



On September 2, newspapers around the world published a sad photo. It showed the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on a Turkish shore. The Syrian boy had drowned, along with his brother and mother, while crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey to Greece. The family had been trying to reach Europe.

The heartbreaking image focused the world's attention on people who have been fleeing to Europe in recent years.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Since January 2015, some 500,000 **migrants** have entered the **European Union (EU)**. The **United Nations (UN)** says about 8,000 more are entering every day. As many as one million could arrive by the end of 2015.

It's the largest movement of people in Europe since World War II.

Most of these migrants are **refugees**. They're fleeing from countries engulfed in violence, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea. Above all, they're coming from Syria, where a **civil war** is raging.

THE ROAD TRAVELLED

The majority of migrants are following one of three routes across the Mediterranean. The most popular one involves crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands of Kos, Chios, Lesbos or Samos in rubber dinghies or small wooden boats. From there, migrants take a ferry to the Greek mainland. Then, they travel through Macedonia

and Serbia, then on to Hungary, Austria and Germany.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 508 million people – 7.3 percent of the world's population – live in the EU.

DESPERATE JOURNEY

The journey is long and tiring. People crowd onto buses, trains or taxis. When they can't take transportation, they walk with their belongings for days in the heat or cold. Women carry small children. Families push elders along in wheelchairs.

The migrants sleep outside on sidewalks or train tracks. They wait in huge line-ups at reception centres for water and

DEFINITIONS

CIVIL WAR: a war between two or more groups within one country

EUROPEAN UNION (EU): a group of European countries that participates in the world economy as one economic unit, operating under one official currency, the Euro

MIGRANT: someone who travels to another country to work

REFUGEE: a person who flees his or her home country to escape persecution

UNITED NATIONS (UN): an organization encouraging peace, cooperation, social progress and economic stability. Created after World War II, it has 192 members, including Canada.



food. They are tired, sick, and despairing.

KEEP MOVING!

The EU has been struggling to cope with the huge **influx**.

Nations along the south coast, such as Greece, were quickly overwhelmed when migrants started arriving in the thousands in April. Then as the tide of refugees pushed north and west, other countries were unable to handle all of the people needing help, too.

Some nations blocked their borders, turning people back. They were concerned about security. Governments also worried that migrants, if they stayed, would take away jobs, and stretch resources. And allowing migrants to enter without permission might encourage other desperate people to set sail for Europe.

Hungary was especially hostile to the migrants. It built barbed wire fences to prevent them from passing through. It also sprayed crowds at the border with tear gas and water cannons.

“Those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different

culture,” said Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

GERMAN HOSPITALITY

By contrast, Germany welcomed the weary migrants. The government wouldn't set a limit on the number it would accept. Thousands of citizens offered the travellers food, water and clothing.

“The... right to **asylum** for the... **persecuted** knows no upper limit; that also goes for refugees who come to us from the hell of a civil war,” said German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

However, at least 800,000 migrants could settle in Germany by year's end. That's one percent of the country's population! Even if Germany is willing to take everyone in, the country can't shoulder the entire burden.

AN EU PLAN

So on September 22, the EU approved a plan to share across its 28 states the 120,000 refugees now in Greece and Italy. This was a small amount compared to the number of people seeking asylum. But it was a start.

The EU will also increase aid for Syrian refugees in Turkey and the Middle East so they would be

HELPING HANDS

Many people have been doing what they can to help the refugees.

- Some 160 Austrian drivers ferried refugees arriving from Hungary to shelters in Vienna.
- Seventy-one German doctors are treating refugees in a former army barracks.
- A Berlin group has created a Refugee Phrasebook to provide basic vocabulary in 28 languages.
- A Munich soccer team has set up a training camp for migrant children and youths.

less likely to attempt the journey westward. Borders will also be tightened to make it harder for migrants to enter illegally.

These measures won't end the crisis, but they are a step in the right direction.

“The refugee crisis can be brought under control, but it will take a tremendous amount of effort, it will take a long time, and it will take many steps in many areas,” said EU Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans. ★

DEFINITIONS

ASYLUM: the right to stay in a country, given by a government to protect someone who has fled from trouble in his own country

INFLUX: a large number of people or things coming to a particular place

PERSECUTE: to treat someone very badly, or to refuse them rights, especially because of their race, religion, or political beliefs