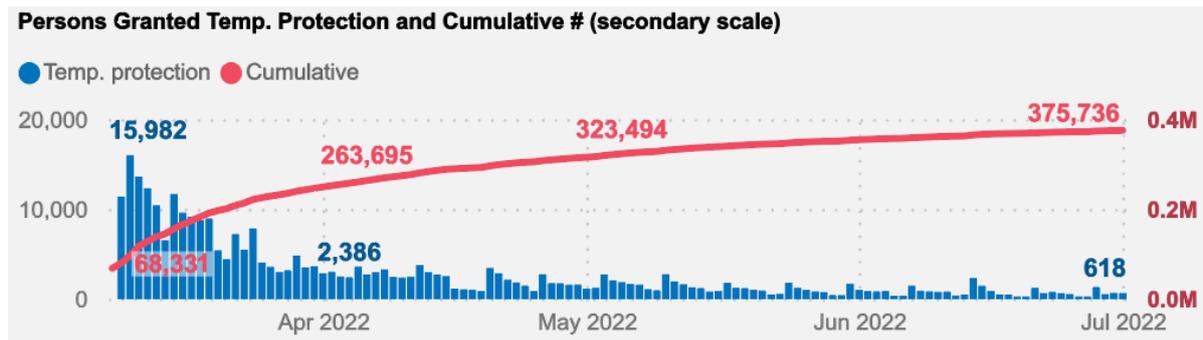




Czech Republic

March - June 2022

As of 30 June 2022, the Czech Republic has granted Temporary Protection to 375,736 refugees fleeing from Ukraine. The country continues to register new arrivals, but the flow has been considerably reduced. 46% are women and 36% children.



The Czech Republic is both a transit and a destination country with the third highest number of registered Ukrainian refugees after Poland and Germany (highest number per capita). The large Ukrainian diaspora, the dynamic economy (lowest unemployment rate in the EU) and the significant solidarity with refugees are the elements that have led to the current situation. While movements within the Schengen area and to Ukraine are complex to monitor, enrollments of Ukrainian children for the 2022-2023 school year will provide additional evidence of the number of refugees planning to remain.

In March 2022, as part of a regional approach led by UNHCR, UN agencies in the Czech Republic (IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIC, WHO) developed a Refugee Response Plan to support government-efforts. Since then, the organizations have been progressively strengthening their response capacities.

KEY FIGURES (as of 30 June)*

5,387,366	385,567	375,736	46%	36%
Individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe	Refugees who have entered the Czech Republic	Refugees granted temporary protection	Percentage of refugees who are women	Percentage of refugees who are children

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN (RRP) FOR THE UKRAINE SITUATION**

USD 1.85 B	USD 925 M	50 %	USD 41.3 M	USD 12.3 M
Overall financial requirements	Funding received	Percent funded	Financial requirements for the Czech Republic	Funding received for the Czech Republic

*See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources. **See the [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) for a breakdown of sectoral response priorities and requirements and the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#) for RRP funding information

Operational context

A national collective effort that quickly stabilized the situation. On 17 March 2022, the Government approved a package of laws (“Lex Ukraine”) that focus on the rapid registration and integration of refugees. Apart from temporary protection, the laws introduced key measures related to access to health insurance, the labor market and education, humanitarian allowance for refugees, and solidarity allowance for hosts. Government efforts coupled with numerous private initiatives (private enterprises and public) and interventions of experienced Czech NGOs allowed the situation to be stabilized quickly.

A comprehensive integration agenda. The Government has developed a comprehensive integration agenda through a three phased strategy: flight for safety, adaptation and coexistence, long-term solutions. The Government strategy is articulated around 13 priority areas implemented through 13 working-groups, including coordination, communication, financing, digital management, and all the relevant aspects of refugee integration (e.g. housing, education, health, social affairs, security, etc.).

Entering in a new phase. Although very high, the initial unprecedented solidarity may wane and will need to be continuously enhanced. Stricter rules in the “Lex Ukraine” will be implemented including an end to the humanitarian allowance for refugees with free accommodation, food, and basic hygiene products, and health insurance coverage for refugees limited to a maximum of 150 days, except for children and the elderly. Vulnerable refugees will gradually be included in the social safety nets already in place for vulnerable Czech people. Not only to decrease the pressure on the capital Prague, but to also stimulate the economy in the regions, the authorities will set up a coordination mechanism and measures to motivate refugees to relocate from the capital to less crowded municipalities.



Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees visits the Regional Assistance Center for Aid to Ukraine in Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic on June 26, 2022. © UNHCR/Michal Novotný

Main interventions of UN agencies



PROTECTION

Sectoral operational background

The protection response to refugees is based on existing mechanisms, systems and services provided by state institutions and NGOs. Both State institutions and NGOs have increased their protection interventions taking on a considerable additional workload since the start of the Ukraine crisis. Numerous Czech NGOs specializing in social work were able to broaden the scope of their interventions thanks to additional state and municipal funding. They implement a "client-centered" approach and play an interface role between refugees and public institutions and systems, and partake in direct primary protection activities (including child protection). In addition to physical communication, numerous digital communication initiatives have also been set up by the government and NGOs to ensure that refugees have access to information about their rights and services.

UN agencies are relying on the existing response capacity and on upscaling their interventions implemented prior to the crisis to support the protection response. At the same time, UN agencies have identified together with the Czech Government and NGOs areas where the response and the existing systems can be strengthened.

Progress updates

- **Protection monitoring and response to refugees.** Either directly by UN protection staff or in collaboration with NGOs such as OPU, protection monitoring is carried out in accommodation centers and entry points. The protection monitoring includes an individual/family response in terms of counselling, legal and administrative support, identification of needs and protection cases, and referrals.
- **Upscaling protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).** OPU will work with the State social services to improve identification, registration, and integration of UASC from Ukraine into the Czech child protection system, to provide the children with legal, social and psychosocial support, and to strengthen the host family network for UASC. OPU will also engage an expert researcher in assessing the needs of UASC in the 14 regions of the country.
- **Strengthening the social service workforce for child protection.** A work plan has been developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and UNICEF to enhance the social service workforce in the country through increasing the number of social workers and implementing capacity building measures (ex. case management with the most disadvantaged children and their families).
- **Monitoring the specific protection needs of the Roma refugee population.** A tailored protection monitoring approach targeting the Roma refugees across the country has also been set up jointly by UNICEF and UNHCR with the NGO Romodrom. The intervention is strengthening field work capacity both for outreach and individual/family support.
- **Protection monitoring and response to third country nationals (TCN).** IOM is supporting third-country nationals fleeing from Ukraine. To date 96 TCNs have been supported out of which 88 people received documents, accommodation and basic needs support.
- **Digital communication to refugees.** UNHCR's dedicated Help Site provides information on temporary protection and asylum, and links to key government and NGO services, including legal advice and counselling. UNHCR and UNICEF are also working on a regional "Digital Blue Dot" to improve access to information and services for refugees from Ukraine in all refugee response countries.
- **Protection profiling.** In June, UNHCR with the Czech research company Sociofactor completed protection profiling with interviews of 313 refugees. Accommodation is the main need mentioned followed by education, employment, and cash. Around one-third (27%) affirmed that they plan to stay in the Czech Republic (37% do not know, 33% want to return to Ukraine, 3% want to go to another country).

- **Capacity building.** Since February, over 255 persons have been reached through capacity development measures by UNHCR and partners, on topics including child protection, GBV, PSEA, and the legal framework for temporary protection.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Reaching the “most invisible”.** The type of accommodation has an impact on the access of refugee children and adults to public institutions and NGOs, and vice versa. While refugees in collective accommodation provided by the state are “easy” to reach, most of the refugee population is hidden and harder to reach. It includes refugees hosted by Czech nationals, refugees living in workers’ dormitories, UASC, and children in alternative care arrangements (particularly family-based care arrangements) who were evacuated from Ukraine. These groups have an increased protection risk and less access to critical prevention and support services. Their protection needs and situation require closer monitoring.
- **Ensuring the best interests of each refugee child.** Numerous initiatives have been launched by governments, local authorities, and civil society organizations to evacuate children in alternative care arrangements from conflict areas in Ukraine to other countries, including to the Czech Republic. Evidence gathered suggests that not all of them have yet been fully integrated into the Czech child protection system. Efforts are underway by UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSF) and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) to assess the situation, so that all children are adequately protected.
- **Monitoring of practices regarding specific ethnic groups.** Regardless of origin, refugees who receive temporary protection are subject to the same level of support. There is no discrimination in the legal framework, but discriminatory practices have been recorded, including by the Office of the Czech Public Defender of Rights (the Ombudsman), against the Roma population.
- **Sustainability of NGO capacities.** Currently, most NGOs report sufficient financial resources until the end of 2022. This positive trend should not mask that before the crisis NGOs faced challenges in recruiting and maintaining their teams, especially social workers. There is a significant risk that NGOs may be unable to maintain their teams and the high standard of services beyond 2022. The financial predictability of NGOs is key to an effective refugee protection response.
- **Ensuring better protection data collection and reporting.** Protection monitoring and a real-time evaluation of the protection response ensure both an appropriate individual response and allow the systematic collection of data on the protection environment to support decision-making. There is a need for a collaborative approach for better data management in the protection response, and analysis to establish a coherent integrated data system of protection, also integrated with data from other sectors.
- **Participation.** Participation of the refugee population is key for an effective protection response. This includes not only community mobilization activities targeting refugees and the host communities, but also ensuring that all refugees (adults and children) have access to adequate feedback/complaints mechanisms and safe channels to report violence, abuse and exploitation. It is further critical that every organization providing services to refugees has safeguarding mechanisms in accordance with Czech child protection laws and international child protection standards. While capacity building is being undertaken by UN agencies and their partners, a systematic and coordinated review of existing participation and engagement mechanisms and their accessibility are required.



ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Sectoral operational background

Anti-trafficking is a critical priority in this refugee crisis given the Ukrainian refugee population is mainly comprised of women and children. To address this situation, the Department of Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Interior is developing an amended National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The current Strategy approved for the period 2020-2023 is the sixth document aimed at

eliminating this crime. Anti-trafficking, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) is also prioritized by agencies.

Progress updates

- **Identification and case management.** IOM is implementing countertrafficking interventions through social media targeting population at risk, distribution of information materials and promotion of a hotline running in four languages (Ukrainian, English, Czech, Russian) operational from Monday to Friday (9 am - 5 pm). On average, IOM is supporting 80 persons per week through the hotline.

In June, UNHCR formalized a partnership with the NGO La Strada, specialized in identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and trafficking, and with strong collaboration with other NGOs and public authorities including the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The cooperation builds on increased capacity of field workers, reinforcement of the helpline for victims and direct support to victims.

- **Capacity building.** In May, UNHCR trained 31 partner staff and government counterparts on PSEA core principles and standards to enhance the capacities of all service-providers working with refugees. UNICEF is also finalizing a pocket guide on child trafficking.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Challenges in data collection.** A lack of more reliable data on the cases on GBV and trafficking in human beings is perceived as one of the biggest challenges in designing an appropriate response. This has been observed by all actors. As of now, the number of reported cases is very low and does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the situation.



EDUCATION

Sectoral operational background

Refugee children from Ukraine have the right to education under conditions similar to Czech citizens. The short-term vision (March – August 2022) is to ensure the adaptation of Ukrainian children to the Czech environment. The MoEYS launched a grant scheme to support children aged 3 -15 enrolling into Czech schools with intensive language preparation and adaptation to the Czech environment before the new 2022/2023 school year.

Enrolment into mandatory pre-primary, primary and lower secondary grades (up to the age of 15) is open until July 15, 2022. The challenge may be that there is an uneven distribution of the refugee population between different regions of the country with the highest pressure in the City of Prague.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the country follows the split system, with the MoLSA in charge of ECEC services for children under the age of 3, and the MoEYS for preschool education of children aged three to six, including the mandatory pre-primary education at the age of five. Data on access to ECEC services for refugee children under three is not available. Given the low enrolment rates (6.3%) of the Czech population aged zero to three in ECEC services and the limited number of available ECEC services in the country, it can be assumed that refugee children under the age of three currently have very limited access to ECEC. The MoEYS data on access to preschool education (ages three to six) will be available in July.

Progress updates

- **Communication for refugees.** In coordination with the MoEYS, UNHCR has prepared updated brochures in Ukrainian, and in other relevant languages, to inform refugees about the Czech education system. The brochures will be shared with education institutions in all regions during the summer.

- **Access to inclusive education.** A joint workplan was developed by UNICEF and the Municipality of Prague for expanding access to schools, capacity building, social inclusion, and expansion of pre-schools. UNICEF also initiated a workplan with the MoEYS to strengthen institutional capacities of schools and preschools in the provision of quality teaching and learning in multi-cultural contexts.
- **Supporting early learning and development.** A workplan has been developed by the MoLSA and UNICEF to improve access to ECEC among refugee children under the age of three and to create parent support services through a grant scheme. The partnership will also include the strengthening of data collection and reporting, with a focus on vulnerable groups (refugee children, children with disabilities, etc.) and supporting quality monitoring of ECEC services.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Access to ECEC.** A limited number of formal and non-formal ECEC providers for children aged 0-6 before the crisis led to increased pressure on municipalities and formal preschools, children's groups, and alternative preschool education providers to accommodate both Czech and refugee children. The number of alternative preschool education providers needs to be expanded (Play and Learning Spaces, community or family-based centres, centres operated by NGOs, volunteer groups...).
- **Social inclusion and training/development for adolescents.** There is a need to support the social inclusion of Ukrainian adolescents into their local communities, connecting them with Czech peers and developing their skills for life and jobs through non-formal education platforms and activities.
- **Improving quality of education data and reporting.** Expanding the scope and establishing a consolidated database of quality disaggregated data on access to education for refugee children is needed (including age, gender, education stage, disability status and other vulnerabilities).



HEALTH

Sectoral operational background

Under "Lex Ukraine I", which was approved in March 2022, all Ukrainians were granted with access to free healthcare for the period of 180 days. The amendment to the law "Lex Ukraine II" entered into force on 27 June 2022. The Government will cover health insurance for refugees for 150 days, except for children and the elderly where health insurance is granted without time limitation. People between the ages of 18 – 65 years old, will be asked to pay for health insurance themselves unless they are employed or registered with the labor office as a jobseeker. Students between 18 and 26 years are considered dependent children and therefore do not have to pay for health insurance.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has set up UA (Ukrainian Assistance) points, located at outpatient clinics providing health care for refugees, under the management of the University hospitals, mainly in Prague and a few other cities. The purpose is to ensure easy access for refugees and increase capacities of health care provision in locations where the network of primary care providers was overloaded.

In the long-term, the capacity of the health care system could be overloaded in specific areas such as pediatric services, mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS), expensive treatments for chronic non-communicable diseases (NCD), tuberculosis or HIV. The epidemiological situation in Ukraine also brings concerns regarding tuberculosis and measles. In Ukraine, the incidence of HIV infection is 16 times higher than in the Czech Republic and the incidence of hepatitis (B and C) virus infection is also higher. Compared with the Czech Republic, vaccination coverage in Ukraine is low.

Progress updates

- **Strengthening of capacities.** WHO is donating equipment to strengthen cold-chain capacities for the national immunization programme and medicines for Covid-19 treatment. WHO is also collaborating with the MoH to strengthen early warning and response systems for communicable diseases. Additionally, UNICEF and the MoH have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and, in close collaboration with WHO, developed a draft work plan which identifies efforts to strengthen access to primary health care services for refugees focusing on maternal and child health services.
- **Strengthening capacities of Ukrainian healthcare providers.** The requirements for certification to enter the labour market in the Czech Republic as a healthcare provider is regulated by EU and national legislation. In coordination with the MoH, the Institute of Post Graduate Studies and the National Center for Nursing Care and Non-Medical Healthcare Professions, UNICEF and WHO, are providing support to Ukrainian healthcare providers to obtain a certificate for employment in the Czech healthcare system.
- **Data analysis.** WHO is currently working with the MoH to establish data analysis of the health profile of the Ukrainian refugees attending the UA Points in the country.
- **MHPSS.** Through the MHPSS Working Group set up by WHO and the MoH, the actors are analyzing the provision of psychosocial support to Ukrainian refugees and volunteer workers to identify gaps and needs. WHO together with UNICEF, the National Institute of Mental Health (NUDZ) and the NGO Consortium is also supporting the development of programs for children, parents and teachers, both Ukrainian and Czech, to facilitate the integration process towards the next school year and mainstreaming MHPSS.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Vaccination of children as a prerequisite for schooling.** In the Czech Republic, vaccination is mandatory for preschool education/institutions. For primary education, the family has to pay a fee. These guidelines are aligned with WHO recommendations. Awareness campaigns must be conducted to encourage parents to vaccinate their children. The Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of Ukraine have reached an agreement on exchange of medical data when refugees do not have their medical records with them.
- **Lack of health care staff.** A lack of health care workers, including nurses and medical doctors (primarily pediatricians) is one of the main challenges. Further efforts are needed to train Ukrainian health workers in Czech language and support their progress towards recognition of their qualifications. Additionally, strengthening primary health care services, including those which are culturally and language-appropriate for the refugees need to be ensured.



ACCOMMODATION

Sectoral operational background

As of 29 June 2022, 63,210 people are living in collective accommodation provided through NACPU/KACPU. The additional availability is around 15,000 beds. The transition from collective accommodation to private housing is the priority of the Government relying on four levers: i) establishment of a unique database that compiles comprehensive information on the number of private individuals offering accommodation, which allows the Government and municipalities to have better control of support provided, and to guarantee the reputability of those offering accommodation (protection risk mitigation); ii) national grant programme, for municipalities and NGOs, to finance the repair of vacant apartments/houses; iii) support of real estate developers/rental housing companies to offer vacant apartments; and iv) installation of furnished and equipped containers, like studios.

Progress updates

- **Support to collective accommodation.** UNHCR is providing 25,000 field cots, blankets and sleeping mats, 500 RHUs (Refugee Housing Units) and 5,000 hygiene kits to the Government. The RHUs, the blankets and the hygiene kits have been put at the disposal of the Fire and Rescue Services/NACPU. Field cots and sleeping mats should be received by the end of June.
- **Access to private housing.** As part of a joint intervention aimed at ensuring access to private housing for refugees in the Moravian-Silesian Region (Karvina, Havirov) in partnership with a well-established rental housing company in the Czech Republic (Heimstaden), the Fire and Rescue Services and NGOs, UNHCR will provide equipment for 50 private apartments for refugees.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Shortages in accommodation.** The supply of accommodation offered by civil society is reducing, putting pressure on collective centers and impacting the integration process.
- **Accommodation material for private housing.** For the NACPU, the most urgent need is accommodation material to equip private housing to ensure a gradual transition from mass accommodation to standard housing in apartments or other premises for the medium and long-term.
- **Unequal public support based on ethnicity.** One of the main issues for the Roma Ukrainian refugees is in terms of accommodation, due to a strong reluctance on the part of the population and of some municipalities.



INCLUSION AND OTHER LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Sectoral operational background

As mentioned in its strategy, the main objective of the Government is “*to emerge from the current situation (...) as a stronger nation in terms of values, social reciprocity, culture and economy.*”¹ Public support is therefore essential. In April 2022, the Czech research institute STEM published a survey on Czech attitudes regarding the arrival of refugees which indicated that 64% of Czech people support accepting refugees, but at the same time 70% express concerns about social welfare guarantees and 52% believe that accepting refugees will result in higher unemployment rates in the country. In June, MoLSA Minister Marian Jurečka stated that “over 70,000 refugees from Ukraine with humanitarian visas and labor permits have found jobs and have started working in the Czech Republic”.

Paying particular attention on data production to support the decision-making process, the Government will progressively implement an area-based approach through the cross analysis of the absorption capacities of services (education, health, accommodation) and of the labor market in different region. This approach is key to accompany the voluntary relocation process of refugees across the country.

Progress updates

- **Communication to the Czech population.** UNHCR will support the NGO Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations to implement a Communication Strategy developed with a Czech Communication agency. The Strategy is using reactive and proactive communication tools with the objective to support the integration of refugees while maintaining public solidarity and support.

¹ Government of the Czech Republic, *Establishment of Strategic Priorities of the Government of the Czech Republic to Cope with the Refugee Wave Related to the Invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation* (Prague, 13 April 2022), p.2.

In addition, the Czech National Committee (NatCom) for UNICEF is maintaining public solidarity by focusing its communication on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and the needs of children and their families, which includes also responding to inquiries and negative comments on the social networks.

- **Dissemination of information on the UN response.** The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) has been providing information services to the UN agencies as well as daily coverage of the UN system response to the Russian war against Ukraine on its social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) and on its website (www.osn.cz) in Czech. The social media posts include particular information from the UN Agencies operating in Czechia (UNHCR, WHO, IOM and UNICEF) as well as other UN Agencies (UNOCHA, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA).
- **Support of youth leadership.** The Czech NatCom for UNICEF partnered with the Czech Council for Children and Youth, the MoEYS and the Czech National Television in the organization of the annual Children's Award. A sub-category for children and young from Ukraine is being established to provide visibility for the most inspiring.
- **Supporting municipalities in strengthening their refugee response.** UNICEF has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Prague and is developing a joint cross-sector work plan in collaboration with other stakeholders to support the city in its response to refugees. UNICEF has also established a link to the wider Eurocities network to exchange experiences with other cities.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Specific support to municipalities.** Although the Czech Republic has a strong decentralization policy, some municipalities less accustomed to dealing with refugee/migrant situations may face difficulties in terms of inclusion. When requested by the Government, UN agencies shall be ready to share good practices, and provide support to municipalities where the integration process is more complex, including in terms of social acceptance.
- **Need for additional support targeting the most vulnerable.** Although the government's financial support can be considered relatively high, specific attention must be given to the purchasing power of the most vulnerable refugees. The protection profiling reveals that 63% of the respondents have transportation needs. Whether it is for administrative procedures, medical appointments or job research, the mobility of refugees is essential for the inclusion process. The profiling also revealed that 58% of the respondents have food needs. The progressive reduction of the donation of food and non-food items (including hygiene kits) outside state-run centers can put additional pressure on the reduced purchasing power of the refugees especially the elderly, and women with young children unable to work.

Working in partnership

- The coordination mechanisms at the Government and civil society levels are well structured. UN agencies are taking into consideration this environment so that they engage in complementarity. An Inter-Agency Refugee Coordination Forum has been created and meets twice a month with the participation of the MoI, the Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations (representing more than 15 Czech NGOs) and UN agency representatives. The objective of this forum is to systematize the cooperation to ensure agile UN support to the Government.
- Chaired by UNHCR, the Protection Working Group (WG) meets twice a month as a key entry point to identify common challenges while ensuring a harmonized response within existing government structures and among Inter-Agency partners. The Protection WG also covers activities related to Child Protection and GBV and has been broadened to include the participation of civil society.

CONSORTIUM OF MIGRANTS ASSISTING ORGANIZATIONS | IOM | LA STRADA | ORGANIZACE PRO POMOC UPRCHLÍKŮM | ROMODROM | SOCIO.FACTOR | UNHCR | UNIC | UNICEF | WHO