID) has created to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children specifically in Europe. The fund will support three specialist and mandated organisations UNHCR, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to work with

host authorities to care for and assist unaccompanied or separated children in Europe and the Balkans. This includes identifying vulnerable children, providing for their immediate support, referral to specialist care, and helping find solutions such as family reunification.

It is important to use the tools available to help children reunite with family wherever possible. The government is committed to meeting our obligations under the Dublin Regulation. We have seconded additional resource into the European Asylum Support Office totalling over 1000 days of expert support to Italy and Greece to implement and streamline the Dublin process, including to quickly identify children who qualify for family reunion. And we continue to work with the French authorities to address the situation in Calais, including through a permanent bi-lateral standing committee to improve co-operation on Dublin transfers, particularly family reunion.

The recent secondment of a senior asylum expert to the French Interior Ministry to improve the process for family cases has already resulted in a significant increase in the number of children being reunited with family in the UK. In the last six weeks 24 cases have been accepted for transfer to the UK from France under family unity provisions, more than half of whom have already arrived in the UK. Once an asylum claim has been lodged in another Member State we have demonstrated that transfers can take place within weeks.

We will do all we can to ensure that children in Europe with a right to be reunited with their family in the UK are supported to do so. However, the government remains of the view that relocation schemes within Europe risk creating unintended consequences or perverse incentives for people to put their lives into the hands of traffickers. Instead we are committed to providing safe and legal routes for the most vulnerable refugees from Syria to resettle to the UK. Under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme we are committed to resettling 20,000 vulnerable refugees by 2020. In the last quarter of 2015 we resettled 1085 Syrian refugees under this scheme over half of whom were children.

[Resettlement of unaccompanied refugee children](#)

28 January 2016 | Written ministerial statements | HCWS 497

James Brokenshire (The Minister of State for Immigration):

The Government has carefully considered how best to provide assistance and protection to unaccompanied refugee children from Syria, other regions of conflict, and for those in transit in Europe.

The crisis in Syria and events in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond has separated a large number of refugee children from their families. Today I can announce that the UK Government will work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to lead a new initiative to resettle unaccompanied children from conflict regions. We have asked the UNHCR to make an assessment of the numbers and needs of unaccompanied children in conflict regions and advise on

when it is in the best interests of the child to be resettled in the UK and how that process should be managed. The UNHCR has already been clear that these are likely to be exceptional cases.

This will complement the existing substantial UK aid and resettlement programmes which are already helping many thousands of children at risk in conflict zones, on transit routes within Europe and in the UK. The Home Office will host a roundtable to invite views from a range of NGOs and local authorities, including UNICEF and Save the Children, on how we can provide more support for children in the region, in transit and domestically to prevent children putting themselves at risk and making dangerous journeys on their own. The UK Government has been at the forefront of the international response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, providing more than £1.1 billion in humanitarian aid to the Syria crisis. This new initiative builds on the Government's existing commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees during this Parliament. More than 1,000 vulnerable Syrians refugees – around half of them children - have already been resettled through the scheme.

The UK Government will also commit to providing further resources to the European Asylum Support Office to help in "hotspots" such as Greece and Italy to help identify and register children at risk on first arrival in the EU. And we will, of course, continue to meet our obligations under the Dublin Regulations.

The Government is committed to combating child trafficking and understands that unaccompanied children, particularly those in transit, are vulnerable to people traffickers. The Home Secretary has asked the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, to visit the hotspots in Italy and Greece to make an assessment and provide advice on what more can be done to ensure unaccompanied children and others are protected from traffickers.

The UK Government is already providing substantial funding to NGOs such as Unicef and UNHCR to provide shelter, warm clothes, hot food, and medical supplies to support vulnerable people, including children, on the move or stranded in Europe or in the Balkans. In addition, the Department for International Development is creating a new fund of up to £10 million to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children in Europe. The fund will include targeted support to meet the specific needs of unaccompanied and separated children who face additional risks. The support will include identifying children who are in need, providing safe places for at risk children to stay, data management to help trace children to their families, and services such as counselling and legal advice.

Alongside these significant efforts to assist children and the most vulnerable internationally, the Government recognises the need to provide support for children who are already in the UK and have been subject to or at risk of trafficking and exploitation. We also recognise the pressure that some local authorities who are supporting large numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children are facing. The Home Office will continue to encourage local authorities to support the

dispersal of UASC from Kent and to work with NGOs, local authorities and the Department for Education to review current practice and consider how capacity could be strengthened, including through ensuring that there is sufficient safe accommodation and specialist support for foster placements.

3.2 Debates

[Unaccompanied Child Refugees](#) [Urgent Question]

HC Deb 9 February 2017 c637-52

Yvette Cooper:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to make a statement on the Government's decision to close the Dubs scheme for child refugees.

[Child Refugees](#) [Private Notice Question]

HL Deb 9 February 2017 c1858-61

Lord Dubs:

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have decided to close the scheme for unaccompanied child refugees under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

3.3 Parliamentary Questions

[Refugees: Children](#)

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Written Statement of 8 February 2017, HCWS467, on immigration, on what date she decided to change the number of unaccompanied child refugees taken by the UK under the Dubs amendment.

Answered by: Robert Goodwill | Department: Home Office

There is no change to the number of unaccompanied children to be transferred to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act. Under the Immigration Act we made a commitment to transfer a specified number of unaccompanied refugee children to the UK, following consultation with local authorities on capacity.

On 8 February, the Government announced that we will transfer the specified number of 350 children to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act. This includes the more than 200 children already

transferred from France as part of the UK's support for the Calais camp clearance.

The UK has contributed significantly to hosting, supporting and protecting the most vulnerable children affected by the migration crisis. In the year ending September 2016, the UK granted asylum or another form of leave to over 8,000 children. By the end of this Parliament, we will have resettled 20,000 Syrian nationals through our Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and a further 3,000 of the most vulnerable children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa region under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

8 February 2017 | Written questions | 63727

[Greece and Italy: Refugees](#)

Asked by: Barry Sheerman

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent steps her Department has taken to assist child refugees in Italy and Greece.

Answered by: Rory Stewart | Department: International Development

Since October 2015 DFID has been supporting child refugees in Greece with assistance such as food, clean water and safe shelter, as well as access to protection and psychosocial care. For example, we have provided over 500 safe accommodation spaces for unaccompanied children since September 2016. In Italy, DFID has provided assistance to unaccompanied minors and supported the deployment of child protection experts.

23 January 2017 | Written questions | 61144

[Topical Questions](#)

Asked by: Heidi Allen

More than 30,000 unaccompanied child refugees arrived in Greece and Italy last year. Building on the good work that we did in Calais, can the Minister give me an update on when we expect the first children to come from Greece and Italy under the Dubs criteria and whether he has a sense yet of how many there might be?

Answered by: Robert Goodwill | Department: Home Office

In 2016, we transferred more than 900 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to the UK from Europe, including more than 750 from France as part of the UK's support for the Calais camp clearance. Following consultation with local authorities, I remind the House that the Government will transfer "a specified number" of children, in accordance with section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, who reasonably meet the intention and spirit of the provision. This will

include more than 200 children already transferred from France. We will announce in due course the basis on which the remaining places will be filled, including from Greece and Italy, and the final number.

HC Deb 23 January 2017 c21

[Refugees: Children](#)

Asked by: Edward Vaizey

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made on the implementation of the Dubs amendment to bring unaccompanied child refugees in Europe into the UK.

Answered by: Robert Goodwill | Department: Home Office

In 2016, we transferred over 900 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to the UK from Europe, including more than 750 from France as part of the UK's support for the Calais camp clearance.

Approximately 200 of these children met the criteria for section 67 of the Immigration Act.

More eligible children will be transferred from Europe, in line with the terms of the Immigration Act, in the coming months and we will continue to meet our obligations under the Dublin Regulation. In addition to our long standing secondee in Italy, we have seconded an expert to Greece who has been working closely with UNHCR, IOM and the Greek authorities to identify potentially eligible children under section 67 of the Immigration Act and support transfers under the Dublin Regulation.

23 January 2017 | Written questions | 60307

[Refugees: Children](#)

Asked by: Jess Phillips

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for how long each child who was subsequently transferred to the UK under a Dublin III transfer was in Italy before that transfer to the UK (a) from first date of arrival in Italy, (b) from the date of appointment of their guardian, (c) from the date of registering their asylum claim, (d) from the date when TCR was made, (e) from the date when TCR was accepted and (f) on the date when the transfer took place.

Answered by: Robert Goodwill | Department: Home Office

The Government is fully committed to the efficient and timely operation of the Dublin Regulation and we are working closely with EU partners, including the Italian authorities to identify, assess and transfer children to the UK who may qualify under the Dublin Regulation or section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

The Dublin Regulation specifies a range of time limits within which requests to accept responsibility must be made and replies received, which vary depending on the circumstances of the case. The Dublin

Regulation states that in all cases requests should be made as quickly as possible.

We have a long standing secondee working in Italy and have established a dedicated team in the Home Office Dublin Unit to lead on family reunion cases for unaccompanied children. The secondee's role includes facilitating the application of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

At present we do not publish data on cases covered by the Dublin Regulation. Eurostat, the EU's statistics agency, regularly publishes Member State figures, which you can find at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Dublin_statistics_on_countries_responsible_for_asylum_application

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4. Organisations and further reading

[The UK response to the Syrian refugee crisis](#) , Commons Library Briefing SN06805, 15 February 2017

UNHCR

[Data: Situations: Mediterranean](#)

Nando Sigona and Rachel Humphris, [Child mobility in the EU's refugee crisis: what are the data gaps and why do they matter?](#) , COMPAS, 24 January 2017

Nando Sigona and Rachel Humphris, [Outrage over unaccompanied minors highlights massive E.U. data gap](#) , News Deeply, 10 October 2016

Human Rights Watch, [“Why are you keeping me here?” Unaccompanied children detained in Greece](#) , 8 September 2016

Save the Children, [Children on the move in Europe: Save the Children's response to the deepening child refugee and migrant crisis in Europe](#) , 27 July 2016

IOM and UNICEF, [Data brief: migration of children to Europe](#) , 30 November 2015

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