

ROMANIA

Annual 2023 Overview

31 December 2023

Key figures

83,765 refugees*
currently in Romania

149,887 refugees**
registered for
temporary protection
in Romania

59,709 refugees
supported with cash
assistance

89,887 refugees
provided with
information and
counselling in person
or via hotlines

**24 national NGO
partners** under the
2024 RRP appeal
(increased from 2 in
2022, and 14 in 2023)

2,468,742 people
reached by UNHCR's
Awareness Campaign
via digital means (12
per cent of the
population of
Romania)

**11 direct partners
operating in 17
counties**
implementing a wide
range of programmes
and activities

6,672 refugees
reached through
employment website,
livelihoods counselling
and Romanian
language courses



Refugees receiving UNHCR core-relief items in in Constanța.

Operational Context

The international armed conflict in Ukraine that erupted on 24 February 2022 triggered one of the fastest-growing displacement and humanitarian crises on record, pushing millions into internal displacement and abroad in search of safety. **Over 5.18 million border crossings from Ukraine and Moldova into Romania** have been recorded since 24 February 2022. **As of 10 December 2023, a total of 83,765 refugees from Ukraine are present in the country and 149,493 refugees registered for temporary protection in Romania**, as per data from the Government of Romania. Women and children represent 73 per cent of the refugee population.

UNHCR, together with other UN agencies and NGOs, support the government's leadership and response, through Inter-Agency coordination in the context of the **Refugee Coordination Model** and a **Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) – January-December 2023** that aligns with the government's priorities and activities reflected in the **National Plan of Measures - July 2022** for the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Romania.

UNHCR in Romania is responding to the needs of refugees from Ukraine through its Field Offices in Suceava and Galați with its Field Presence in Constanta, a Field Presence in Timisoara, and the Country Office in Bucharest. UNHCR is also present at the Emergency Transit Centre for refugees located in Timișoara. In addition, UNHCR in 2023 implemented projects through 11 national and international partner NGOs in 17 counties across Romania.

Response

Protection

UNHCR works with authorities and partners to promote legal and physical protection of refugees. During 2023, UNHCR's Protection work in Romania included information provision, communication with communities, identification of people with specific needs and referrals to specialised services, legal counselling on temporary protection and advocacy for inclusion, with tailored interventions for the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disabilities, older people, minorities, and woman and girl survivors of, or at risk of, gender-based violence. Some key results of UNHCR's Protection response in 2023 are as follows:

- **89,797 refugees** were provided with information, legal assistance and counselling in person or via hotlines;
- **1,200 officials** of local authorities, partners and volunteers trained on core concepts of refugee protection, including child protection, prevention of and response to gender-based violence, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) etc;
- **52 organisations** are coordinating through the PSEA Network;
- **Some 21,000** refugees are regularly reached through social media dedicated channels, including Telegram and Facebook. Important UNHCR messaging gets reported, reaching over 80,000 persons.



A refugee receives protection counselling from UNHCR partner CNRR at the Service Hub in Galați.

UNHCR leads the Inter-Agency Protection Working Group to help 37 organisations coordinate their protection response and avoid duplication of effort. UNHCR, together with partners Terre Des Hommes and Autism Voices, work in Brașov, Bucharest, Constanța, Galați, Iași, and Suceava, to support children with specific needs, establish child-friendly spaces, ensure psychosocial support, raise awareness, and enhance capacity of the authorities, partner staff, and volunteers. UNHCR, jointly with UNICEF and partners, also advocated on access to education for refugee children from Ukraine to ensure that no child is left behind and - through some child protection interventions - complemented the response from UNICEF and other partners in education.

Cash Assistance: UNHCR's cash assistance programmes are designed in coordination with the Government to complement its efforts to support the refugees from Ukraine. They serve as a transitional safety-net pending the individual's ability to secure employment or be included in national social protection schemes. In 2023, UNHCR's cash assistance has evolved towards more tailored interventions to the most vulnerable refugee population, progressively focusing on a cash for protection programme whose beneficiaries are selected based on a vulnerability scorecard jointly developed by 17 organisations under UNHCR's coordination, which in turn enables partners to assess vulnerability in similar and compatible ways. Deduplication with other cash assistance providers - notably the Romanian Red Cross - is ensured and organisations providing this assistance have agreed on similar transfer values and complementary modalities through the Cash Working Group. In



5 enrolment centres in Bucharest, Brașov, Galați, Suceava and Iași. Mobile enrolment teams across Romania.

2023, more than **59,000 refugees** have received cash assistance. In addition to six cash enrolment centres operational in Braşov, Bucharest, Galaţi, Iaşi, Constanţa and Suceava, UNHCR also enrolled refugees through mobile enrolment teams in various cities hosting considerable number of refugees, including Baia Mare, Cluj, Constanţa, and Satu Mare.

Border Monitoring: Since the onset of the Ukrainian refugee emergency, UNHCR established Field Offices in Galaţi and Suceava that continue to monitor the main border crossings with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, identifying trends and needs of arriving refugees, as well as covering the needs in key areas hosting substantial number of refugees. UNHCR also has a presence in Timișoara that supports the Romanian authorities to manage the Emergency Transit Centre.

Socio-economic inclusion and livelihoods:

Together with the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), and partner NGOs, UNHCR is working to facilitate socio-economic inclusion and self-reliance. UNHCR has secured funding to provide professional-quality language courses to 2,000 refugees in 2024, among those actively seeking for employment, thereby fostering the employability of refugees in coordination with the ANOFM and other partners. Among other results, during 2023:

- **751 refugees were** supported with Romanian language courses;
- **967 refugees were** supported with employment coaching/counselling; and
- **25,489 refugees** enrolled in employment services or other similar platforms with ANOFM and Jobs4Ukraine.



Refugees attend a CV-writing workshop facilitated by Jobs 4Ukraine, Constanţa.

Winterisation

UNHCR, in coordination with authorities and partners, has stepped up its support in the 2023-2024 winter season. UNHCR and partners are distributing humanitarian aid, including bedding and hygiene kits, to assist refugees from Ukraine during winter, as well as assessing sites for potential transit accommodation. UNHCR is also providing a top-up cash assistance to support the most vulnerable families prepare for the additional winter expenses.

Awareness campaign

In July-August 2023, UNHCR conducted an awareness campaign to promote social cohesion and inclusion between refugees and host communities in Romania for six weeks. The campaign, titled “Born in Ukraine. Finding Hope in Romania,” highlighted the stories of six Ukrainian refugees from all walks of life to highlight their efforts towards inclusion and gratitude towards the people of Romania. The main results of the campaign can be summarised as follows:

- It reached some 2,4 million people via digital means (12 per cent of the population of Romania), out of which 378,000 young people reached through a music platform.
- It refuted misconceptions about the Ukrainian refugees through a landing page with myths vs. reality, visited by more than 300,000 persons, of which some 105,000 went through the various elements of the page.
- The reactions online were overwhelmingly positive, with some 80 per cent of reactions and comments expressing support to refugees, while negative reactions reflected misinforming narratives not substantiated in facts.
- The campaign also included 226 TV video ads in 7 TV channels, 75 digital outdoor advertisements in 5 cities and 102 press coverage pieces including media amplification of the campaign.

Fast-track transfers

In 2023, a total of 2,300 refugees have been supported to travel to Romania from Ukraine-Moldova border through fast-track transfers in partnership with the Department of Emergency Situations and IOM. This initiative, launched in April 2022, provides refugees from Ukraine with safe and dignified transportation from Palanca border crossing point between Ukraine and Moldova, to Romanian border and onwards to Bucharest. Palanca has been an important transit point for new arrivals, primarily from southern regions of Ukraine since the onset of the international armed conflict.

Working with partners

UNHCR carried out a wide range of activities through 11 partners operating in 17 counties. Activities carried out by partners AFF, AidRom, Autism Voice, CNRR, CSCM, Estuar, FONSS, Fundația Sensiblu, HEKS/EPER, IOM, PATRIR, Project Voiajor, TDH and include:



Protection monitoring at borders



Support for people with disabilities



Information provision, legal counselling, and psychosocial support



Support self-reliance/employment



Gender-based violence



Enhance inclusion and wellbeing



Child protection risks



Needs assessment and information management

Inter-Agency Coordination

To ensure effective coordination among the humanitarian partners implementing the Regional Refugee Response Plan, UNHCR with support from authorities established a robust Inter-Agency coordination platform. The coordination architecture is made up of seven sectoral working groups, four sub-working groups, two task forces, and one network, led by Inter-Agency leads and co-leads. The sector working groups hold regular meetings ensuring a flexible and effective structure. UNHCR and partners work closely with authorities to ensure complementarity and synergy between government Working Groups and the Inter-Agency coordination structure of the RRP in support to the National Plan of Measures. The year saw a significant increase in the number of national NGO partners – with an increase from 2 in 2022 to 14 at the beginning of the 2023 RRP, and 24 appealing national NGOs in 2024 in line with the ‘localisation’ drive. Furthermore, to enhance local coordination and linkages to national coordination platforms, seven local coordination networks were launched.

Information Management and Needs Assessments

Throughout 2023, UNHCR consolidated the Information Management (IM) response in three focus areas with the overarching aims of localising activities and assess specific areas and themes.

Develop and enhance IM systems: 15 systems were either developed or updated in 2023 to facilitate the use of data within UNHCR, as well as for partner or government use. These included the adoption of the Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS), successfully used for deduplicating cash assistance cases in Romania; the Movement Trends and Temporary Protection Overview data management and visualisation systems; internal dashboards used for operationalising internal data, and other systems allowing UNHCR staff to make real-time use of collected data.

Lead and conduct the country-wide assessment plan: 14 assessments were carried out in Romania during 2023. Approximately half were conducted in-house, while others were carried out in partnership with both operational and UNHCR-funded partners. The assessments varied in scope and coverage, ranging from UNHCR core protection activities to larger Inter-Agency assessments as well as thematic or programme assessments.

Enhance collaboration on IM activities and expand the number of partnerships: UNHCR engaged with 10 partners to conduct IM activities, of which two were UNHCR-funded partners (CNRR and CSCM), the latter being a new IM partner capacitated to oversee and conduct several IM activities in the coming years. Other activities were conducted in the context of operational partnerships on specific projects, including government partners, local authorities, UN agencies, and local NGOs.

All these activities and findings of the assessment and operational data were constantly communicated, presented, and shared through the monthly Information Management Working Group meetings co-chaired by UNHCR, as well as other Working Groups, Sub-working Groups, government, and Refugee Response-related forums.

RomExpo UNHCR Integrated Service Hub for Refugees and regional service hubs

Since 2022, in support of the national response, UNHCR worked with UN Agencies, authorities and partners to provide services to refugees at the RomExpo Integrated Service Hub in Bucharest and regional service hubs in Braşov and Galaţi as well as cash enrolment centres in Iaşi and Suceava. RomExpo and the regional service hubs serve as one-stop-shops for all services available free of charge. In 2023, some 34,000 refugees were enrolled for cash assistance at RomExpo. In addition to cash assistance enrolment services, RomExpo and the service hubs provide refugees a range of essential services including child protection and social services to children and families with links to national and local referral pathways and services, information on services, asylum, and family reunification, the identification and referral of persons with specific needs, legal aid, and counselling. The hubs also host child and family-friendly spaces, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) provides mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), referrals to doctors, and pre-natal services. The integrated service hub for refugees at RomExpo and the regional service hubs also offer space for national NGOs and refugee-led organisations to conduct occasional activities, including training, sensibilisation events, and other community-focused activities. Importantly, at RomExpo the General Inspectorate for Immigration, with EUAA support, registers refugees from Ukraine for temporary protection status, in what has become the main point of registration in the country, with more than 48,000 refugees registering there since the end of March 2022.

Needs and plans for 2024

In 2024, UNHCR will seek to further sustain the governmental and humanitarian response to ensure protection and inclusion of refugees from Ukraine. The total funding requirement for UNHCR in Romania is of USD 52.9 million. The priorities for 2024 are as follows:

- Maintain social cohesion through programmes that, addressing the urgent needs of refugees, have also a positive impact on the host communities.
- Maintain advocacy efforts towards the enjoyment of rights by refugees.
- Enhance community-based protection, ensure prevention of and response to gender-based violence, and child protection risks.
- Ensure localisation of the refugee response by fostering the capacity, role and relevance of Romanian actors' programmes delivery of services and assistance.
- Promote economic inclusion through job counselling and language courses.
- Maintain the cash for protection programme, complementing governmental assistance, for the most vulnerable refugees.
- Continue to coordinate the humanitarian community's refugee response in support of the Government's leading role, through the RRP for 2024, inter alia, by ensuring the relevance, delivery capacity and functioning of the Inter-Agency structures.
- Maintain its winter and contingency preparedness, in coordination with the government.
- Overall, facilitate mid-long-term protection and inclusion of refugees into the Romanian society.



Refugees from Ukraine accessing services at UNHCR's integrated service hub at RomExpo, Bucharest.

Some stories from 2023



[Danya overcomes the challenges of integrating in Romania](#)



[How Romanians view refugees](#)



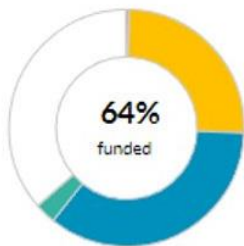
[Ivan learns Romanian language and new skills to find employment](#)

Funding Situation

As of 15 December 2023

\$59.5 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2023



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors of unearmarked, softly earmarked, and earmarked funding:

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | United Kingdom | United States of America

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