

© UNICEF/Romania/2022

Four-year-old Max and his mother fled conflict in Ukraine, leaving loved ones behind to seek safety in Romania.

10 March 2022

Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR) – Ukraine Situation: Refugee Response in Neighbouring Countries

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 - 2022



Highlights

- As of 10 March, over two million refugees have crossed Ukraine’s Western borders to Europe, with over 1.4 million in Poland, almost 83,000 in the territory of Moldova, 82,000 in Romania, and more than 642,000 in other European countries. UNHCR estimates that as the crisis unfolds, this number may increase to four million people.
- UNICEF’s refugee response in neighboring countries is focused on assuring protection of children made vulnerable by this crisis, closely integrating child protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and nutrition, education and early childhood development and social protection support.
- UNICEF is working closely with UNHCR and other partners to scale up support for refugee children and their families in Poland, the territory of Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Belarus. UNICEF actions will aim to address immediate humanitarian needs in key sectors as well as to strengthen systems and capacities of host countries to support refugee communities in the medium term.
- In Moldova and Romania, UNICEF has already set up four Blue Dot safe spaces that provide crucial protection to refugee children and their families. The process of establishing additional Blue Dots is being accelerated across all seven countries, with eight more planned.

UNICEF Response Key areas



Provision of temporary water and sanitation services, distribution of critical hygiene and dignity products for families, women and children, support infection prevention and hygiene promotion.



Provision of education and recreational supplies for children and adolescents, facilitate access to temporary learning, recreational and early childhood development activities; support host-government in coordination and integration of children into national education systems.



Provision of essential health services for mothers and children, promotion of vaccination, infant and young child feeding, provision of essential commodities, including vaccines, health supplies, medicines, and micronutrient supplements.



Establishment of ‘Blue Dots’ to provide critical support and protection services for children and families, provision of technical support for registration, screening, case management and referrals, including family tracing for unaccompanied children, psychosocial support and prevention and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.



Support multi-purpose cash interventions for vulnerable households with children, strengthen capacity of national social protection systems to integrate refugee children.

Situation in Numbers



4,000,000ⁱ

People anticipated to flee from Ukraine and seek protection and support across the region



2,155,271ⁱⁱ

Refugees who have crossed borders from Ukraine into neighboring countries since 24 February 2022

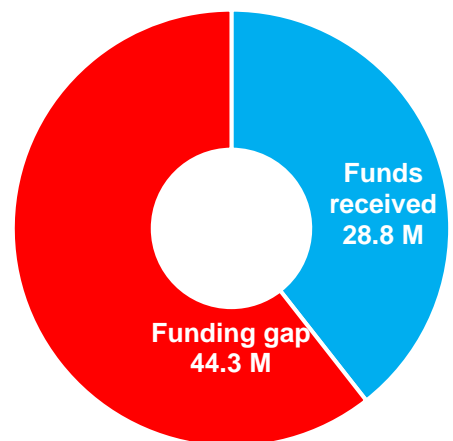


7 neighboring countries covered under UNICEF’s response in Europe

UNICEF Appeal 2022

US\$ 73.1 millionⁱⁱⁱ

Funding Status (in US\$ million)



^{i&ii} UNHCR. Operational Data Portal as at 8 March 2022. <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

ⁱⁱⁱ This is an indicative overview based on pledges received over the past week.

Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships

Under the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) UNICEF is appealing for US\$ 73.1 million over a 6-month period to respond to the urgent needs of children and their families crossing the borders to neighbouring countries in Europe. These amounts are an estimate based on initial assessments, and funding requirements may require adjustment based on the evolving situation and corresponding humanitarian needs. Flexible contributions from donors will enable UNICEF and partners to take prompt actions to address immediate needs and prevent a further deterioration of the welfare of refugee children and their families, and hosting communities in neighbouring countries who have been affected by the Ukraine crisis.

UNICEF is grateful for the immediate and generous pledges of support that have been received from both private and public donors.

UNICEF is working closely with UNHCR and UN partners to rapidly scale up its multi-sectoral humanitarian response. UNICEF is leveraging its presence, experience and partnerships established through longstanding country programmes in Moldova, Romania and Belarus and through a strong network of National Committees in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. UNICEF continues to build on and expand its close relationships with Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to enable meaningful cooperation, effective use of existing systems and coherent, context-specific response.

Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

After eight years of conflict that was limited to Eastern Ukraine, the sudden and dramatic escalation of war in Ukraine has resulted in over two million people, half of whom children, fleeing their homes and crossing into neighbouring countries to seek safety, protection, and humanitarian assistance. As the situation continues to unfold, displacement dynamics and needs are expected to continue to grow exponentially, with UNHCR estimating up to four million refugees and asylum-seekers will need humanitarian support in neighbouring countries¹.

Over 1.4 million refugees (60% of the total) have already arrived in Poland. A significant number are anticipated to stay until they can connect with family members who are still in Ukraine, or until they can eventually return home. The remaining refugees have fled to Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Belarus, and other surrounding countries.

Most refugees are women and children. In addition to being suddenly uprooted from their homes, they are now placed at significant risk of gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation and abuse, psychological trauma and family separation. Children are in desperate need of safety and stability, the most vulnerable being those unaccompanied or separated from their families, who are at heightened risk when they move across borders. Given this, UNICEF and UNHCR issued a joint statement calling for the protection of [unaccompanied and separated children fleeing Ukraine](#), urging neighbouring and impacted countries to ensure their immediate identification and registration, offer safe spaces for children and families linked to national child protection systems and expand capacity of emergency care arrangements with screened caregivers as well as other critical services for the protection of children.

Disabilities and special needs add an additional layer of vulnerability. This requires all UNICEF programme interventions to respond to the needs of this important vulnerable population group in different contexts.

Regional Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF is working closely with UNHCR and other key humanitarian partners under the interagency Refugee Response Plan (RRP) to respond to the humanitarian needs of people fleeing from the conflict. UNICEF will expand its programmatic and advocacy support, alongside UNHCR, in hosting countries as the situation evolves. Assessment missions to hosting countries are ongoing and operational plans will be developed in a sequenced manner with other humanitarian partners.

As a first measure of immediate support UNICEF is activating Blue Dot safe spaces to provide critical support and protection services for refugee children and their families. These spaces are being set up in close coordination with national and local authorities along entry points of major population arrivals, often in conjunction with municipalities. The Blue Dots provide key information to families, psychosocial support, safe spaces for mothers and children, and the ability to identify protection risks, including critical support to identify unaccompanied and separated children, support family reunification and provide mental health / psychosocial support and links to a social service. As required, Blue Dots can also provide a range of other services as needed, such as cash and information. The menu of services will be determined at each site and based on what is already available and what the needs are.

¹ UNHCR. Operational Data Portal. <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

UNICEF will also scale up health and nutrition support, focusing on the provision of essential services for children and their mothers, promotion of infant and young child feeding and prevention of disease outbreaks, including support to vaccination. If required, UNICEF will support multi-purpose cash interventions for vulnerable households with children in transit and the integration of refugee caseloads into national social protection systems. Refugee children's continued access to education will be facilitated through support to temporary learning, recreational and early learning activities as well as through support to host-governments to facilitate inclusion of refugee children into the national education system.

Poland

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Since 24 February, 1,412,503² refugees have arrived in Poland from Ukraine. This represents 60% of the Ukraine refugee outflow overall. In many cases, refugees are expected to stay in Poland until they can return to their homes or reunite with family members who are still in Ukraine.

There is currently no formal screening or registration mechanism in place at the border crossings. Given the long backlogs of people seeking to enter Poland, those arriving are screened briefly for valid documents. This makes it difficult to identify children and families in need and support family reunification. A major concern is also the continuing transfers of children from residential care facilities within Ukraine. Transparent identification and transferal processes are crucial to protect these children from vulnerable situations and respond adequately to their needs.

There has been overwhelming and commendable support mobilised by volunteers and government, and these efforts are at the forefront of providing critical support to the hundreds of thousands of arriving populations. There is however need to bolster and strengthen this support through more structured guidance, systems and capacities to identify and address protection concerns and ensure safeguarding processes.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

In child protection, UNICEF is working to establish Blue Dots and provide border monitoring and response to child protection cases in parallel. Initial supplies to establish 10 Blue Dots in Poland have been delivered and will be distributed to implementing partners in the coming days. These include 100 Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits, 100 School-in-a-box kits for 40 students each, 100 Recreation kits, 50 Adolescent Kits, 10,000 school bags, 1,000 WASH and Dignity Kits, 40 First aid kits, 20 tents as well as blankets, clothes and Personal Protection Equipment.

The provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services, gender-based violence (GBV) referrals, and the availability of social workers to link families with existing services are priorities for UNICEF's immediate refugee response. In addition, linkages between staff members in Poland and Ukraine have been established to facilitate information sharing and enhance preparation for the needs and protection of the most vulnerable children, including those living in orphanages and in institutions and those who are unaccompanied and separated, newly arriving in Poland.

UNICEF is assessing needs in major cities as well as the border crossing points, identifying partnerships with UN agencies, NGOs and civil society, to define effective responses based on contextual needs. An ongoing mapping of the existing child protection system and entry points is crucial to accelerate support to the social work and foster care systems. Recognizing the essential role of the Polish national social protection system in the response, particularly in the medium- and long-term in light of the EU directive and recent legislative changes outlining government support to refugees, UNICEF will be working with the government nationally and sub-nationally to support the integration of refugee children the families into the national social protection system.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) welcomed UNICEF's arrival and agreed on the need to work through and with existing systems. UNHCR High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, visited in Warsaw to deepen the cooperation with the Government of Poland. An agreement has now been reached on how to facilitate registration, which is an important step for the UNICEF/UNHCR joint Blue-Dot model in Poland, which will center around these sites. This data collection is crucial to identify children and families in need, in particular unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).

² Data derived from UNHCR, 08 March 2022, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

Moldova

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

By 8 March 2022, 250,236 Ukrainians, including 98,453 children, entered Moldova. Of the new arrivals, 148,569 have left for other destinations, while 101,667, including 46,701 children, remain in Moldavian territory.

To respond to the refugee influx, 166 refugee centres have opened, 80 of which are accredited by the National Agency of Social Assistance. The refugee centres established can accommodate 13,200 people. In addition, an estimated two thirds of the refugee population are being hosted with local families. To date, 10 unaccompanied children have been registered, with the majority placed in the Hincesti, Carpineni residence with their cases being actively followed up on by local social workers.

To date, 285 refugee children have been integrated into the national Moldavian education system.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

The three first Blue Dots have been established near the Otaci border crossing (north), Palanca border crossing (south) and Moldexpo reception centre (Chisinau), with the Moldexpo Blue Dot already operational, and two more to be fully functional this week. UNICEF delivered two trucks of basic hygiene products, including diapers, disinfectants, and absorbent wipes to centres in Palanca and Calaraseuca and one batch to Moldexpo. In addition, clothing, bedding, blankets, generators, and baby food have been distributed.

UNICEF held a meeting with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and national NGOs to explore how to strengthen the capacity of the system to offer family-based care placement for unaccompanied children. The intention is to boost the number of child placements with current foster carers and increase the number of new foster carers. Another concern is the evacuation of large groups of children from Ukraine for which UNICEF and partners plan support to provide transit through or accommodation in the country. Particular concerns were expressed regarding the evacuation of children with disabilities from residential institutions.

UNICEF and WHO are working jointly to promote polio and measles vaccinations at all reception centres. UNICEF is co-chairing the Education Working Group with UNHCR and supporting the Ministry of Education to integrate refugee children into the national education system.

UNICEF plans to reach at least 3,250 vulnerable refugee households with cash assistance.

Registration and payments are expected to commence in the coming week. This cash assistance will help families obtain the goods and services that they feel they need most.

Romania

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 6 March 2022, 82,062 Ukrainian citizens entered Romania. Around 58,000 refugees, including an estimated 18,000 children, are still in the country. The increasing percentage of refugees staying in Romania is a possible indication that more of the vulnerable population (who do not have support from others) are starting to cross the border. Both the Government and civil society responded promptly to the influx of refugees. A number of private individuals have been supporting the incoming Ukrainian citizens with food, clothing, accommodation and means of transportation.

Information received to date, shows there are many children separated from their parents who are travelling with relatives or caregivers. Many of the separated children are travelling to join their parents who work in other European countries. To date, all identified separated child cases have been referred, and are being followed up on by child protection directorates at the local level. While the legal procedures of unaccompanied and/or separated children arriving at the borders are clear, there is a time gap between identification and referrals a more structured referral mechanism needs to be put in place.

Although most people entering Romania are in transit (i.e., they are met at the border by family and/or friends with transportation means and are led further west towards Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland), a number must find their own means of transportation and accommodation. Humanitarian needs assessments are ongoing by UNICEF, in close collaboration with government and civil society partners. The key needs among the population arriving are healthcare, protection from violence, abuse and exploitation, family-tracing, and reunification as well psycho-social care.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Out of three main border sites, in Sighet, UNICEF has established a fully functioning Blue Dot Hub which includes services for refugee children and families. Around 2,500 refugee and asylum seekers women and children received at least one service in the Blue Dot since the start of the refugee crisis. All Blue Dots will have child-friendly spaces and the presence of social workers and psychologists is ensured by specialized local authorities and civil society organizations. UNICEF is preparing the establishment of two other Blue Dots in two sites (Siret and Seaccaea). In Siret, UNICEF is working with three NGOs, (Hope and home for children, SERA foundation, Romanian Federation of Child Rights Organizations) which will roll out services in Blue Dots.

In all locations, UNICEF is coordinating closely with local authorities, the Ministry of Family, and the National Authority for the protection of the rights of the child. As a matter of priority, UNICEF is working closely with UNHCR to set up case management, incident monitoring and family tracing and reunification. UNICEF is also working with the government to ensure all in-kind donations offered by individuals and private companies reach refugee children after they cross the border into Romania.

UNICEF is assessing the needs for sanitation interventions in shelters, planning for distribution of hygiene kits, and supporting trainings on infection prevention and control. UNICEF teams are also working with the government, nationally and sub-nationally, to bolster their capacity to provide social protection support for children and families within their national systems and programmes.

Other Countries

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

In **Hungary**, 191,348 refugees and asylum seekers arrived from Ukraine as of 7 March 2022, the majority of which continue to be children and women. In **Slovak Republic**, 140,745 refugees have arrived as of 7 March 2022, with 60,000 being in temporary placement and with 140 having applied for special protection (asylum). The Government has established a crisis management team which will be taking over the response from the NGOs on and around the border, while NGOs shift their focus towards response inside the country.

In **Czech Republic**, official arrival figures are not available due to Schengen regulations. To simplify and speed up the admission of Ukrainian refugees, the authorities have set up a National Assistance Centre and registration hotspots around the country. Ukrainians will receive a special 12-month entry visa, health insurance and a labour permit. All centres are fully operated and managed by the state authorities. The government has agreed with UN agencies on a 'Programme of Assistance for Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war' which covers refugee's basic needs, such as accommodation, meals, social needs, psychological assistance.

Generally, there is a critical problem with registration because Ukrainians have a visa-free regulation in the Schengen zone up to 90 days. There are also reports on a growing concern over the Covid-19 testing at arrival check points. UNICEF main priorities are the protection of children, UASC and children with special needs who often arrived in uncoordinated way, without sufficient support.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

In **Hungary**, UNICEF is leveraging local systems and actors in collaboration with the Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF. One key partner for the Refugee Response in Hungary is Terre des Hommes. Other child protection service providers have been mapped to identify service providers in terms of mental health and psychosocial support, case management and child protection support for children at risk in the context of the current crisis. Together with partners, UNICEF is planning to establish six Blue Dots and mobile teams for immediate response. Each Blue Dot will be equipped with child-friendly space and focus on child protection response.

In **Belarus**, UNICEF is assessing the needs for sanitation interventions in shelters, planning for distribution of hygiene kits, and supporting trainings on infection prevention and control. UNICEF will also support children's continued access to education through support for recreational activities, integration of children in the national education system, and provision of education kits for children on the move.

In the **Slovak Republic**, UNICEF is meeting with relevant Ministries and working closely with UNHCR for a coordinated response under the RRP. The mapping of potential partners to accelerate Blue Dot locations and partnerships in service provision is ongoing. Similarly, contacts have been established with the Slovakian National Committee for UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Affairs and UN agencies in the **Czech Republic**; two UNICEF staff members have been deployed to accelerate the child protection response.

External Media

UNICEF Romania Article: [UNICEF support in Romania for refugee children, women and families coming from Ukraine | UNICEF Romania](#)

UNICEF Romania Article: [Sleepless nights for the mothers in Ukraine | UNICEF Romania](#)

UNICEF Romania Article: [The heartbreaking road to safety for a Ukrainian mother and her child | UNICEF Romania](#)

UNICEF Romania Article: [After three days of trying to leave their home in Kyiv, a mother and her twins arrive to Romania | UNICEF Romania](#)

UNICEF Romania: [UNICEF Europe C.Asia on Twitter: "Platon, aged 4 is a refugee from #Ukraine. His grandfather drove him and his mother, Vira, to the border with Romania. "I will never forget my father's eyes when I left him at the border," says Vira. "It was the second time I ever saw him crying." https://t.co/gecreaNlmh" / Twitter](#)

UNICEF ECARO: [UNICEF Europe C.Asia on Twitter: "'Children without parental care are at a heightened risk of violence. When these #children are moved across borders, the risks are multiplied.' Unaccompanied and separated children must be identified, registered and protected. ▶ https://t.co/wpq244Zfj5 https://t.co/Oltnbf99JV" / Twitter](#)

UNICEF ECARO: [Briefing to the UN Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell](#)

UNICEF ECARO: [Unaccompanied and separated children fleeing escalating conflict in Ukraine must be protected \(unicef.org\)](#)

UNICEF ECARO: [UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell's remarks at the UN Security Council meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine](#)

Next Sitrep: 18 March 2022

Who to contact for further information: Afshan Khan
Regional Director
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: akhan@unicef.org

Manuel Fontaine
Director of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF Headquarters, New York.
Email: mfontaine@unicef.org

Annmarie Swai
Regional Emergency Advisor
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Email: aswai@unicef.org