



SCOUT RESPONSE TO REFUGEE OPERATION – GREECE



The refugee crisis has been widely documented across Europe and the world. Thousands of people from Syria, North Africa and beyond have been finding any means necessary to make it to the safety of the EU. Sadly, some don't make it, but for those that do what lies in wait for them in these foreign lands?

Unlike the arrivals lounge that many conventional travellers will be familiar with when reaching Europe, there is no Starbucks at the refugee transit centres, no warm embraces from a loved one or that comforting feeling of reaching 'home'. For thousands of refugees there is the daunting feeling of a journey that has only just begun rather one that has now ended.

As for the Red Cross, UN agencies and governments across Europe the overwhelming task of organising the management of this crisis, and the people it affects, has been a difficult one with the focus being on logistics rather than a warm welcome, and quite rightly so. With thousands of people coming across the border everyday, the process needs to be a fluid one.



To support this process and to offer a warm embrace to the new arrivals the Soma Hellinon Proskopon (Scouts of Greece), along with many other National Scout Organisations, have been offering their expertise. Knowing that a third of the new arrivals were children, they concentrated their efforts with the younger generations of migrants – keeping their spirits high and maintaining a sense of normality, which has been missing for these young people!

Hundreds of enthusiastic and compassionate Scout volunteers – acting as Messengers of Peace - have been delivering simple everyday scouting activities for thousands of young people on the Aegean Islands and across the country, as well as helping parents find accommodation for their families and clothes for their children.

It's these simple acts of humanity, friendship and peace that scouts throughout Europe are offering and they are making thousands of people feel welcome in a place that they can now, for the time being at least, call home.