Highlights

- As of 29 March, over 4 million refugees have fled Ukraine (over 2.3 million to Poland, almost 609,000 to Romania, over 387,000 to Republic of Moldova, close to 365,000 to Hungary, and over 642,000 to other countries). Women and children make up 90% of the refugee population. UNICEF is working with host governments, municipalities, and civil society in Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovak Republic and beyond to ensure their protection, in line with the European Union (EU) Temporary Protection Directive, and address immediate health and nutrition, education, early childhood development, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs.
- UNICEF has seven operational “Blue Dots” in Romania, Moldova and Poland, providing integrated services reaching 25,241 people to date. Establishment of 26 more is being accelerated for Hungary (4), Moldova (4), Poland (10), Romania (3), and Slovak Republic (5), which when operational will reach at least 13,000 people, including 5,200 children per day.
- UNICEF established an agreement with the World Organization of Scouts Movements (WOSM) to reach over 500,000 young people with information and messaging on prevention of risks and where and how to access to basic services.
- To scale up programme capacities, UNICEF has deployed 147 surge missions (child protection, WASH, social protection emergency coordination, operations, supply & logistics) to Poland (60), Moldova (15), Romania (16), Hungary (14), Slovakia (6), Czech Republic (5), and through the Regional Office (31).
- As of 30 March, UNICEF has USD 49.4 million available against its USD 73.1 million ask for the refugee response under this humanitarian appeal. UNICEF appreciates the generous contributions from public and private sector donors.

UNICEF Response Key areas

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

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

Situation in Numbers

- 4,019,287
- 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 million

Funding Status as of 29 March (USD million)

- Funding gap: 23.8 M
- Funds received: 49.4 M


\[iii\) Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Belarus, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic

* This reflects the current requirement under Pillar 2 (Refugee Outflow) of UNICEF’s HAC appeal of USD 349 million which covers interventions in neighbouring countries
Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships

UNICEF acknowledges the timely and generous commitments of public and private sector partners against the overall 2022 Ukraine Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), including from the Governments of Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, the European Commission and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Ongoing fundraising campaigns by UNICEF National Committees have generated significant, timely and flexible support from the private sector including corporate partners and individual donors.

Under the overall HAC appeal and aligned with the interagency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) (March to August 2022), UNICEF is initially seeking USD 73.1 million to respond to urgent humanitarian and protection needs of refugee children and their families fleeing to neighbouring countries in Europe. As of 29 March, UNICEF has USD 49.4 million available for the refugee response, of which 44% is fully flexible. These resources are critical to enabling UNICEF to scale up the response to reach children most in need.

With the situation rapidly evolving, intensified fighting, continued displacements, and exponential increase in the number of refugees, the humanitarian response and related financial requirements are being revised to reflect expanded needs until the end of 2022. A revised UNICEF HAC appeal will be launched in early April. Continued, flexible contributions will enable UNICEF and partners to act quickly and respond strategically to where the needs are greatest.

UNICEF and UNHCR have a strong operational partnership in countries neighbouring Ukraine, aligned with the blueprint for joint action for refugee children. An important component is the joint roll out of the “Blue Dots”, putting the protection of women and children at the center of the response. UNICEF is also working closely other UN Agencies and partners to deliver its multi-sectoral response. Close relationships have been established with relevant Government Ministries, Local Authorities, Municipalities, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and national networks, which have national reach, contextual knowledge and localised experience.

Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 29 March, over 4 million refugees have crossed from Ukraine into Europe. Over sixty percent (2.3 million people) have arrived in Poland, with significant caseloads in Romania (608,936), Moldova (387,151), Hungary (364,804) and Slovakia (281,172). With intensified fighting in South-Central Ukraine, particularly in and around Mariupol and Odessa, an increase of refugees is anticipated in the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

Women and children constitute about 90 percent of those who have fled Ukraine, and are extremely vulnerable to significant risks, including gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation. For children arriving in neighbouring countries, particularly unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), there remains critical need to ensure safety, stability, minimum protection standards and access to services in reception facilities across the region.

Regional Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF’s response is rooted in a partnership approach – advocating for refugee children, building capacities through leveraging national and municipal government structures and systems, and engaging civil society and young people to support Ukrainian women and children.

UNICEF is advocating with the governments of neighbouring countries and beyond to strengthen child protection screenings at border crossings, train stations and other main entry points to better identify at-risk children. UNICEF is supporting the governments of Ukraine and surrounding countries to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the registration and care for children evacuated from institutions inside Ukraine. This agreement facilitates the exchange of information to ensure protection and support family reunification for vulnerable children who have been separated from their families and caregivers.

UNICEF established close relations with governments of refugee hosting countries and signed MoUs with all major municipalities in the region to ensure effective cooperation and the inclusion of refugee children in national protection, health, and education systems, in line with the temporary protection directive granted by the European Union (EU). UNICEF established coordination mechanisms with relevant humanitarian actors on the ground, including other UN Agencies – primarily UNHCR and WHO – as well as civil society and I/NGO partners. Beyond immediate protection needs, UNICEF prioritises services in health, nutrition, WASH, education, and social protection to address basic needs, mitigate the risk of outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases, like measles and polio, and ensure continued education.

To meet immediate protection and humanitarian needs of refugee children and their families, UNICEF is working with UNHCR, CSOs, NGOs, and national networks to establish “Blue Dots”, child and family protection hubs providing services for child and gender-based violence (GBV) protection, identification of UASC, family reunification, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), social protection, health, education and early childhood development. Hubs are located in strategic sites like border crossings, registration points, urban centres or delivered by mobile teams. In Moldova, Romania, and Poland, seven established Blue Dots have reached over 25,240 children, women, and families

with integrated services. Operationalisation of 26 more is being accelerated for Hungary (4), Moldova (4), Poland (10), Romania (3), and Slovak Republic (5) which will reach at least 13,000 people, including 5,200 children per day.

UNICEF reached an agreement with the World Organization of Scouts Movements (WOSM) to strengthen joint work with young volunteers to reach over 500,000 young people with information and messaging on prevention of risks and where and how to access basic services. In addition, over 25,000 young people will be actively engaged with various activities and opportunities will be given to some 10,000 to express their views and provide feedback through U-Report platforms. The partnership covers work with Scout associations in Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia as well as Ukraine. In close coordination with national actors, the Scouts will support supply distribution, information sharing, referral to services including Blue Dots, provision of socio-emotional support as well as activities related to Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP).

In Belarus, Moldova, and Romania, UNICEF has leveraged its presence, experience and partnerships, established through long standing country programmes, to quickly respond and scale up. UNICEF has established offices and capacities in Poland and is finalizing an exchange of letters with the government to support government led refugee response programs in Czech Republic, Hungary (where UNICEF has a large presence) and Slovak Republic. In all these countries, UNICEF maintains a strong engagement with its well-established National Committees, leveraging their facilitating role to support the response.

As of 30 March, UNICEF has deployed 147 surge missions, in the areas of child protection, WASH, social protection emergency coordination, operations, supply & logistics to support and bolster response capacities in Poland (60), Moldova (15), Romania (16), Hungary (14), Slovakia (6), Czech Republic (5), and through the Regional Office (31). Following this initial surge, the deployment of longer-term programme technical and operational capacities is now underway.

### Poland

### Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The number of arrivals over the past week shows a slight downward trend, bringing the total number of Ukraine refugees in Poland to over 2.3 million, with estimated half of the arrivals being children. According to the Polish Border Guard, 352,000 Ukrainian nationals have returned to Ukraine since 24 February. In addition to Ukrainian nationals, there are more than 91,000 third-country nationals (TCN) who have crossed the border to Poland. Nearly 700 TCNs, whose situation has been assessed, have repatriated to their country of origin through return flights organised by the Polish Border Guard, in collaboration with Frontex. Despite the launch of a registration process by the Government to identify unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) at the border crossing, access to reliable data remains a challenge. The Ministry of Family and Social Policy has reported 20 UASC registered since the beginning of the crisis.

### Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**Child Protection:** UNICEF continues to support the presence of two social workers from Ukraine in Stalowa Wola, a hub established as a first entry point for identification and registration of children evacuated from residential care institutions.

Since 14 March, 203 children and 137 women benefitted from the services provided by UNICEF’s partner Związze Harcerstwa Rzeczpospolitej (ZHR) Scouts in the Blue Dot at the Medyka border crossing point. Four more Blue Dots will start operating within the next two weeks in Korzowa, Chełm, Przemysł, and Warsaw through partnerships with Polish Humanitarian Action (PHA) and ZHR Scouts. In parallel, a training package is being prepared that will support capacity building of Blue Dot staff, in partnership with the Foundation for Empowerment of Children (FDDS). UNICEF has also initiated training for all staff and partners in prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

**Health and Nutrition:** UNICEF continued to provide technical support to frontline partners working in Reception Centers at the Przemysł and Medyka border crossings, including through the establishment of Mother Baby Spaces to support infant and young child feeding (IYCF) for breastfed and non-breastfed infants, technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of frontline partners in supporting IYCF, and procurement lines for essential commodities.

UNICEF and WHO are engaging with the Ministry of Health to facilitate the procurement of vaccines (polio and measles) and to support the epidemiological surveillance system. In cooperation with the City of Warsaw, technical assistance for community engagement activities is planned with Ukrainians and host communities to increase demand for immunization and supporting outbreak prevention and response.

**Education:** UNICEF has reached an agreement with the Municipality of Warsaw on areas of support for refugee education and is planning a similar engagement with the municipal government of Krakow to reach over 100,000 refugee children and adolescents, covering pre-primary, primary, and secondary education levels with provision of supplies.

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3 According to IOM data
training for teachers to address the varied needs of refugee children, and to ensure quality of learning is not reduced for host community children. At the national level, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education to provide support in areas related to needs assessment, response planning, accessing EU funding mechanisms to support needs on the ground, and utilizing the Learning Passport as a digital solution to support teacher and caregiver capacities in areas related to MHPSS, disabilities, language learning and training.

UNICEF is piloting the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool for the education sector, developed in the Education Working Group (EWG), through its growing partnerships with municipal level governments. UNICEF is increasing the effective functions of the EWG mechanism by recruiting dedicated coordination and information management functions.

**WASH:** In collaboration with UNHCR and other actors, UNICEF continues to monitor the water, sanitation and hygiene situation, primarily at the border crossing points and in the reception sites, to determine gaps and provide required assistance. UNICEF and the City of Warsaw are planning WASH support to schools, where almost 13,000 Ukrainian children have enrolled so far, as well as to learning spaces the city is planning to establish.

**Social Protection:** UNICEF is working with the Polish Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), which manages several large social protection programmes and is preparing cash transfers to 1 million Ukrainian children and their families. To support ZUS’s impressive work to register Ukrainian refugees for social protection interventions, UNICEF will distribute information through its networks to advise refugees on their entitlements and encourage enrolment in programmes supporting children and families.

**Social and Behavior Change, Community Engagement, AAP:** Interviews with volunteers at border entry points were conducted to assess capacity development needs and other gaps to guide UNICEF interventions. Insufficient training, lack of information on access to services and referral systems, and a lack of structured feedback mechanisms in place to collect refugees’ concerns and questions, were the main gaps identified. Interviews with refugees in a reception center were also conducted to understand their needs and priorities, which included immediate accommodation, transportation, documentation, and social services provided in different countries. This evidence is guiding the design of UNICEF’s web platform “one stop-shop online safe space for women and children” that will provide up-to-date and life-saving information, guidance and services for parents, youth, and children, and give access to feedback mechanisms. Moreover, the first social listening report, covering several countries neighbouring Ukraine, revealed discriminatory narratives against Ukrainians and on the “risk of Ukrainization of Poland” on social media. This confirms the need to accelerate interventions to prevent stigma and discrimination, for example through youth clubs, school communities, and digital engagement.

### Republic of Moldova

#### Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Over 387,000 refugees have crossed from Ukraine into the Republic of Moldova. The number of asylum seekers continues to increase, reaching 5,858 as of 30 March. The caseload of refugees present in the country is placing significant strain on national systems, as refugees currently account for roughly 4 percent of Moldova’s population (compared to under 100 refugees registered for all of 2020). Most refugees entering Moldova are staying with local families. Only roughly 10 percent are estimated to be in the 99 formal Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) across the country. The maximum capacity of RAC’s is currently around 9,317 people, with 5,202 spaces. Initial reports show that roughly 71 percent of children in RAC’s have access to education services, but the quality of education and attendance/engagement rates are not known. Over 1,600 Ukrainian children have enrolled in Moldovan kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Anecdotal information collected by UNICEF and partners suggests that children prefer to connect to the online digital platform of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, the access to which UNICEF will be facilitating.

#### Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**Child Protection:** Over the past week, UNICEF reached 719 people (388 children and 331 caregivers) with integrated services at Blue Dots, which brings the total beneficiaries to 3,699 (2,116 children). The most visited Blue Dot remains in Palanca, which saw 418 people (225 children and 193 adults), while MoldEXPO reached 146 children who received support on a more regular basis, as many of them are staying in the RAC for longer than one day. UNICEF has also successfully advocated to place a Child Protection Specialist at the border crossing point (BCP) in Otaci, in addition to the Child Protection Specialist placed at BCP in Palanca. The Specialist supports Border Police in identifying and referring vulnerable children to relevant state and NGO provided services. Additionally, UNICEF and UNHCR in Moldova

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4 [Factsshheet](WFP Moldova; March 2022).
5 [Refugee Accommodation Centre (RACs)](Weekly Needs Monitoring, UNHCR, 24.3.2022).
and Romania are cooperating to establish “mirror” Blue Dots, with one on the Moldovan and one on the Romanian border.

**Health and Nutrition:** UNICEF launched a Mother Baby Corner at the RAC MoldEXPO. The corner provides a respite for mothers with young babies or toddlers – a private space to breastfeed or change babies. The room also features basic supplies such as diapers and a changing table to support young mothers. Additionally, UNICEF is developing a training on immunization which will reach 400 participants, including health care workers, and representatives from education and social protection services. Lastly, UNICEF continued to procure equipment for the neo-natal intensive care unit (NICU) unit.

**WASH:** UNICEF worked on developing a partnership with Solidarite International to address challenges faced by host communities and RACs. Furthermore, this week UNICEF supported the procurement of additional WASH supplies for RACs to cater for 10,000 refugees, including hygiene and sanitary items, PPEs, and washing machines, dryers, washing powder, and fridges, as these have become essential items to improving the living conditions of refugees.

**Education:** UNICEF is establishing a partnership with the Football Federation of Moldova to utilize football as a channel for social integration between refugee children and local children. The programme is expected to reach 1,000 children. Three child-friendly spaces have been established in Chisinau Municipality and will be providing semi-structured education activities to refugee children living in host communities. UNICEF has also procured schoolbags to support 5,000 children in the coming weeks.

**Social Protection:** UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP have partnered to set up an emergency cash transfer programme for refugees and families with children (UNHCR and UNICEF) and host families (WFP) to reach over 100,000 refugees and host families. UNICEF’s resources are expected to reach 50,000 people (majority women and children) with 120 USD transfer per person based on the Minimum Consumption Basket in Moldova. The pilot programme has started and so far, 492 people have been reached.

### Romania

#### Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The number of refugees who have crossed into Romania is now at 602,461. Although the majority of persons entering the country are in transit, 80,049 are still present; the vast majority women and roughly 30,000 children. A basic needs assessment is ongoing in close collaboration with the Governmental and CSO partners, while a multi-sector needs assessment will be conducted by UNCHR and other partners.

UNICEF agreed on an umbrella partnership with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities (MOFYEO) and its National Agency for the Protection of the Child Rights and Adoptions (NAPCRA) to ensure support for a national coordinated system and to strengthen capacities to provide services for the most vulnerable refugee children and families.

#### Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**Child Protection:** Three Blue Dots are fully functional and provide child friendly spaces, counselling and social support, support to restore family links and family reunification, referral services for people requiring specialized support and linking the population to accommodation or travel services offered by the state. During the past week, Blue Dots have provided integrated services to 3,166 people, including 1,250 children, which brings the total reach to 21,388 people. Another five are in the process of being set up at the border between Moldova and Romania and in key cities inside the country, with at least two more to be functional by the end of this week.

**Health and Nutrition:** UNICEF continues to provide safe spaces, access to medical first aid and life-saving information at dedicated mother and baby/toddler spaces at Blue Dots. In addition, UNICEF is procuring vaccines for routine immunization, upon request by the Ministry of Health.

**Education:** There are currently 810 students enrolled in Romanian schools and another 330 applications are to be processed by the Ministry of Education (MoE). UNICEF is supporting the MoE in their efforts through two established Education Working Groups, one under the UN Coordination Structure and the other under the Government task force and prepared a list of links to online platforms and useful educational materials in Ukrainian that will be placed on the MoE website. In addition, the Blue Dots and some transit centers (e.g., Sighet) are equipped with safe play and learning spaces.

**WASH:** 24 mobile sanitation facilities are being installed at the border crossing areas, with 10 of them catered for people with disabilities. In addition, 2,600 Hygiene kits have been procured to equip the Blue Dots.
Other Countries

Situation Overview & Programme Response

The refugee arrival numbers in Belarus have reached 10,902, with 79 percent of the refugees arriving from Ukraine, 20 percent from Poland, and the rest from Lithuania and Latvia. UNICEF works with the Belarusan Red Cross to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugee children by equipping Child Friendly Spaces in sanatoria of the Gomel, Brest, and Grodno regions, creating Mother Baby Corners in tents at the border, providing hygiene, ECD, adolescent kits and information materials for families with children. Building on the existing partnership with the Republican Center of Psychological Aid, UNICEF intends to provide supervision and mentoring for psychosocial support delivered in communities, capacity building of frontline workers, and establishment of referral pathways for children and families.

In Bulgaria, out of 133,567 people who have entered the country, 61,196 are currently present in the country, including more than 22,000 children (2% of the total child population in Bulgaria). So far, 27,325 applications for temporary protection have been registered. UNICEF and UNHCR have agreed with the Government on the establishment of Blue Dots in Sofia, Varna, Bourgas and Russe. The two agencies are performing monitoring visits, are in discussions with the central and local authorities, and are assessing NGOs capacity to provide support.

In Hungary, the refugee arrival number has increased to 364,804, with additional inflows of refugees from Romania. The new influx of refugees from Ukraine has slowed down over the past week by 25 percent. Temporary accommodation centers are being provided by municipalities and Hungarian charity organizations at border areas, in Budapest, and across the country. Populations at these locations tend to have a high number of Roma and other minority groups present. Whilst individuals staying at these facilities are provided with basic provisions of accommodation, food, and hygiene, there is lack of access to child protection and psychosocial services - programmatic interventions that are made more challenging because of the high rates of onward movement. In response, the establishment of “Blue Dots” is being pursued at border crossings, reception centers in the border areas and in Budapest, as well as in temporary accommodation centers operated by the state, municipalities and Hungarian charity organizations. UNICEF has been advocating to state authorities for the enhancement of guardianship procedures and parental authority processes over potentially separated children identified during registration and since the past week, a process has been established at the main reception/transit point in Budapest to assign temporary parental authority for separated children following registration and assessment.

Over 281,000 refugees have entered Slovakia with an average of 62 percent adults and 38 percent children. So far, 1,036 children have filled temporary request applications. Heightened risks of trafficking, discrimination against Roma refugees at registration and reception centers, stretched capacities of national systems to respond to refugee needs, and lack of registration data continue to be major concerns. UNICEF is finalising agreements with the local NGOs Tenenet and Slovak Humanitarian Council to establish five Blue Dots (two in Bratislava, Kosice, Michalovce, Kosice). As of mid-April, the child protection services, psycho-social support, referrals, outreach teams and Child and Mother Friendly Spaces will be available to approximately 5,000 – 7,000 children and primary caregivers per day. Training of 300 border police, 20 social workers, and 20 NGO representatives working with volunteers on child trafficking and sexual exploitation as well as child friendly communication is being rolled out, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Border Police Unit. UNICEF and partners are working on hotline services for vulnerable groups of the population and strengthening capacities to respond to the needs of refugees, connecting those services to safe messaging.

Around 300,000 refugees are present in Czech Republic and around 103,000 children registered with the national health insurance company, as of 30 March. 59 UASC have been identified, out of which 17 are in residential care run by the Government and 16 in faith-based residential care. 40 additional UASC with disabilities arrived and they are placed in a recreational center managed by a local NGO. UNICEF deployed a social protection expert to Czech Republic to assess the readiness of the social welfare system to absorb large numbers of refugees and identify risks and challenges particular to this group, leveraging UNICEF’s experience in similar contexts. UNHCR and UNICEF have agreed to set up Blue Dots jointly in the country, and are currently assessing potential sites as well as interventions and services.

External Media

UNICEF Romania Article: Blue Dot - Providing Critical Support To Refugees From Ukraine
UNICEF Romania Article: At Romanian border, Ukrainian teacher loves the sound of silence
UNICEF Romania Article: Tears flowing into the Danube
UNICEF Romania Article: Romania extends a warm welcome to refugee Ukrainian mothers and their children
UNICEF Romania Article: Crossing the bridge of toys
UNICEF Romania Article: He became the protector of his younger sisters and did not hesitate to save them
UNICEF Romania Article: Ukrainian boy who lost guitar has message for his music teacher
UNICEF Moldova Press Release: UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Orlando Bloom in Moldova to meet refugee children
UNICEF ECARO Blog Post: Inside the journey of Ukrainian refugee children and families
UNICEF ECARO Remarks: UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell's humanitarian briefing at the WEF
UNICEF Photo Essay: Childhood upended by war in Ukraine
Next Sitrep: 8 April 2022

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