

# Slovakia

Winterization Cash Assistance in 2023 - 2024



Slovakia, Nitra. Refugees registering for UNHCR cash assistance. © Slovak Humanitarian Council/Sandra Fraňová

## One-time winterization cash assistance to refugees in 2023-2024

UNHCR and UNICEF, in cooperation with the Slovak Government, supported Ukrainian families, stateless persons and third-country nationals affected by the war in Ukraine, and other refugees and asylum seekers in Slovakia who face protection risks or who are in a situation of extreme vulnerability, with a **one-time emergency cash transfer** for winter expenses, such as blankets, winter clothes and shoes, meals, and utilities, in 2023. Cash assistance for winter needs is provided to vulnerable individuals and families to minimize protection risks and support their basic needs. Refugees already registered for Temporary Protection status already eligible for [UNHCR-UNICEF Cash for refugees with vulnerabilities in Slovakia in 2023](#) with up-to-date information in UNHCR database were among the direct beneficiaries of the Winter Cash Assistance while new arrivals as of 1 September 2023 could also enrol with UNHCR until end-December to receive that support.

Every registered refugee who was eligible for [UNHCR-UNICEF Cash for refugees with vulnerabilities in Slovakia in 2023](#) considered eligible to receive the Winter Cash Assistance automatically and did not need to approach the registration sites. The same eligibility criteria applied for new arrivals who arrived after 1 September 2023. In addition, eligible individuals and families who were economically disadvantaged (without regular employment, a regular source of income or insufficient source of income due to, for example, family members with a disability or a health condition). Each case is assessed on its merits and UNHCR will make a final decision based on an in-person interview and the review of the supporting documents provided. Additionally, under this Winter Cash Assistance, 1,714 families supported by MoLSAF disability grant, were included in the payments. The amount was calculated based on the number of family members. It was a one-time payment of EUR 150 per person, with a maximum of EUR 400 per family.

## Summary of Winterization Assistance Impact

### Key figures

Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refugees received from UNHCR one-time winterization cash assistance in Slovakia between November 2023 and April 2024</li> </ul>
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11,900 people as beneficiaries of the winterization assistance</li> </ul>
Enrolment centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bratislava, Zilina, Nitra, Dunajská Streda, Michalovce, Kosice, Presov, and Poprad</li> </ul>
Demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>73% of the refugees supported were female</li> <li>20% of the refugees assisted were older people</li> </ul>
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47% of PDM* respondents reported having improved their living conditions following the cash assistance</li> </ul>

\*Winterization Post Distribution Monitoring Survey 2024

UNHCR's Cash for Protection as well as the Winterization program in Slovakia provide an initial safety net to individuals and families falling under the eligibility criteria as until they are included in the MoLSAF social programme. Winterization was additional to the Cash for Protection programme, which was provided by UNHCR in 2023. Enrolment for both programmes continued until the end of December 2023, giving more people who met the eligibility criteria the opportunity to be assisted.

### Step-by-step process

- The first for refugees was to visit UNHCR Registration Centres to present proof of receipt of Temporary Protection document on 1 September 2023. UNHCR and Partner staff provided information to potential beneficiaries on the different steps of the process. Each case was assessed on its merits and UNHCR made a final decision based on an in-person interview and the review of the supporting documents provided.
- Biometrics were captured and biodata recorded during the registration process to ensure there was no duplication of assistance provided in Slovakia or in other countries under the Regional Refugee Response Plan to the Ukraine Situation.
- Refugees with identified specific needs (e.g. older people or separated children) or otherwise in need of urgent support were referred specialized partners for further counselling and assistance.
- The cash assistance was provided either through Western Union or a bank transfer. Refugees who received the assistance via Western Union received a unique 10-digit code (MTCN code) via SMS, with allowed them to collect their money at any Post Office in Slovakia within 15 days.

## Partners

UNHCR, along with UNICEF provided one-time emergency cash assistance for the winter needs, in order to support the [Ministry of Labor Office and Family Affairs in Slovakia](#). Our national NGO Partners include [People in Need](#), [Slovak Humanitarian Council](#), [Human Right League](#), [Mareena](#) and [SME SPOLU](#). Private sector partners include [Western Union](#), a financial service provider.

## Next steps

UNHCR and the inter-agency Cash Working Group (CWG) members continue jointly the efforts to support refugees, Temporary Protection holders, asylum-seekers and stateless persons in Slovakia.

With lessons learnt from 2023, UNHCR and UNICEF continue the support through [the new Cash Assistance programme for refugees with vulnerabilities in Slovakia in 2024](#), which supports vulnerable individuals and families to minimize protection risks and address their basic needs. In addition, it aims to ensure that beneficiaries of cash support are also linked to additional services they may need and included in the national social protection system.

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