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Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan

Summary and Inter-Agency Funding Requirements for Bulgaria

March-August 2022

OVERVIEW

The Regional RRP

The **inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP)** outlines the comprehensive response and activities to support countries' efforts to protect and assist refugees, and other persons in need of humanitarian aid, coming from Ukraine. It includes the financial requirements of partners in all countries involved (including UN agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations and civil society) covering the period from March to December 2022, working in tandem with concerned host Governments.

Bulgaria

More than 102,000 Ukrainian refugees currently remain in Bulgaria as of 18 May 2022 --- the majority of whom are women and children --- in need of life-saving assistance to cover basic needs, as well as access to health, childcare, education and social support, and systematic protection services including response and prevention of gender-based violence and violence against children, provision of psycho-social support, and legal counseling. Refugees are significantly vulnerable, with heightened risks of family separation, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and abuse.

In **Bulgaria**, RRP partners are supporting government-led efforts through a multisectoral approach focusing, among others, on protection, reception/accommodation and distribution of material assistance for the most vulnerable groups and for individuals with specific needs. The response is identifying and addressing refugees' needs, taking into account considerations related to age, gender and diversity, in particular given the high numbers of women and children.

This summary of the inter-agency RRP response in **Bulgaria** presents the needs analysis and response priorities, as well as the financial requirements of partners, which are an integral part of the Regional RRP under the other countries' response chapter.

 **7**
INTER-AGENCY
PARTNERS IN A
COORDINATED
RESPONSE PLAN

 TO ASSIST UP TO
200,000
INDIVIDUALS IN NEED
OF HUMANITARIAN AID

 WITH A TOTAL
\$29.8 M
OF INTER-AGENCY
REQUIREMENTS

COUNTRY CONTEXT

According to the Bulgarian authorities, as of 17 May, **264,853** refugees from Ukraine had entered Bulgaria since 24 February, of whom **102,918** (39%) have remained. This figure has continued to rise in the following weeks. The majority of refugees are women and children. Most refugees (almost 84 per cent of the total arrivals) from Ukraine arrive in Bulgaria through Romania, using mostly free transportation such as trains, buses, and private vehicles. The rest of the refugees arrive by land from Turkey, Serbia, and Greece or by air.

Refugees fleeing
Ukraine to Bulgaria

264,853

Since 24 Feb 2022
Last updated 17 May 2022

The EU Council of Ministers adopted on 10 March 2022 the Decision for Granting Temporary Protection for persons displaced from Ukraine for a period of one year as of 24 February 2022. Upon entering Bulgaria, refugees have the right to either apply for temporary protection, apply for international protection, which includes granting refugee or humanitarian status, or stay in Bulgaria without a visa at their own expense within 90 days (with a possibility of extension for up to 6 months). According to the authorities, **106,819** persons have registered under the Temporary Protection Directive, including **247** Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASCs) and **371** third-country nationals (TCNs) from Ukraine. Of those registered, **50% are women**, and **38% are children**,

As of 19 May, **61,942** (61%) refugees from Ukraine had been provided with free accommodation in Bulgaria. The majority are accommodated in state and privately-owned hotels. According to the governmental map of the accommodation provided, the most significant locations of the refugees from Ukraine are Varna (27%), Sofia (19%), Burgas (12%), and Ruse (9%).

The number of refugees expected to enter and remain in Bulgaria by the end of 2022 has been estimated as somewhere between 70,000 (already surpassed) and 200,000. Nearly 200,000 refugees have arrived in Bulgaria since 24 February 2022; and around 46% of them currently remain in Bulgaria. Should the security situation in Ukraine further deteriorate, the number of refugees entering and remaining in Bulgaria may reach over 200,000 by the end of 2022.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Provision of information on entry/exit requirements, Temporary Registration provisions, other types of protection, and information on access to the services remain insufficient. It has also been reported that some refugees from the Roma minority who fled Ukraine and entered Moldova were refused entry to Bulgaria due to undocumented family members in the group. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) needs to be prioritized, including strengthening inter-agency networks and PSEA mechanisms and systems. Lack of free transportation for people moving onward also puts vulnerable women and children at higher risks of SEA and trafficking. There is currently no structured or specialized child protection, particularly identification, documentation, referral, and monitoring children at heightened risk. Unaccompanied children or children accompanied by a non-family member are at heightened risk – particularly of trafficking and separation. Most of the Persons with Special Needs (PWSN) identified by UNHCR need relevant information on access to social and health services. The need for mediation to support their access to social services, including support in required paperwork and legalization of civil documents, increases.

A coordinated approach is required to ensure that protection risks are identified and responded to in a timely manner. **Accommodation of refugees remains the main challenge.** The distribution of core relief items (CRIs) is currently provided by various organizations and individuals, depending on locations. Persons accommodated at the hotels are provided with meals. Refugees from Ukraine are at high risk of infectious diseases, as living conditions during transit or upon arrival may increase the risk of transmission and susceptibility to disease. They are likely to have greater vulnerability due to limited availability of accommodations and overcrowded living conditions and other exacerbating factors. The population is considered at high risk of adverse mental health outcomes, and there is an urgent need for (continued) mental health and psycho-social support services (MHPSS). Access to adequate health care for people with chronic diseases and people with disabilities is also challenging.

Currently around 600 children and adolescents have requested to be enrolled in the Bulgarian pre-school and school education. Although the number is at the moment relatively low due to the expectation of people that the conflict will be over soon and they will be able to return to Ukraine in the near future and that many of the students are still continuing their online education, there is a shortage of childcare families and adequate support for students to join the Bulgarian Education System.

According to the data provided by the Employment Agency, out of the 7,000 profiled, 70-80% of Ukrainians are ready to be employed immediately, while 10% would like to be employed, provided that their children would

have access to the day-care facilities. In this regard, socio-economic inclusion opportunities need to be identified. The identified needs also include capacity building for various state and NGO actors, including border and national police, volunteers, and social workers.

RESPONSE STRATEGY AND SECTOR PRIORITIES

Protection: Protection interventions include identification of protection risks and special needs including MHPSS among vulnerable refugees such as survivors of violence, UASCs, persons with disability, older persons, single women, and female-headed households. Cash for Protection will be undertaken. Children and other PWSNs will be supported through the established Child and Family Support Hub under the "Blue Dot" concept. In addition, legal aid on temporary protection including legal counseling and assistance will be provided through the Blue Dot Hubs and the dedicated legal Hotline. As part of AAP, feedback/complaint mechanism will be enhanced including information on risks of PSEA, fraud, and trafficking. Also enhanced will be the technical assistance for the Government of Bulgaria including protection-sensitive interview techniques, legal information, child protection, and GBV-related interventions while providing information through cross-border coordination.

Accommodation: Transit centers and emergency accommodation including the pre-fabricated Refugee Housing Units and rental of temporary accommodations will be provided in view of the the precipitously increased number of refugees in Bulgaria.

Core Relief Items: Including basic hygiene kits (WASH) and dignity kits, specific items will be determined based on the rapid needs assessment.

Food Items: Food vouchers will be distributed to the PWSNs based on the rapid needs assessment.

Health: Refugees' access within the refugee-hosting communities to a wide range of preventive and curative health interventions, referral to appropriate medical facilities, and medicines / other medical needs will be assisted while providing support to the national health system. Refugees are at increased risk of communicable diseases primarily due to closer and more intense social mixing and exacerbating factors such as stress. In cooperation with authorities, efforts will continue to strengthen surveillance and early warning mechanisms to timely detect and respond to priority communicable diseases and vaccine-preventable diseases such as Measles and to support the maintenance of COVID-19 response operations for refugee and hosting communities as a whole. As most of refugees are women and children, maternal and childcare, including access to immunization (measles, Polio) will be provided including support for infant and young child feeding. MHPSS and access to sexual and reproductive health will be strengthened including lifesaving emergency obstetric care for refugees and survivor-centered clinical case for survivors of GBV.

Livelihoods, Resilience, and Solutions: Refugees' civil documents will be legalized to ensure their access to social services including employment. Out-of-school classes including language classes will be provided; and children enrolled in Bulgarian schools will be provided with educational materials. Job counselling including information of job opportunities will be provided.

COORDINATION

RRP partners will support the government-led efforts to respond to the refugee influx from Ukraine. UNHCR leads and coordinates the implementation of the RRP in line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM).

Within the framework of this RRP and building on existing country-level humanitarian coordination structures, an inter-agency Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) composed of all partners involved in the response is being established at the country level in support of government-led coordination mechanisms. This will enable RRP partners to work efficiently to maximize the response and avoid duplications and parallel systems, in particular considering new partners. It will also aim to guide joint advocacy initiatives and resource mobilization efforts to support the country-level response plans.

In coordination with the Government, UNHCR will co-chair the established Protection Working Group (established during the Syrian emergency) and facilitate the establishment of a dedicated Child Protection Sub-Working Group. Coordination with civil society is established through weekly coordination forums chaired by UNHCR. The Sub-working group on Education response, including early learning, is co-chaired and coordinated by Ministry of Education and Science, UNICEF and UNHCR. A sub-group on prevention of trafficking has also been established.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS MARCH-DECEMBER 2022 | USD

The below table presents the financial requirements of partners in **Bulgaria**. These requirements are already included in the Regional RRP.

RRP partners are appealing for an estimated **\$ 29.8 M** covering the period from March to December 2022. **The RRP will be revised as the situation evolves.**

Financial Requirements per appealing inter-agency partner & sector

Organization	Protection (incl. GBV and CP)*	Food security	Health & Nutrition	Livelihoods & Resilience	Logistics, Telecoms & Operational Support	Education	Basic Needs (Accommodation / Shelter, CRIs, Transportation, CBI)	WASH	Total
UNHCR	9,971,429						8,028,571		18,000,000
WHO			2,100,000						2,100,000
UNICEF	4,577,070		632,200			700,640		125,860	6,035,770
IOM	100,000	600,000	150,000	150,000	100,000	50,000	160,000		1,310,000
Bulgarian Red Cross	2,100,930								2,100,930
Caritas	268,060								268,060
Foundation for Access to Rights	89,087								89,087
Total (USD)	17,006,676	600,000	2,882,200	150,000	100,000	750,640	8,188,571	125,860	29,803,947

Protection breakdown by partner and area of response

Organization	Protection	GBV	Child Protection	Total Protection
UNHCR	9,921,429	20,000	30,000	9,971,429
UNICEF	249,400	972,700	3,354,970	4,577,070
IOM		50,000	50,000	100,000
Bulgarian Red Cross	2,100,930			2,100,930
Caritas	268,060			268,060
Foundation for Access to Rights	89,087			89,087
Total (USD)	12,628,906	1,042,700	3,434,970	17,006,676

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