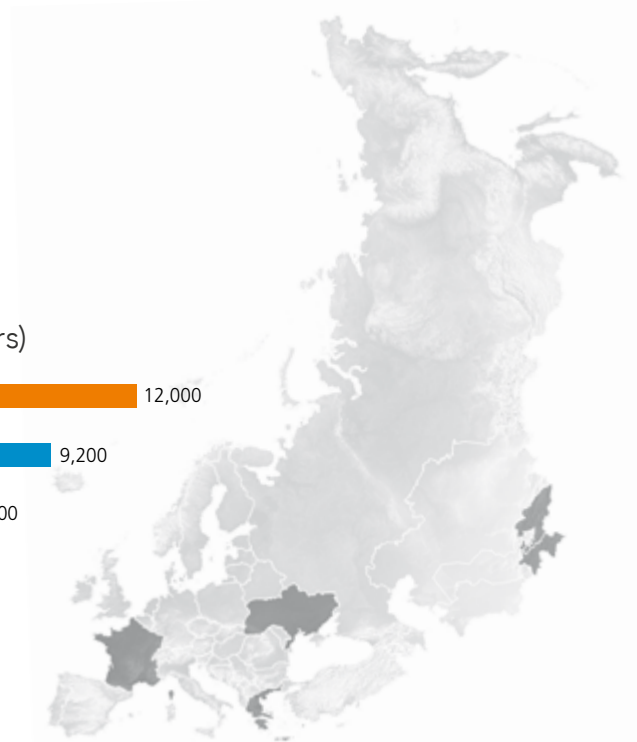
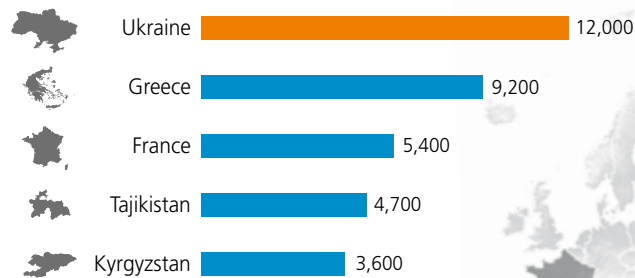


EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Conflict 12,000
Disasters 41,000
0.2% of the global total

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict, violence and disasters)



Every year, Europe and Central Asia have lower numbers of new displacement than other regions and fewer people living in displacement. However, a total of 53,000 new displacements were still recorded in 2018, of which 41,000 were associated with disasters and more than 12,000 with conflict. Almost 2.9 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year, the result of old and unresolved conflicts and territorial disputes in several countries.

The latter figure includes 800,000 in **Ukraine**, where the country's conflict entered its fifth year. New displacements were recorded in October when 12,000 people were evacuated following an explosion at an ammunition depot east of Kyiv, thought by the government to have been an act of sabotage.²⁴⁷ The majority were able to return home two weeks later. Around 200 new displacements were also recorded in settlements along the contact line, where ceasefire violations including shelling continue.

Around 344,000 people were living in protracted displacement in **Azerbaijan** as a result of the country's unresolved conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. An additional 301,000 IDPs were estimated to have made partial progress towards durable solutions, thanks to the government's efforts to relocate them into temporary housing. In **Georgia**, 293,000 people remain displaced because of long-standing territorial disputes in Abkhazia and South

Ossetia. Similar conditions were faced by around 228,000 people in **Cyprus**, who remain displaced as a consequence of the deadlock between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot authorities over the status of the north of the island. Many of Europe's IDPs have been living in displacement for 15 years or more.

There is no up-to-date information about displacement in **Turkey**, but renewed fighting between the government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 2015 and subsequent security operations triggered hundreds of thousands of displacements in the south-east of the country. In 2018 the government began building new homes in the region as part of an urban renewal project and to compensate victims of the conflict. Around 25,000 homes are thought to have been built to date, but it is unclear who the beneficiaries will be. Some of the housing offered to IDPs for compensation are far from city centres, pulling them away from their livelihoods and social networks.²⁴⁸ Several people who remained in their homes in areas affected by the conflict, such as in the historic Sur district of Diyarbakir, have also been evicted to make way for regeneration initiatives.²⁴⁹

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and **Russia** accounted for an important share of the region's new displacements associated with disasters. Days of heavy rain caused flooding in Tajikistan's southern province of Khatlon in May, triggering more than 5,400 new displacements

and damaging homes, roads, bridges and farmland.²⁵⁰ Landslides in the Jalal-Abad region of Kyrgyzstan triggered almost 4,700 new displacements in April, and floods 1,500 in the Russian republics of Altai, Tuva and Khakassia in March.

Storms and floods triggered at least 5,400 new displacements in **France**, including 1,500 in the Ile-de-France area around Paris when the banks of the river Seine burst in January.²⁵¹ A riverine flood in the Piave basin in **Italy** led to 1,300 new displacements in October, and flash flooding and storm surges pushed a similar number out of their homes in **Greece** in late September when a storm struck the island of Evia and the southern Peloponnese peninsula.

A short winter, warm spring and record-breaking temperatures and below average rainfall in the summer led to one of Europe's most destructive wildfire seasons in recent years.²⁵² Approximately 3,000 homes were destroyed in the Greek region of Attica in July, triggering more than 7,000 new displacements.²⁵³ Wildfires in the Valencia region in **Spain** triggered 2,600 in August.

The European parliament and Council of Europe approved plans in December 2018 to improve the EU's management of disaster risk. The scheme, known as rescEU, will create a reserve of civil protection capacity to support national responses to the impacts of natural hazards and epidemics. Member states will also share national prevention and preparedness plans to identify and address possible gaps.²⁵⁴

Urban perspectives

Europe and Central Asia is one of the most urbanised regions in the world. Seventy-two per cent of its population live in towns and cities.²⁵⁵ It is a diverse region, and as in other contexts, the drivers, triggers and impacts of urban displacement vary across it, making it difficult to generalise. From Spain to Uzbekistan, the way national and local authorities respond to the phenomenon also vary widely.

Many IDPs in Ukraine come from urban backgrounds, particularly cities such as Donetsk, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, Luhansk and Sloviansk.²⁵⁶ The country's urban centres, including the capital Kyiv, have also been important destinations for those fleeing the conflict.²⁵⁷ Ukraine's towns and cities offer better access to services and income-generating opportunities than rural areas, and

many IDPs have managed to establish themselves in their new urban environments.²⁵⁸

Housing, land and property rights are challenges, however, because Ukraine does not have a specific mechanism to process claims on properties affected by the conflict.²⁵⁹ Nor does Ukrainian legislation list IDPs as a group entitled to social housing. The local authorities in Bakhmut, Kramatorsk and Sloviansk have made efforts to address some of these issues with support from the international humanitarian community.²⁶⁰

Local governments and international agencies have also worked together to address displacement in **Kosovo**, where policies have been put in place to help municipalities support sustainable returns for people displaced by conflict between 1998 and 2004. The Regulation on the Return of Displaced Persons and Durable Solutions in Kosovo, for example, calls for municipal action plans on the issue and emphasises the importance of IDPs' socioeconomic integration based on their skills, gender, age and disabilities.²⁶¹ It also aims to improve cooperation between national and local authorities to ensure return conditions are comparable across the territory.²⁶²

In many parts of the region, however, urban IDPs face marginalisation and unequal access to basic services. Those in many post-Soviet countries receive lower quality service provision than host communities, particularly in terms of healthcare.²⁶³ The dynamics of urban displacement in Central Asian countries remain poorly understood, but evidence suggests that urban renewal and beautification projects have caused displacement in cities including Ashgabat in Turkmenistan, Dushanbe in Tajikistan and Tashkent in Uzbekistan.²⁶⁴

The Council of Europe called in 2018 for renewed action by states and regional bodies to address internal displacement in the region.²⁶⁵ Among many recommendations, it highlighted the importance of addressing IDPs' housing, land and property rights and providing humanitarian assistance to those living in protracted displacement. The role of local authorities and cities in unlocking solutions will be central to implement these national and regional commitments.