



Mapping The Response

To The Refugee and Migrant Crisis

In The

European Baptist Federation (EBF) Region

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EBF Refugee Crisis Working Group

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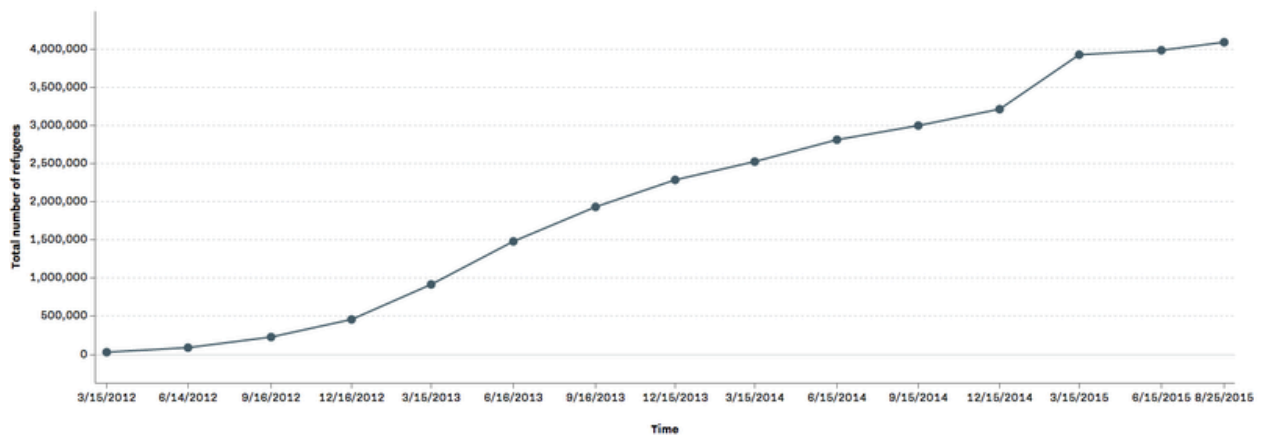
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Background and Context of the Refugee Crisis

Europe has always been a preferred destination for migrants from North Africa, as well as refugees and migrants from the Near East, and parts of Asia. However, within a year of the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, there has been a steady growing influx of migrants and refugees from Syria. With only a portion of the 3.8 million Syrians who are now refugees reaching Europe, this only reached crisis proportions since July 2015. While many would not technically be classified as refugees as per the criteria used by UNHCR, they are nevertheless migrants fleeing from a devastated country, where the economy and infrastructure has been destroyed and where the prospects of surviving and earning even the bare minimum is diminishing by the day. **(Latest figures only available till August 2015)**

Total number of Syrian refugees, March 2012 to August 2015

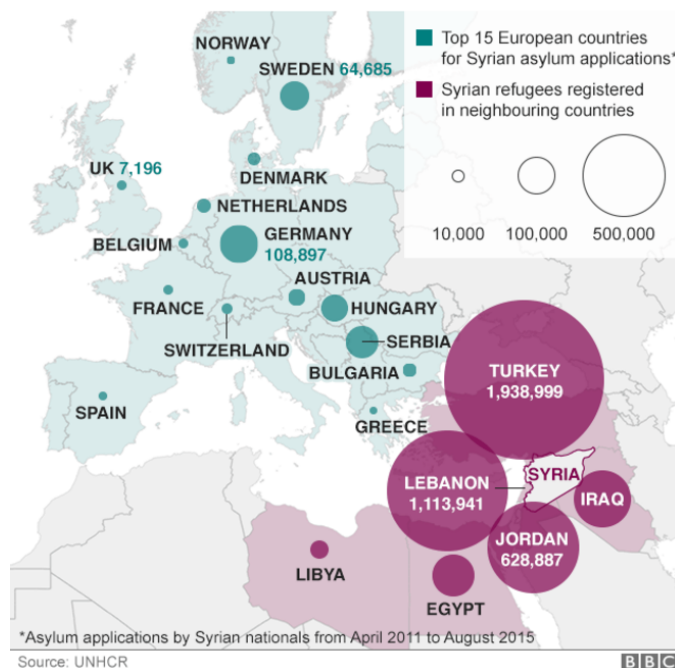


Source: UNHCR

Vox

As dramatic as the numbers are for Europe, it is important to put the numbers into perspective by understanding how many refugees the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, who have significant less capacity, are accommodating.

Syrians in neighbouring countries and Europe

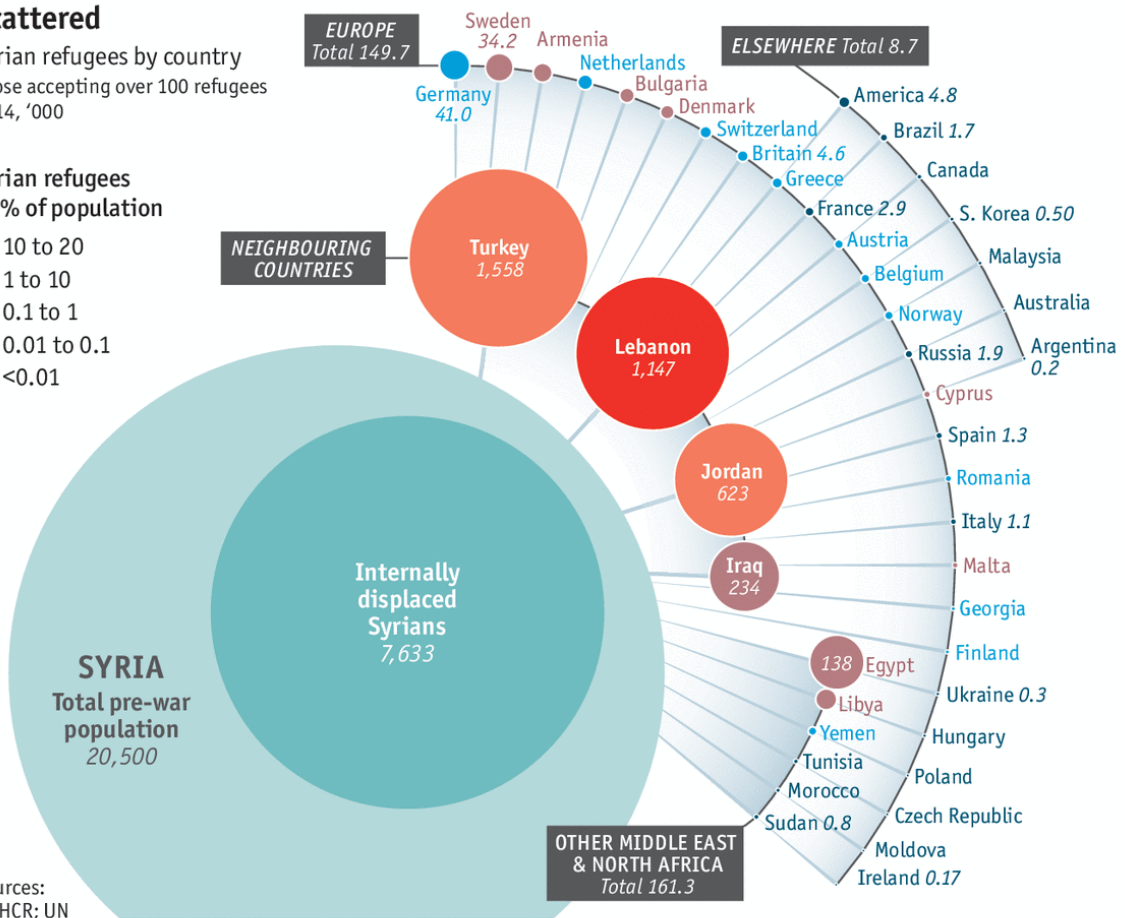


Scattered

Syrian refugees by country
Those accepting over 100 refugees
2014, '000

Syrian refugees
as % of population

- 10 to 20
- 1 to 10
- 0.1 to 1
- 0.01 to 0.1
- <0.01



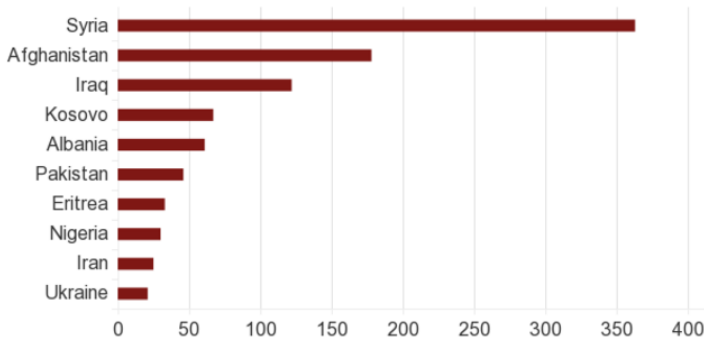
Sources:
UNHCR; UN

Economist.com

The Syrian refugees and migrants are being joined by significant numbers from Iraq and Afghanistan. The majority claiming asylum in Europe were fleeing war torn countries in the Middle East. According to Eurostat, at the end of last year, 922,8000 applications were still under consideration with 424,800 pending applications in Germany alone. Among the 1.2 million applications, half of the Syrians applying for asylum did so in Germany while the top country for Iraqis was Germany, where nearly 30,000 applied for refuge. The agency said that on average, there were 2,470 first time asylum applicants per million in EU member states.

Top 10 origins of people applying for asylum in the EU

First-time applications in 2015, in thousands

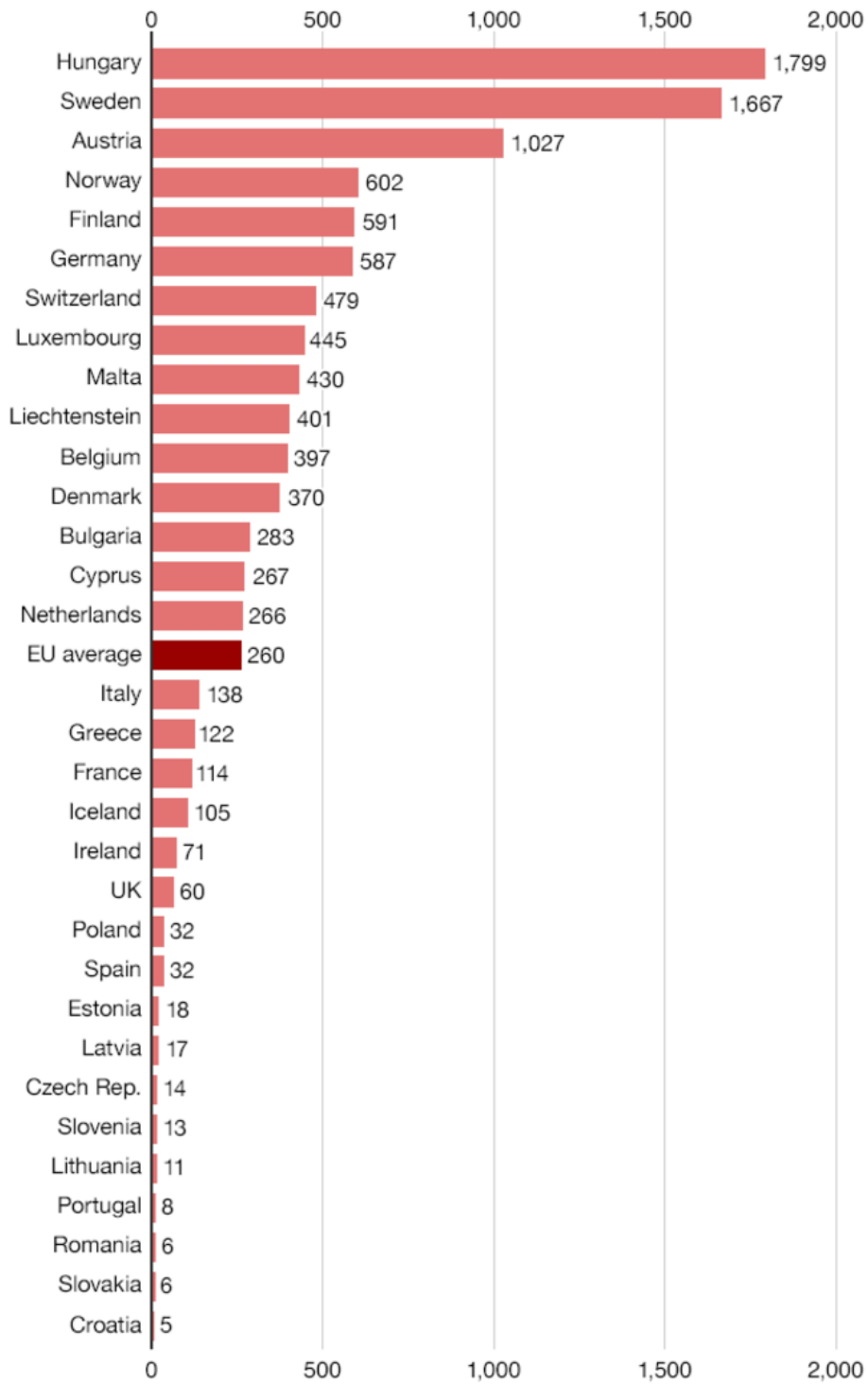


Source: Eurostat

Country Number of asylum seekers

Country	Number of asylum seekers
Syria	362,775
Afghanistan	178,230
Iraq	121,535
Kosovo	66,885
Albania	65,935
Pakistan	46,400
Eritrea	33,095
Nigeria	29,915
Iran	25,360
Other	325,510

Asylum applications per 100,000 local population, 2015



Source: Eurostat

BBC

Finland had the largest jump in asylum applications, increasing from 3,500 to 32,000.

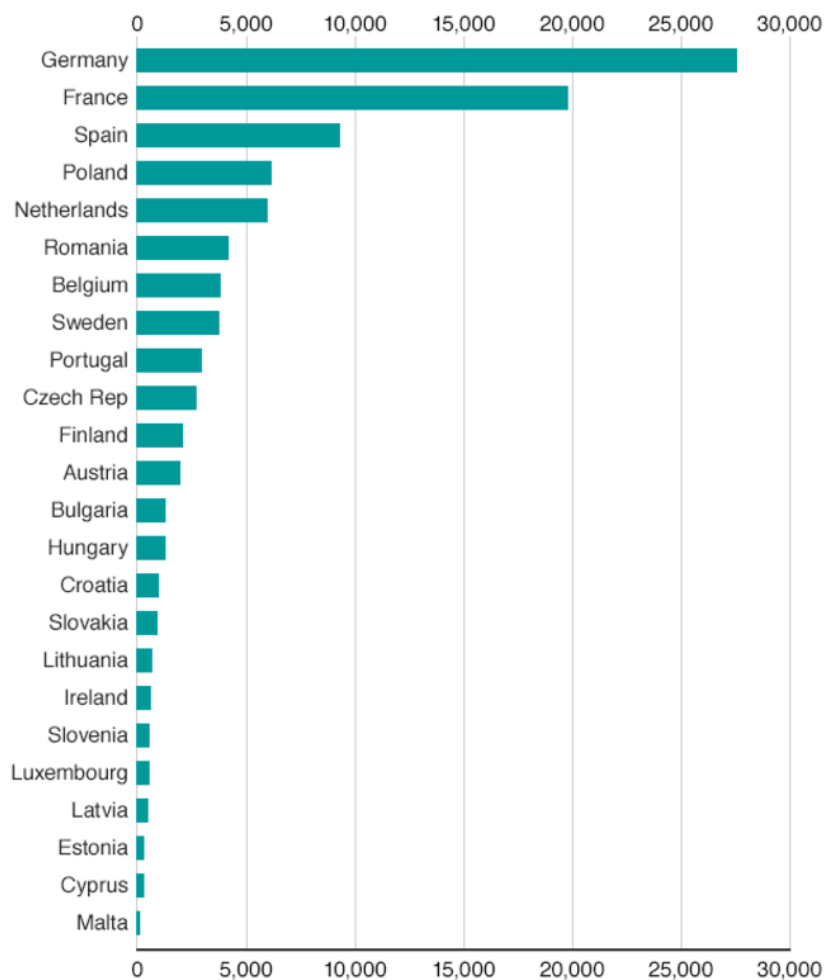
Country	Change (in %) 2015 / 2014
Finland	822
Hungary	323
Austria	233
Norway	179
Belgium	178
Spain	167
Germany	155
Luxembourg	129
Ireland	127
Sweden	108
Eurostat	

Syrians were around a quarter of all asylum applications in the EU and among the top 10 nationalities applying for asylum within Europe were Kosovans and Albanians.

There is much discussion within the European Union (EU) about sharing the burden of the migrants and refugees, but there is no agreement yet. The proposed numbers are as follows.

EU member state migrant quotas

Number of people countries have agreed to relocate from Greece and Italy

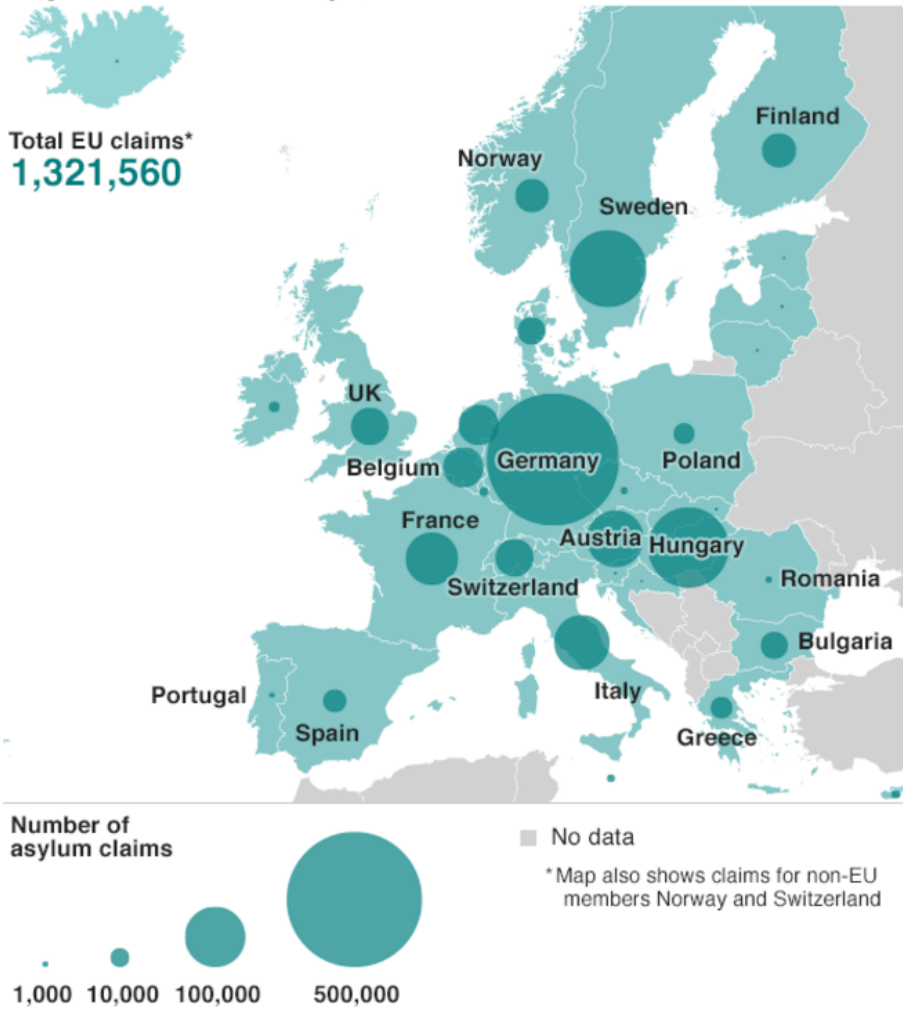


Note: the UK and Denmark are not taking part in the relocation scheme

Source: European Commission



Asylum claims in Europe, 2015



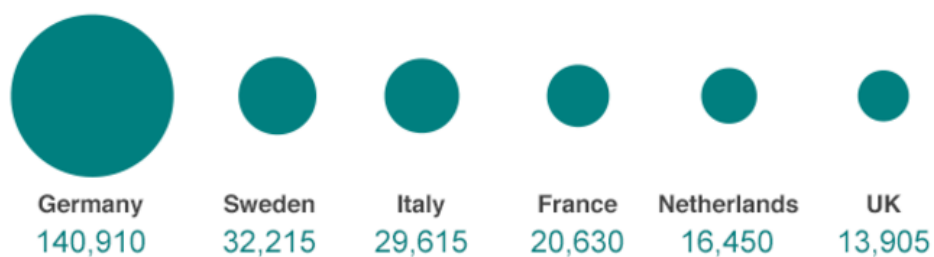
Source: Eurostat

BBC

Asylum applications approved 2015



Total claims granted by country



Source: Eurostat

BBC

Responses Of The Member Unions of the EBF Till Date

For detailed reports and stories from the various Unions, please see
< <http://ebf.org/initiatives> >

SUMMARY

Country	Assistance being provided	Sources of Funding	Identified Needs
Austria	Bible Study; Language-Courses; Legal advice, legal assistance; legal representation; Social assistance: accompany to Doctors, apartment searching, job searching; Resumé writing; counselling; Practical help: soup kitchen; clothing, donations; transportation -support; micro-loans; translation for social agencies; Tutoring for any students; training for volunteers;	Local churches, EBF and German Baptist Aid.	Additional funding and co-workers – especially Arabic and Farsi speakers.
Croatia	At the camp in Slavonski Brod: Children's food packages for 5,000 children, food for 80,000 persons, 10 tones of blankets, clothing and shoes, 4,500 meals for volunteers. Also provided Alaska tents and sanitation units.	Local churches, BWAid, Baptist General Association of Virginia; Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; IM of the American Baptist Churches; First Baptist Church Tallahassee Florida; EBF member unions through EBF; Samaritan Purse; Assemblies of God; Hilfe Konkret Germany; Red een Kind Netherlands, Virginia Baptists, InterAct Sweden, a local church in Sweden, Christian organizations, and charities and individuals in UK.	Prayer Volunteers Funding
Finland (Swedish)	At the early stages: providing night shelter for one night for refugees coming with late transport to a town. Collecting cloths and other things needed and some church donated money to the local Red Cross. Food help (for both migrants and native people). Assistance with thing that they need help with.	Churches and individual members, cloths also given from people outside church. For this pastor the funding comes form the church itself but mostly from the Union and a fund inside the Union.	Different kinds of help with integration into the Finnish society. Taking stand against all kind of racism.

Country	Assistance being provided	Sources of Funding	Identified Needs
Germany	<p>Overseas: Funding for refugee projects in Lebanon and Turkey</p> <p>Germany: Activities in refugee camps, with children, intercultural events and meals, Distribution of clothes, sewing projects, sports programmes, Language courses, legal advice, practical help and support, Renting rooms, “church asylum”, Bible study groups, translation of worship services.</p>	<p>Local churches</p> <p>Private individuals</p> <p>Some from NGOs</p>	<p>Political advocacy</p> <p>European cooperation</p> <p>Cooperation with Lebanese Baptists</p>
Great Britain	<p>As a Union, they have been doing a lot of advocacy with the Government to increase the number of asylum seekers and the aid that is being provided. Some churches are acting as collection points for supplies and items needed, as well as providing services as needed. They have had a very good response to churches wanting to provide spaces for refugees and migrants.</p>	<p>Local churches</p>	
Hungary (Hungarian Baptist Aid)	<p>Providing - Food packages, hygiene kits, drinking water, sanitation facilities (W.A.S.H), medical assistance, warm clothing, sleeping bags, and blankets.</p> <p>Providing assistance at Budapest Western and Eastern Railway Station, Horgos-Röszke Serbian Hungarian border, Opatovic Camp- Croatian-Serbian border, Szentgotthárd Hungarian-Austrian border Barcs</p>	<p>Hungarian Baptist Aid’s own resources,</p> <p>Private donations,</p> <p>in-kind donations from Hungarian partner organizations, and international partners: Sweden, Netherlands, USA</p> <p>Funds from international partner organizations: Tearfund, Immanuel Baptist Church, USA, Netherlands</p>	<p>Euros 50,000</p>
Italy	<p>Responding through a coalition of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) in the following projects - Mediterranean Hope, The Relocation Desk, and the Ecumenical Scholarship program</p>	<p>Local churches</p>	
Iraq (Baptist Church of Baghdad)	<p>Provide food</p> <p>One time distribution: Electric Heaters, Mattresses, and Blankets.</p>	<p>Some churches in the US and Australia, GBAAid, BWAid</p>	<p>Continuing needs for food, blankets, mattresses, electric heaters, medicines, etc. Need about \$100,000.</p>

Country	Assistance being provided	Sources of Funding	Identified Needs
Lebanon (LSESD)	Working through local churches in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq , LSESD is providing access to food, health care, water, education and psychosocial support. It is addressing the needs of women and children	Local churches Grants from NGOs, governments, foundations and other institutional donors	Continued funding for access to food, health care and education
Netherlands	Netherlands – some churches work with migrants at the permanent centers in welcoming activities as well as providing clothing, sleeping bags, (stuffed) toys, and welcoming packages. Middle East – funding relief projects with partners in the region Italy – providing funding through the Baptist Union in Italy for their work with FCEI.	Local churches Individuals	
Scotland	Food, clothing and money to local agencies. Befriending scheme through Edinburgh Churches for Sanctuary. Christian Evangelism and discipleship. Practical and pastoral help. Help with Asylum claims. Furniture and temporary housing for asylum seekers (Glasgow). Besides working through a number of local churches, funding is also being provided through BMS World Mission, Tearfund, Dundee to Calais, CalAid, Positive Action in Housing, South East Integration Network, ELAM ministries (work with Iranian/Kurdish and Afghan asylum seekers	Local Churches	Language training
Serbia (North)	Providing food, water and hygiene items the refugees at the border with Hungary	Funds and donations from local churches EBAid with funding from EBF members and Virginia Baptists	
Serbia (South)	Food, waterproof jackets and mattresses at the refugee camps in Miratovac and Presevo as well as the camps in Sid, near the Croatian border	Come Over and Help BWAid Blythswood Care Texas Baptists through EBF	Euros 11,800 monthly for three months for food and bread, hygienic material, shoes, and waterproof jackets for 2,000 individuals, 30% of whom are women and children

Country	Assistance being provided	Sources of Funding	Identified Needs
Sweden (InterAct)	International: Support to Lebanon, Croatia Baptists, Bread of Life, Serbia. Sweden: Assisting 5,000 refugees weekly with asylum assistance, language cafe, material support, food and shelter. Resources to churches that want to help refugees, as well as mapping how churches are already responding and creating a network	Local churches Second hand shops Municipalities	Develop and EBF wide platform for sharing information and tools for language learning, information regarding asylum seeking etc. Also collecting information about ongoing interventions and available resources where they can learn from each other and share what is relevant
Turkey	Packages of food (Rice, pasta, beans, potatoes, tea etc.), sanitary products, swaddling clothes, baby food/ milk and clothes, medical help, shoes, flat equipment	German Baptist Aid, EBM INTERNATIONAL, HMK, Baptist Union of the Czech Republic	Euros 20.000 monthly for that sort of immediate help according to the capacities of the four local churches

○ AUSTRIA

Union: Baptist Union of Austria

Number of Churches involved in providing Assistance: 14 churches in Innsbruck, Salzburg BC, Mission Evang. Amen BC, Bad Ischl BC, Linz BC, Steyr BC, Graz International BC, Graz BC, Gleisdorf BC, Wien-Project: Gemeinde BC, Buiattgasse BC, Mollardgasse BC, Afrikan Gemeinde, Adonai Gemeinde.

Assistance Provided Through Others: International Teams (Linz BC), Herzwerg (Beheimgasse BC) and BGAV.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Assisted: Between 900-1000 being assisted directly. Many hundreds more are accompanied but being practically assisted through Caritas and the Red Cross.

Type of Assistance being Provided: Bible Study; Language-Courses; Legal advice, legal assistance; legal representation; Social assistance: accompany to Doctors, apartment searching, job searching; Resumé writing; counselling; Practical help: soup kitchen; clothing, donations; transportation -support; micro-loans; translation for social agencies; Tutoring for any students; training for volunteers;

Value of Funding for These Projects: Euros 40.000 (Salzburg) , Euros 17.000 (Linz), Euros 48.500 (projekt: Gemeinde), Euros 26.000 (Graz-International)

Source of Funding: EBF and German Baptist Aid.

Other Needs that the Churches Also Address: Iranian Bibles; Funds for travel costs; Food Bank, clothing; 60 EUR tablet with Literature, Bibles, Sermons; homes for Christian refugees (who face conflicts in the public camps) in Graz; Salzburg, Linz, Wien Building up a ministry around Gilbert Shaheen Kurdish speakers; Arab speakers, Team led by Gordy Beck going to LESBOS with Farsi-speakers.

Funding Still Needed: Euros 35,000.

Other Involvements: Since our General Secretary was for the last four years also speaker of the new church “Freikirchen in Österreich”, he had the opportunity at several official meetings to advocate our position. A lot of volunteers of our churches raised their voice in the government, in the media (campaign for Laila e.g.), in the communities and in the churches. They are a voice for the voiceless.

Have you done any fundraising for this crisis with your local churches? The local churches are financing a big part of the budget for this work. And they are very active to fund this work.

Other information about your context or activities that may be of value In this crisis we are very thankful that we have this good structure of our refugee and integration work. We do this work since the 1980s. These experiences are helping a lot. But now the challenges for our churches are extreme - we need more financial support and in some situations also gifted co-workers, especially in our situation in Graz.

- [CROATIA](#)

Union: Baptist Union of Croatia

Situation in the Country:

The camp that was in Opatovac was moved to Slavonski Brod, the city on the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unlike the camp in Opatovac, (opened 20.09.2015., closed 8.11.2015.) which was just a short-term solution, the camp in Slavonski Brod (opened 3.11.2015. until today) was able to accommodate 15 000 people. The camp was built by the Republic of Croatia and the humanitarian organizations.



CBA (Croatian Baptist Aid) participated in the building of this camp by providing Alaska tents and sanitation units (portable toilets). CBA also gave to the state the possibility of having shower containers. Since the beginning of the migrant and refugee crisis there have been 780 000 people going through Croatia, of which 450 000 people went through Slavonski Brod. Our volunteers were active inside the camp by serving the refugees in their need. The camp in Slavonski Brod was voted the best organized in Europe. Also unlike Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia, the camp in Croatia was fully free for the refugee, while the listed countries charged the refugees for everything. Of course there were some good humanitarian organizations who were trying to meet the refugees' needs without charging them. The camp in Slavonski Brod was coordinated by the Republic of Croatia who was in

constant direct communication with only three organizations – Red Cross, Jesuit Refugee Service, and Croatian Baptist Aid.

Inside the refugee camp in Slavonski Brod there were some happy news – a few babies were born and got their interesting name, like the girl who was named Croatia and a boy who was named Muhammad Hrvoje (Hrvoje rooting from the name Hrvatska (Croatia)).

CBA is currently working in the camp distributing clothes, footwear, underwear, socks, blankets, pillows, and chocolates.

CBA has made a partnership with MAGNA and are helping in procuring food for children and baby formulas.

CBA saw the need for better communication inside the camp in Slavonski Brod and helped deal with that by procuring walkie-talkies, and creating an optimal communication net between organizations and the state.

CBA also, due to the size of the camp, loaned an ATV (quad) with a trailer to easily and faster move food and other supplies to the camp's sectors where the refugees were.

CBA was the only organization, with the Red Cross and JRS, to have had the option to directly communicate with the refugees.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted: Children's food packages for 5,000 children, food for 80,000 persons, 10 tones of blankets, clothing and shoes, 4,500 meals for volunteers.

Funding Received Till Date: Local churches, BWAid, Baptist General Association of Virginia; Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; IM of the American Baptist Churches; First Baptist Church Tallahassee Florida; EBF; Samaritan Purse; Assemblies of God; Hilfe Konkret Germany; Red een Kind Netherlands, Virginia Baptists, InterAct Sweden, a local church in Sweden, Christian organizations, and charities and individuals in UK.

Types of Assistance Being Provided and the Response Till Date:

- The Croatian Baptists led by their General Secretary Željko Mraz have been involved right from the beginning in coordination with the Mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandić, and other institutions, religious communities and NGO's to direct a joint appeal to the citizens of their country to help
- The churches in Zagreb organized themselves in the collection and distribution of donations. They were provided with a space of 80m² (free of charge) by a Syrian gentleman, who has been living and working in Zagreb for many years, where they could collect, pack and distribute help.
- Besides BC Zagreb, in this whole process Baptist churches in Osijek and Andrijaševci were fully involved with providing space for storage, volunteers, purchasing the necessary goods, providing transportation for the goods and the volunteers. The new Baptist church building in Slavonski Brod is just about to be finished, but already opened her doors to accommodate the volunteers serving in the camp, and for storing goods for the refugees.
- Supplies collected from churches as well as through STEP (IFES Croatia) in addition to purchases. STEP also had a goal, all the while the camp in Slavonski Brod was active, to inform the public and the students about the work of CBA inside the camp. STEP is also still engaged in the refugee crisis by organizing public discussions and lectures in universities across Republic of Croatia.

- A group of clowns from Italy joined us in helping the refugee children through animating them and performing for them in the camp in Slavonski Brod. They played the guitar, made balloon animals, and played different social games to reduce children's stress.
- The volunteers from the American Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina were faithful helpers in the opening of the camp in Slavonski Brod.
- The interpreters that came from different parts of the world, where there day and night translating and helping the Croatian Police and the Ministry of Health with registration and offering help to the refugees.
- The volunteers and the coordinators were able to stay in our house in Slavonski Brod, and we also helped Croatian Ministry of Interior with lodgings for interpreters.
- In cooperation with the Dutch Red een Kind and Magna CBA was able to purchase and distribute baby food and ready formula for babies and small children.

Needs Identified by the Union and Churches:

- **Prayer** – for the refugees, for the volunteers that are working tirelessly, and also for the police who is handling all of this very efficiently and professionally. So pray for all the people who are involved in this crisis, and also that the Lord puts an end to this great wave, to have peace restored where there's war, so that people don't need to leave their homes.
- **For volunteers who are willing to dedicate a week** in shifts. The Union will organize housing. Our focus now is on two fronts – one is the needs of the refugees that we meet that are looking for asylum, second are the needs for help in Idomena where the CBA team has already started working.
- Considering that the summer is coming, there is still a need for hygienic supplies, as well as underwear (tops and bottoms), and socks since the refugees don't have the possibility to wash their clothes because they spend most of their time walking.
- **Financial help** is still needed. We have slowly run out of funds – all financial help is very welcome.

○ [FINLAND](#)

Union: Baptist Union of Finland (Swedish)

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: 6 of their 15 churches.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted: 200-250 in the present crisis.

Assistance Being Provided Through Other Agencies: Cooperation with the local refugee coordinator and with reception centres. In Oravais there is an organisation called "Flyktingvännerna" (Refugees' Friends). It works on an ecumenical basis and the local Baptists are actively involved.

Type of Assistance That has been Provided Till Date: At the early stages: providing night shelter for one night for refugees coming with late transport to a town. Collecting cloths and other things needed and some church donated money to the local Red Cross. Food help (for both migrants and native people). Assistance with thing that they need help with.

Funding Accessed till Date: 150 euro plus food and cloths collected or bought. One of our part time pastors is working specially with integration. If her salary in counted, the sum would be around 6000 €.

Source of Funding: Churches and individual members, cloths also given from people outside church. For this pastor the funding comes form the church itself but mostly from the Union and a fund inside the Union.

Other Needs that the Churches Could Address: Different kinds of help with integration into the Finnish society. Taking stand against all kind of racism.

Amount of Funding Still Needed: 1.200 euro/month for the next year if we want to continue the support of the integrating pastor on the same level as now. (Her church consists of mostly Karen people with very low income).

History of Helping Migrants and Refugees: Since 1991, when there was a reception centre for refugees established in Oravais, the local Baptist church has been actively working with refugees and asylum seekers. They have during these years been in contact with hundreds of people from different parts of the world. Many have also come to the church and experienced a warm fellowship. No one really knows how many have been brought to Christ during these years, but at least 34 people have been baptised. Many are the times they have also tried to comfort people in despair.

From 1950's until 1990's the BU of Finland had mission work in Rwanda and Burundi. After the massacre in Rwanda we had some rwandese people coming to Finland. They where Baptists and therefore came to us. They are now most of them very well integrated into the Finnish society. Our churches in Jakobstad, Vasa, Närpes and Helsinki have been of great help in this process.

The Baptist church in Jakobstad supports a group from Bulgaria and another from Afghanistan, both financially and with assisting them in contacts with the authorities and with the Bulgarians also trying to find work for them. The also allow both groups to have their services in the Baptist church free of charge.

Many Karen refugees came to Finland some 10-15 years ago and some of the families came to Oravais. Most of them being Baptists already, they found their spiritual home in the Baptist Church in Oravais, which since then has grown from 10-15 people to more than 70.

Advocacy and Communications Done Till Date: The Baptist church in Oravais has during the last 20 years helped many refugees with sending documents to the authorities, sometimes trying to get them to change their decisions. Members of the church have also been called as court witnesses a couple of times.

In extreme cases, (members of) the churches have also been hiding refugees for shorter periods.

The Baptist church in Jakobstad supports a group from Bulgaria and an other from Afghanistan, both financially and with assisting them in contacts with the authorities. On a national ecumenical level we have together with the other Swedish speaking free churches in Finland sent and also through the Ecumenical Council of Finland there has been sent letters and petitions to the authoriries and to the press both for a greater openness for refugees coming to Finland and against racism, but also against our governments decision to cut in the support of NGO:s involved in Mission Aid work.

Fundraising Till Date: Some churches have collected clothes and other things needed. Otherwise not for this particular crises.

Other Information: At least in the Middle West of Finland (Ostrobothnia), where most of our churches are, it seems that many of those working with refugees as their paid jobs are members of different churches, Baptists or others. And some members of our churches are active in other organisations as the Red Cross. Many of the efforts that are carried out on a local plan is done on an ecumenical basis.

Several of our members also help as friend families and support persons for refugees and other people coming to Finland.

○ GERMANY

Union: Union of Evangelical Free Churches (Baptists) in Germany

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: So far, we have listed 65 churches with specific projects.

<http://www.baptisten.de/mission/mission-live/diakonie/fluechtlingshilfe/ideenpool-fluechtlingshilfe/gemeinden/>

We estimate that about half of our 800 churches are actually involved in welcoming, supporting and integrating refugees.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted: Cannot be counted, but estimated at 5,000 – 10,000.

Assistance Being Provided Through Other Agencies: Internationally through partners in Lebanon and Turkey. At local level our churches cooperate closely with other churches and their organizations, e.g. through “Diakonisches Werk”, NGOs and government institutions

Type of Assistance That has been Provided Till Date: Activities in refugee camps, with children, intercultural events and meals, Distribution of clothes, sewing projects, sports programmes, Language courses, legal advice, practical help and support, Renting rooms, “church asylum”, Bible study groups, translation of worship services.

Funding Accessed till Date: BEFG account “Gemeinden helfen Flüchtlingen” receives donations from churches for the refugee help and distributes to churches that apply for support for their projects; in the last 3 months about 20,000 € have been collected and forwarded. <http://www.baptisten.de/aktuelles/artikel-lesen/gemeinden-helfen-fluechtlingen/>

Needs Identified by the Churches: Political advocacy and European cooperation

Other Key Activities Till Date:

- Resolution by the Annual Assembly (Kassel, May 2015): Welcoming the strangers
- Discussion forum about migration and integration at the Annual Assembly in May 2015
- Representative of Free churches in the church commission dealing with the government institution for migration (BAMF)
- Material and networking concerning “Kirchenasyl” (“sanctuary” offering protection for asylum applicants)
- Enquiry to the churches about their involvement in Sep 2015
- Workshop on refugee help at the “Kreativtag” in Oct 2015
- Forum for refugee help planned for April 2016
- Communication of refugee issues regularly in the German Baptist Union’s newsletters and magazines, on the website.

- Policy for donations: preferably to help the pressing needs in Lebanon, Turkey and Ukraine

Update 4 March 2016

- The training “First aid with refugees and trauma” has taken place on Saturday, December 12, 2015, in Hannover, with 30 attendants and very helpful input from Pastor Bettina Peter (Lübeck), a trained trauma counsellor. This training will be repeated in other areas of Germany.
- Several churches and regions have appointed coordinators for the refugee help of our churches; e.g. in Baden-Württemberg the Baptist “diakoniewerk” at its assembly on February 27 has installed a full-time position for this coordination work.
- Our publishing house Oncken Verlag has published 10,000 brochures with Bible text and pictures about the Easter stories in four languages (German, Farsi, Arabic, Turkish) for the churches to distribute to refugees.

Fundraising Till Date: Quite immediately, churches and individuals were responding to the media coverage of the crisis, asking our national administration: “Where can we send our offerings and donations to help refugees?”

Our first response: Financial help is most needed not here in Germany, but especially in Lebanon and Turkey; we can channel it to the refugee help there through German Baptist Aid and European Baptist Aid.

Then we also established an account for refugee projects in our churches (“Gemeinden helfen Flüchtlingen”). Money collected there is distributed to churches that provide information about their project, its budget and the need for external funding.

We receive donations and offerings for both purposes.

Experience with Migrants and Refugees: German Baptist churches have developed a strong sense of involvement in the affairs of their hometowns and regions. Many social projects have been established with the motto from Jeremiah 29:7 (“seek the peace and prosperity of the city”) and in the light of Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 25:31-46. Churches have learnt to be “missional” in the sense that their involvement in the community is part of God’s redemptive mission in our world.

Another preparation for the refugee challenge has been the growing number of migrant churches associated with our union. For 10 years already we have seen groups of francophone Africans, Vietnamese or Tamil speakers and others become affiliated or member churches in our union. During the last five years we have trained over 20 migrant leaders and 10 of them are ordained pastors already.

Then came the experience that some of the new refugees especially from Iran have come as Christians fleeing the persecution in Iran or have converted to the Christian faith in Germany. Many Baptist churches have accepted these Iranian Christians into membership; many of them were baptized in our churches. So now, we find ourselves not only trying to handle the challenge of migration, but in fact celebrating the new diversity in our churches and union. Our motto for 2015/16 is “Bunte Gemeinde”, meaning: we celebrate diversity and discover Christ in the other, the stranger.

Other Relevant Information: While we see refugee help in Europe to be an urgent issue, we know that the challenges of migration and integration will remain on our agenda for many years to come. And we understand cultural diversity to be a reality and strength of the Christian church since Pentecost and even in heaven (Revelations 7:9)

Some weeks down the line, the media hype about the German welcoming culture has dried out. We are now facing the challenges of receiving, supporting and integrating hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The discussion about the political response to this challenge is getting more diverse and heated. Unfortunately we observe the polarization of positions in this debate and little effort for mutual understanding and searching for solutions together.

We ask ourselves what we can do as churches and as a union to improve the culture of discourse: allowing and inviting people to voice their questions and fears, positions and opposition and so on.

Updated information 13 Nov. 2015: In the German church scene, there are two trends at the moment:

- More resolutions and statements from churches and unions - mostly encouraging our government to continue its welcoming policies; and at the same time showing awareness and first responses to the concerns and fears among some people;
- A lot of material is being produced with the intention to help churches and individual Christians as they meet refugees: specifically for the Christmas season, material to encourage Christmas events with refugees, booklets with the Christmas story in several languages; a guide to welcome refugees and explain our life and faith to them ...

As a Baptist Union we follow the trend:

- Our National Executive will probably formulate and send a statement to the churches end of next week;
- And we will inform about and propagate some of the material also next week.

And we have a small account to support refugee ministries in our churches; the committee will start next week to distribute funds to our churches, especially for language courses and creative ideas to integrate refugees in our society and churches.

We now have a set date for the training "First aid with refugees and trauma": it will take place on Saturday, December 12, 2015, in Hannover.

Update 4 March 2016

- The services of the coordinator for migration and integration issues, Thomas Klammt, is in high demand: advice for churches concerning refugee help and asylum questions, theological and practical input at regional conferences.
- On April 23, we prepare to have a meeting of refugee helpers from our churches: to give them training and encouragement, support and the opportunity to share and network.
- The Annual Assembly on May 4-7, 2016, in Kassel will again have the main topic "Bunte Gemeinde" (Colourful Church) with one plenary session specifically about migration and integration issues.

- Later in the year we plan to have a consultation meeting for the Arabic speaking people in our churches, possibly in cooperation with Lebanese Baptists.

- GREAT BRITAIN

Union: Baptist Union of Great Britain

Number of Churches Providing Assistance:

Response Till Date:

- Advocacy – Visit to the migrants’ camp in Calais by two Baptist pastors and some Baptist youth for fact finding. They also took some aid with them. Have since been sharing stories and lobbying charities for support.
- Lynn Green, the General Secretary, along with other ecumenical partners provided a public statement on the situation in Calais.
- Petitioning, in a variety of forums to ask the government to accept more asylum seekers and to increase the support to refugee migrants in the UK.
- Baptist churches have offered 300 spaces to house migrants and refugees.
- A member of a Baptist church heads a charity called Home for Good. Till date 9,000 people (mainly from churches) have responded to foster refugee and migrant children from the Middle East.
- Many churches are acting as collection points for items that can be used by the refugees.

Experience with Migrants and Refugees: A number of churches in the Union have over the years been providing services to asylum seekers such as operating a drop in centre, providing food, clothing, household goods, advice, a shower, a hot meal, and generally a place of welcome and safety.

- HUNGARY

Union: Baptist Union of Hungary; Hungarian Baptist Aid.

Churches Involved in Providing Assistance: Kelebia, Tompa, Győr, Szeged, Zákány, Budapest, Verőce, Velence.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted: Between 10,000-12,000 as of October 9, 2015

Assistance Being Provided Through Other Agencies: Providing assistance at **Budapest** Western and Eastern Railway Station, Horgos-Röszke **Serbian Hungarian border**, Opatovic Camp- **Croatian - Serbian border**, Szentgotthárd **Hungarian-Austrian border** Barcs.

Assistance That has been Provided Till Date: Food packages, hygiene kits, drinking water, sanitation facilities (W.A.S.H), medical assistance, warm clothing, sleeping bags, and blankets.

Funding and Donors: Euros 65,000 as of Oct. 6, 2015. Hungarian Baptist Aid’s own resources, private donations, in-kind donations from Hungarian partner organizations, and international partners in Sweden, Netherlands, USA. Funds from international partner organizations: Tearfund, Immanuel Baptist Church, USA, American Baptist Churches (ABC).

Several BU Churches have provided relief items and volunteers, no financial fundraising was done in the Churches.

Funding Sill Needed: Euros 50,000.

Other Needs That Churches and Unions Could Still Address: Professional volunteers for ten-day shifts in Croatia, rental cargo vehicles, non-perishable and culturally acceptable food items (HALAL food), winter sleeping bags (new) Antibacterial hand sanitizer (gel).

Experience with Migrants and Refugees: Extensive global experience in addressing the needs of refugees during crises.

Advocacy and Communications:

Communication happens through both the Hungarian media and international media. Below is a list of mediums that this advocacy and communication happens through.

Hungary:

- Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources
- Hungarian website of Hungarian Baptist Aid: www.baptistasegely.hu
- Social media networks: <https://www.facebook.com/Szeretetszolgalat?fref=ts>

International:

- Local media in Serbia
- Washington Post: "...to Eva Varga, a 63-year-old doctor providing volunteer help to the migrants Monday, a refugee crisis is the wrong time to play religious politics. "For me, there are no Christian patients and no non-Christian patients," said Varga, who has provided medical help in countries around the world for the relief organization Hungarian Baptist Aid. "There are only my patients, and I'm obliged to take care of them." - The Washington Post
- BBC Radio
- English Facebook site of Hungarian Baptist Aid: <https://www.facebook.com/HungarianBaptistAid?fref=ts>
- English articles from Hungarian Baptist Aid: www.hbaid.org
<http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/refugees-children-and-mothers-are-priority->
<http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/hungarian-bapist-aid-and-the-baptists-helping-the-refugees->
<http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/aid-in-serbia-and-croatia>
<http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/bacskossuthfalva--hungarian-baptist-aid-continues-to-primarily-help-children-mothers-and-those-injured.->
<http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/american-baptist-donations-arrived>

Other Relevant Information: HBAid works together with Serbian Baptist organizations, Croatian Baptist organizations and also with other NGOs, the Red Cross chapters of the respective countries, as well as the relevant Government organizations of the respective countries. Most currently it is the Government of Croatia in order to have access to the Opatovac Refugee Camp.

○ ITALY

Union: Christian Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy

Response Till Date: The Union is responding through a coalition of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) in the following projects - Mediterranean Hope, The Relocation Desk, and the Ecumenical Scholarship program.

Activities include:

Mediterranean Hope: Work is divided into four closely related units: analysis and information flows via the Mediterranean; reception and orientation of migrants and asylum seekers; integration programs; actions aimed at promoting effective migration policies that affect human rights.

The Relocation Desk: Activities at Fiumicino Airport in Rome

The Ecumenical Scholarship Program: Enables refugees to engage in postgraduate studies, vocational training, and Italian language studies. It also provides socio-legal counselling, on-the-job training, internships and vocational courses, career guidance seminars, internship programs in developing countries as a way of stemming the brain-drain effect, conferences and workshops.

○ IRAQ

Church: Baptist Church of Baghdad. (There is no Baptist Union in Iraq)

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: Only four Evangelical/Protestant churches including on Baptist church, also the Traditional churches) in different ways.

Number of Refugees Being Helped: In cooperation with LSESD in Beirut, assisted 70 families, for nine months and now planning to raise this number to 200 for 6-12 months, in partnering with GBAAid, and BWAid.

Type of Assistance Being Provided: Food, blankets, mattresses, electric heaters. Have around 50 Christian families (from Nineveh plain) being assisted monthly, through small packages (Since April 2015). Have 70 Muslim families (Shabak; from Nineveh plain) being assisted monthly (Since January 2015). Also visiting refugees' camps to provide food, each one of these camps had between 20-50 families.

Funding: Have received \$93,080 till date from churches in the US and Australia, GBAAid and BWAid. Need about \$100,000 to continue the programs.

Advocacy: The pastor, Rev. Ara Badalian is active in the Iraqi Council for Interreligious Dialogue (ICID), focusing on the conflict between the Majority groups, which has an effect on the situation of the Minorities, specially the Christians.

Experience with Refugees and IDPs: The Baptist Church in Baghdad is collaborating with LSESD in Lebanon and churches in Baghdad in responding to the needs of the IDPs and refugees streaming into Baghdad and building up experience.

○ LEBANON

Union: Convention of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Lebanon; The Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD)

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: LSESD is implementing its relief program mainly through local churches in **Lebanon** (at least 21), **Syria** (at least 6) and **Iraq** (1).

Number of Refugees and IDPs Being Assisted: 7,255 families (43,530 individuals approx.) have access to food every month, 4,560 individuals provided with healthcare, 800 children have access to various kinds of educational programs, 3,160 families provided with blankets, mattresses and NFIs, 200 families have access to clean water.

On-going Response: Access to food, healthcare, education, water and psychosocial support; distribution of blankets and mattresses; milk and diapers for young children, vocational training for children and young adults; training for women; training for churches on gender based violence and child protection.

Source of Funding Till Date: Churches, Baptist Unions, donor governments, foundations, aid agencies, private donors.

Funding Required: Since most of the funding is time bound grants, funding is required to sustain the programs among the refugees and those internally displaced.

○ NETHERLANDS

Union: Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: A few – no exact numbers. There is a general care for all incoming refugees and migrants.

Type of Assistance Being Provided: Netherlands – Once the asylum seekers arrive at a permanent center, in contact with them is possible. Many individuals have responded by providing clothing, sleeping bags, (stuffed) toys, and welcoming packages. Some eat and meet activities have been organised as well. Baptist churches are mostly joining these initiatives and not starting them themselves. **Middle East** – Have provided funding to projects in the region and are considering new funding.

Experience with Migrants and Refugees: Have some migrant churches in the Union and contacts with new groups have increased over the years. A number of churches provide translation service for migrants, as well as working with asylum seeker centers in activities such as doing activities and eating together, as well as conducting Bible Studies.

There are some good interdenominational organisations that are specialised in different aspects of the work – for example www.gave.nl is an organisation that tries to bring Christians and asylum seekers together. The Protestant Church of the Netherlands has a special representative for migrant-related issues, who is doing a lot in national coordination and political voicing.

Advocacy and Communications: Churches mostly in agreement with what is said by the umbrella organisations (such as the Evangelical Alliance, the Council of Churches). There

are close links with these bodies and some members of parliament, like Joel Voordewind from the Christian Union.

Fundraising: Together with quite a lot of Dutch organisations, such as the Evangelical Broadcasting Company, which is coordinating some of the funding. However, most of the organisations working with refugees in Europe that they know are already well supported. So they are considering giving some (more) funds to the Italian project Mediterranean Hope, as well as looking to see if they can support projects in the Middle East.

○ SCOTLAND

Union: Baptist Union of Scotland

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: Several churches so far either currently involved or anticipating direct contact with refugees locally in the near future.

Assistance Being Provided Through Other Partner Agencies: BMS World Mission, Tearfund, Dundee to Calais, CalAid, Positive Action in Housing, South East Integration Network, ELAM ministries (work with Iranian/Kurdish and Afghan asylum seekers)

Number of Migrants Being Assisted: Currently more than 50+ but potentially 300+ particularly anticipated in Edinburgh, Glasgow and some island communities before Christmas.

Type of Assistance Being Provided: Food, clothing and money to local agencies, befriending scheme through Edinburgh Churches for Sanctuary, Christian Evangelism and discipleship, practical and pastoral help, help with Asylum claims, furniture and temporary housing for asylum seekers (Glasgow)

Source of Funding: Local Churches.

Other Needs Identified: Language Training

History of Working with Migrants and Refugees: Many of our churches do not have any direct contact with refugees. Some of our churches will be in contact with migrant groups settling in different parts of Scotland. A couple of our churches are in contact with a Roma community in Glasgow. Our churches in Edinburgh will be working with Syrian refugees being relocated to Scotland.

Some of our Churches in Glasgow are directly involved in helping asylum seekers who have been displaced from East African countries following the Rwandan Genocide. Queen's Park Baptist Church runs International lunches and English classes for Iranian and Afghan refugees. There is a challenge to manage expectations and help them understand our justice processes. The church also translates their services into Farsi and through mission partners in Glasgow; they have experience in Turkish, Central Asian, Middle Eastern and some experience of Muslim cultures.

Another church in Glasgow has worked for many years with asylum seekers, in some cases offering temporary accommodation and help to furnish other accommodation. Another church in the East end of Glasgow runs English classes for Asylum seekers.

Advocacy and Communications: Some of our churches have gathered some initial information about the crisis. One of our churches in Edinburgh has been proactive in, with the Edinburgh Churches for Sanctuary organisation, putting in place a befriending project and translators ready for refugees coming over.

A couple of our churches in Glasgow have experience of working with Glasgow Lawyers and the Home Office and provide letters and documentation in asylum claims. They have also petitioned the Scottish Government and supported the 'Scotland Sees Syria' campaign.

Fund Raising with Local Churches: Some churches have given directly to EBF, many have given to BMS World Mission for their work with Refugees and BUS has collectively been raising money which will be divided between BMS for their work with refugees, EBF Refugee fund and our own local projects.

Other churches have given to other agencies such as Tearfund and also to local initiatives.

Other Information: While many of our churches have no direct contact or experience of working with refugees, they are keen to help where they can to show Christian care and compassion. Some of our churches particularly in the South and East of Glasgow are very multi-cultural in nature and have adapted to support people from other cultural backgrounds. The churches in our largest cities and surrounding areas are more likely to come into direct contact with Refugees.

- [SERBIA](#)

Union: [Union of Baptist Churches in Serbia \(Serbia North\)](#)

Type of Assistance Already Being Provided: Food, water and personal hygiene items.

Activities Till Date: Individuals in various churches have been helping small groups of migrants for the past three years. With the huge influx, they are providing assistance at the border with Hungary. The crisis worsened when Hungary closed the border to the refugees.

Source of Funding: Local churches, EBF/EBAid members, American Baptist Churches (ABC), and Virginia Baptists.

Union: [Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Serbia \(Serbia South\)](#)

Situation in the Country: As reported by the Baptist Union: The first appeal for help was received from Presevo and from the local government in Vranje. Not long after that, "Love Your Neighbour" (a local NGO) received an appeal for help from Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare. The largest influx of migrants is in Miratovac and Presevo.

Number of Churches Providing Assistance: 3

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted: 2,000

Type of Assistance Already Being Provided: Food, waterproof jackets and mattresses

Sources of Funding: **International** - Come Over and Help, BWAid, Blythwood Care, Texas Baptists through EBF. **Local Churches** - In spite of being fairly poor, they have been providing clothes, fruits and volunteers

Activities Till Date: They are concentrating their work mostly on the camps at Miratovac and Presevo and also in the camps in Sid, towards the Croatian border.

Proposed On-Going Activities: Providing food and bread, hygienic material, shoes, and waterproof jackets for 2,000 individuals, 30% of whom are women and children.

Funding Required: Euros 11,800 monthly for three months.

Experience in Assisting Refugees and Migrants: "Love Your Neighbour" is an experienced organisation with long experience in with refugees from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. They started their humanitarian work in 1991 and also worked with children in Vranje in southern of Serbia. The work with migrants is just a continuation of their humanitarian work. They are in contact with local governments and also with local churches that wanted to be involved in volunteer help.

- [SWEDEN](#)

Union: Evangeliska Frikyrkan / InterAct

Number of Local Churches Involved: 60 churches

Number of Refugees Being Assisted: About 5,000 weekly.

Type of Assistance Being Provided:

- In the Conflict Zones and Along the Path of the Refugees
 - Support to Lebanon, Croatia Baptists, Bread of Life, Serbia.
- In Sweden
 - Asylum assistance, language cafe, material support. Food and shelter.
 - In Sweden they have provided resources to help churches that want to engage with refugees in their local communities.
 - They are also in the process of mapping and creating a network of churches involved in different ways ministering to refugees. So far 60 of their churches have responded telling about many different types of initiatives both of short term character but also ongoing longterm engagements.

Sources of Funding: Local churches and local second-hand shops support International projects. Local projects supported by Churches and Municipalities.

History and Experience in Helping Migrants and Refugees: The last 30 years their churches have been involved in different levels with refugees and migrants. Mainly through opening up churches for activities like language learning, support with asylum process meeting material and spiritual needs. As a union they have a working group supporting churches in their efforts. Produced material to help churches: "Helping the Asylum seeker ", "A multicultural church-insights and lessons learned " to mention a few. Staff and contact persons that supports churches in these areas.

Advocacy and Communications: They have made several opinion articles in the secular press. The most noted one was signed by 378 pastors. Through ecumenical organisation like Swedish Christian Council they have been active in talking with politicians. They have been involved with advocacy in this issue for 30 years and will continue on different levels.

Needs that EBF can address:

- EBFs broad network throughout Europe and the Middle East provides a platform for sharing information and tools to be used in this kind of work. It can involve tools for language learning, information regarding asylum seeking and many other topics.
- Collecting information about ongoing interventions and available resources where they can learn from each other and share what is relevant will be very helpful.
- [TURKEY](#)

Churches involved in providing assistance: Adana, Istanbul, Izmir, Samsun

Number of refugees and migrants being assisted: Between 8.000 – 10.000 people as of October 5, 2015

Assistance that has been provided till date: packages of food (Rice, pasta, beans, potatoes, tea etc.), sanitary products, swaddling clothes, baby food/ milk and clothes, medical help, shoes, flat equipment

Funding and Donors: From HMK we have received 35.895,- EUR, 16.674,- EUR from the Baptist Union of the Czech Republic, from EBM INTERNATIONAL 39.125,- EUR and from German Baptist Aid 20.000,- EUR

Funding still needed: Euros 20.000 monthly for that sort of immediate help according to the capacities of the four local churches

Sources of funding: German Baptist Aid, EBM INTERNATIONAL, HMK, Baptist Union of the Czech Republic

Experience in assisting refugees and migrants: Since 2014 we are helping refugees. We try to find out the poorest people (mostly mothers and children). Firstly we contact the district manager for asking the needs and addresses of these peoples. Then we go to them and distribute handbills (coupon for the packages) and give them date and place where they can collect the packages. In Adana we screen the tents of the refugee camps and note the particular needs of the refugees and we give them according to their particular needs. In Izmir the Baptist church itself has become a shelter for Iranian Refugees. There is a community of sometimes 80 members gathering in the Baptist church. The Baptist church counts meanwhile 25 Iranian members.

<p>The EBF Council in Sofia, Bulgaria commissioned this report in September 2015. Rupen Das, as part of his role as faculty of IBTSC in providing research and other support to EBF's member Unions, is the primary author of the document, along with other members of the Working Group, with input from the member unions of the EBF.</p>
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