

48 asylum seekers arrived in Germany on the first relocation flight from Cyprus



On 19 December 2022, 48 asylum seekers including families with children, arrived to Germany on the first relocation flight from Cyprus, within the framework of the new EU-funded Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM).

Within the framework of the Solidarity Declaration agreed in June 2022 by 21 European Union Member States (EUMS) and associated countries, the new EU-Funded Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism will support voluntary relocations from the five first-line Mediterranean countries, Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece and Cyprus, to European Union Member States and associated countries.

With the support of the European Commission and in coordination with the Asylum Service, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, and other stakeholders such as the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA), IOM ensures that beneficiaries are adequately prepared for and subsequently transferred to the Member State of Relocation (MSR) in safety and dignity and on a voluntary basis, receiving comprehensive support throughout the entire process.

Record irregular arrivals this year, having risen to 17,074 with an average of 1422 monthly arrivals

As of 19 December, the Republic of Cyprus registered 17,074 irregular arrivals with a cumulative total fast reaching 50,000 since 1 January 2015. Main routes of arrival continue to be from the non-government-controlled areas with 85% migrants and refugees crossing through the buffer zone to the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) by land, and 15% through Turkey, Syrian and Lebanon by sea.

Furthermore, at the end of September 2022, there were 27,725 pending applications of international protection at the Asylum Service, and 8,013 pending applications at the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC).

Also as of 19 December, new arrivals of unaccompanied and separated migrant children (UASC) have reached 917, noting a 40% increase from the last year's 659 arrivals. As of the week 21 November there were a total of 1,217 shelters and the First Reception Centre. The majority of UASC in Cyprus are boys and the main countries of origin are 36% from the Syrian Arab Republic, 34% the Federal Republic of Somalia, 10% the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 21% from other African countries.

At the end of November, the Asylum Service counted a total of 2,944 migrants and refugees accommodated at all centers, 2,587 at First Reception Centre, 234 residents at Kofinou Reception and Accommodation Center and 123 residents at Limnes Reception Center.

Main nationalities accommodated at First reception center on 30 November 2022 are Syria 452, Democratic Republic of Congo 408, Nigeria 327, Somalia 248, Pakistan 246, Bangladesh 179 and Cameroon 120. *IOM collects data from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and CODECA NGO.*
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95 beds rented in districts of Limassol and Nicosia for UASC



Since July 2022 the Transition to Adulthood project has expanded with 57 additional beds reaching a total of 95 in the country. Most of the unaccompanied migrant teenagers who are currently benefiting from semi-independent living are transferred from the First reception center and accommodated in the community in the districts of Limassol and Nicosia.

As of 28 December, IOM Cyprus empowered 137 unaccompanied migrant teenagers, including 51 girls and 74 boys through the alternative care model provided

Empowerment was made possible by early access to language learning as well as the organization of workshops. IOM Cyprus hosted a workshop on 12 November for the beneficiaries on the topic of bullying and combatting xenophobia delivered by trainers, members of the Cyprus Youth Council pool of trainers. The initiative aimed at effectively preventing and dealing with the phenomenon of bullying and was added to the overall effort to empower the children of the program.

Thanks to the continuous support of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus, of the local communities, the house landlords, and trainers, IOM continues successfully to support unaccompanied migrant children in Cyprus to their transition toward adulthood. IOM Cyprus has taken over the management and implementation of the programme, which is fully funded by the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus.

Children and border management

On 25 October a three days training of trainers in the framework of the project "Contributing to address the needs of migrant children at borders in Europe" was organized and delivered by IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, European Union, and NATO in Nicosia. The training provided 20 frontline workers in Cyprus, the European Union Agency for Asylum, the State Health Services Organization, the Medical and Public Health Services, Social Welfare Services, Cyprus Police and, IOM staff with some of the foundational knowledge and skills to support the needs of migrant children and borders (sea, land, air).



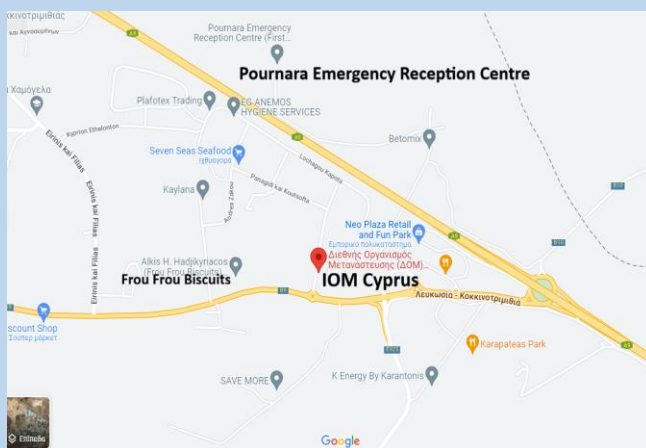
The training participants giving their feedback said the interactive methodology of the training exceeded their expectations and that the content was informative suggesting that it would in the future be rolled out to more Police officers tasked with registrations of UASC at the first reception center. This training was supported by IOM's Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MiRAC).

As a learning organization IOM contributed further to the Cyprus Police's own organized training on countering Labour exploitation on 20 September in Larnaca. IOM was also a panelist to the Youth Board of Cyprus' discussion on Euth Crisis on 8 October. Moreover, between 7-9 November IOM Cyprus trained colleagues in Zambia sharing practices on information management, data collection and analysis and the use of IOM's own global migration management application, MiMOSA. Thanks to all those who supported knowledge sharing.

IOM Office has Moved

In the context of facilitating and strengthening the work of the International Organization for Migration in Cyprus, we would like to thank the Commissioner for the Citizen, Mr. Panagiotis Sentonas, for the concession of accommodation for our offices as of 01.12.22 at the "House of the Volunteer", at the address Kratitirion 4, 2660 Kokinotrimithia, and the Department of Public Works of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works, for its support.

Migrants, partners and donors can now find the IOM Cyprus country office here:



I am a migrant – 5,461 KM of courage



Abraham is a young man, a dancer, and a migrant. He has found his community and calling it Limassol. Here he fights to be financially independent.

He left Sierra Leone to seek safety and came to Cyprus to rebuild his life. Initially he was placed in a camp setting in Nicosia.

Abraham is grateful for all the support of IOM and the Social Welfare Services. 'Upon my transfer to an alternative care house in Limassol, I was able on a typical day to go to school in the morning, work as a kitchen assistant at TGI Fridays in the afternoon, play in the park with other boys in my free time, read a book. 'The most significant moment of my life here was a day spent at the beach with other friends.'

As other migrants children using irregular means to travel and arriving unaccompanied, Abraham's journey to integration in the host country is not easy. Abraham says IOM has taught him motivation. The message he wants to pass to others now that he has reached adulthood is to be patient, it is not easy to reach their goals, but if they work hard, everything will be ok in the end.