



## A new online information platform for refugees in Cyprus

Nicosia, Thursday 12 October 2017 – UNHCR Cyprus launches today a new online information platform for refugees and asylum-seekers living on the island. A mobile-friendly website that is accessible at <http://help.unhcr.org/>, the “HELP” platform seeks to offer comprehensive, accurate, objective and up-to-date information that is essential for refugees and asylum-seekers in Cyprus. Topics covered include the national asylum system, the rights and duties of asylum-seekers and refugees, and information about government programmes and non-governmental organisations that offer various types of assistance and integration support. The “HELP” platform also describes the role and work of UNHCR in Cyprus. The information is currently available English, but there are plans to also include other languages in the near future.



Refugees and asylum-seekers make on a daily basis many decisions affecting them, whether it is applying for asylum, learning the local language, looking for a job or bringing the family members they have left behind. Access to reliable, timely information from authoritative sources is central to their ability to make good, informed decisions. “We recognise, however, that the realities of urban refugee situations where people are widely dispersed throughout the country

necessarily require extensive use of modern communication technology that ensures a greater and quicker flow of essential information,” said Damtew Dessalegne, the UNHCR Representative in Cyprus. This is essentially what the “HELP” online platform is intended to serve as: a one-stop information shop.

We hope that through this user-friendly platform we can adequately inform and empower as many people as possible as they struggle through the complexities of the asylum process and in their efforts to adapt to and integrate into the social, economic and cultural fabric of the host society. Needless to emphasise that the use of online information is not a substitute but a supplement to UNHCR’s regular contacts with refugees and asylum-seekers through outreach activities, one-on-one counselling, monitoring visits and group information sessions.

With today’s launch of “HELP”, Cyprus joins a global UNHCR initiative as the eighth country offering nationally-tailored online information to refugees and asylum-seekers on the island. The “HELP” platform will be regularly updated to reflect new developments and changes in key areas of concern to its users.

We welcome any suggestions and feedback you have that will help us improve our new platform.  
Please write us at [cypni@unhcr.org](mailto:cypni@unhcr.org).