



PROTECTION BRIEF

CZECHIA

APRIL- JUNE 2024

Operational Context

Based on the number of Ukrainian refugees who applied for an extension of Temporary Protection in 2024 (320,000), the figures of Temporary Protection holders in Czechia, including new arrivals, were updated to **360,524** people as of **30 June 2024**, compared to 373,745 at the end of 2023 (source: Ministry of the Interior).

This report presents an overview of refugees' demographic profiles as well as main findings regarding protection risks and priority needs of refugees from Ukraine in Czechia. The brief is based on the analysis of **1,215 Protection Monitoring interviews** and findings from focus group discussions conducted by UNHCR with refugees from Ukraine across the country in the second quarter of 2024.

Key Figures

360,524

Temporary Protection holders in Czechia

96%

of Protection Monitoring respondents are Temporary Protection holders

72%

of respondents and their household members are women and children

29%

consider accommodation as their highest priority need

66%

mentioned difficulties finding work in Czechia

35%

need more information about job opportunities

Protection Risks and Needs

UNHCR Czechia continued to conduct Protection Monitoring while also consulting different groups of refugees through focus group discussions on protection risks and priority needs. Specific challenges in accessing rights were reported. The key findings are highlighted below.

Protection Risk I

Access to Temporary Protection (TP): 96% of the respondents are holders of Temporary Protection in Czechia. Among the respondents who did not apply for Temporary Protection in Czechia (12 individuals, 4%), the reasons were: not meeting the eligibility criteria (3 individuals), not needing protection and related benefits (3 individuals), have applied for, or were issued a different residence permit (3 individuals), and were Temporary Protection holders and have since transitioned to a different legal status (2 individuals).

10%

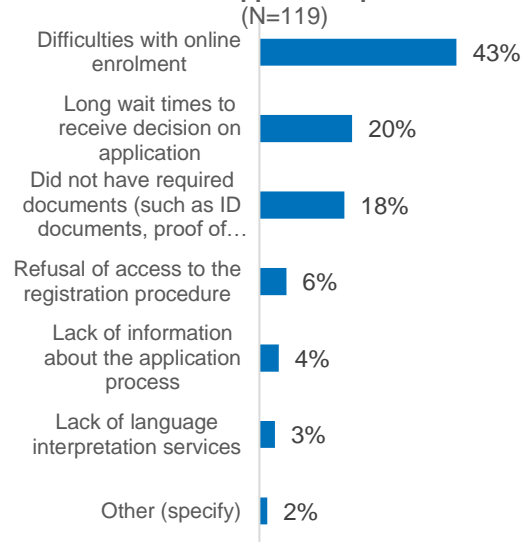
of respondents (119 individuals) reported some challenges with the **Temporary Protection application or extension process.**

The main challenges related to applying for Temporary Protection included: difficulties with online enrolment, long waiting times to receive a decision, lack of required documents (such as ID or proof of address) to complete the registration process, and refusal of access to registration procedures.

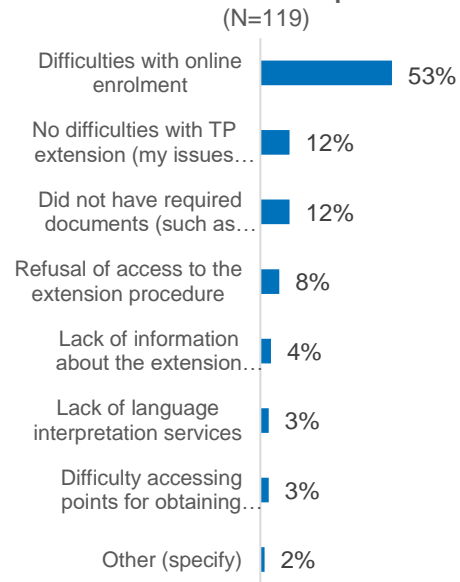
With respect to the extension of Temporary Protection, challenges included: difficulties with online enrolment for extension of Temporary Protection, lack of required documents (such as ID or proof of address) to extend Temporary Protection, and refusal of access to the extension procedure.

Only 4% of respondents reported lack of information about the Temporary Protection application or extension procedure.

What was the main difficulty you experienced during the Temporary Protection application process?



What was the main difficulty you experienced during the Temporary Protection extension process?



Access to documentation:

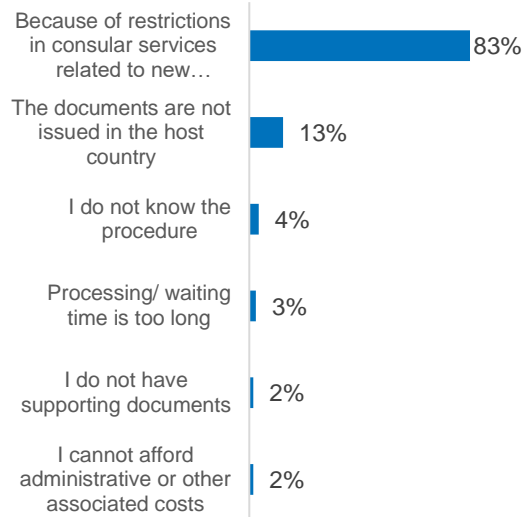
16%

of respondents were not able to obtain, replace or renew their identity documents in Czechia.

83% of them stated that the reason were restrictions in consular services related to new mobilization rules in Ukraine, while 13% reported that the document in question was not issued in Czechia.

Moreover, on a related question ('What was the reason why you went back to Ukraine last time?'), 15% indicated obtaining documentation as the main reason for going back to Ukraine on the last occasion.

Why are you unable to replace/renew/issue this document in the Czech Republic?



Protection Risk II

Access to adequate housing: Findings from Protection Monitoring interviews highlighted that 352 respondents had accommodation as their highest priority need.

29%

reported accommodation as their highest priority need.

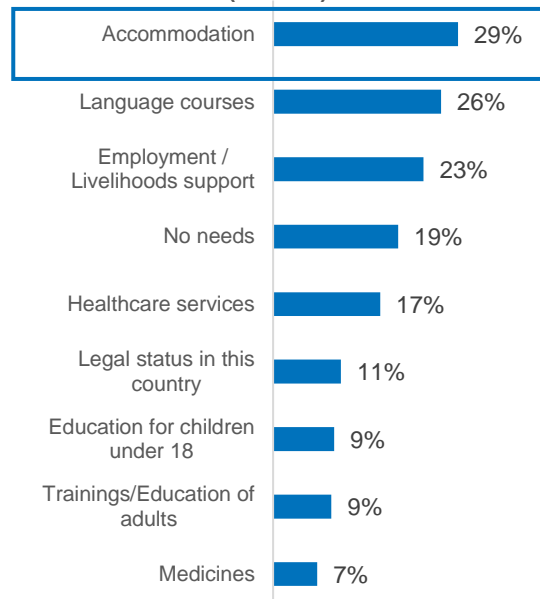
The results indicate obstacles for longer-term housing solutions. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) can only stay in their accommodation for up to six months, while 19% are not sure how long they can stay for. These figures are higher for residents of collective accommodation facilities (37% and 33% respectively).

Of the respondents living in collective accommodation facilities, 21% are planning to move out in the next three months, while 25% do not know what they will do.

Of the overall respondents who are unable to stay in their accommodation beyond six months, 12% reported being under pressure to leave. The main sources of pressure were the termination of free or subsidized accommodation (36%) and the decision of landlords to no longer provide accommodation (33%). These findings reflect the change in legislation whereby cost-free accommodation will no longer be available for vulnerable Temporary Protection holders, and accommodation for new arrivals is reduced from 150- to 90-days, effective 1 September 2024.

Out of those who at least partially cover rent themselves, one-fifth (21%) indicated that they experienced challenges in paying rent in the past three months, including paying rent on time.

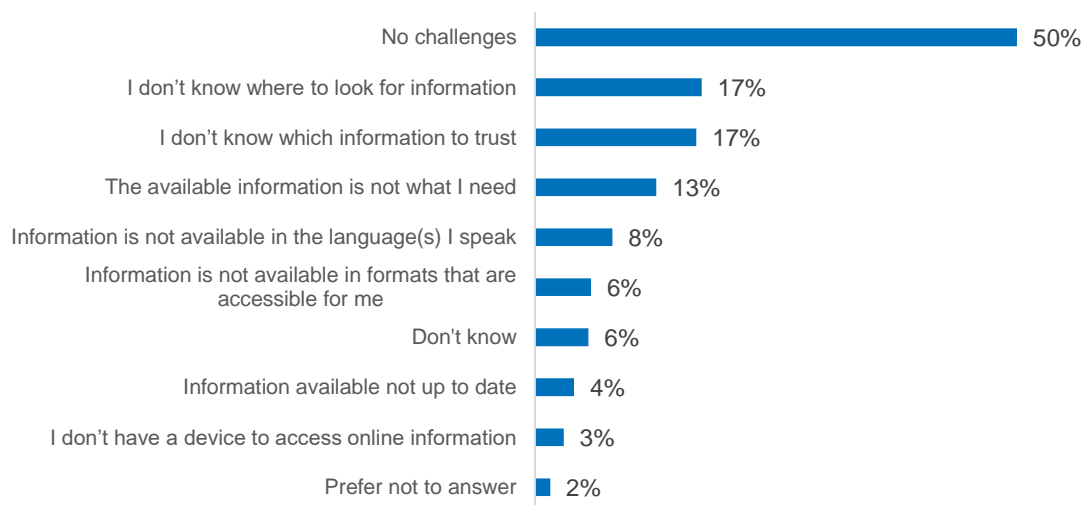
What are currently the top three priority needs of your household? (N=1215)



Focus group discussions held by UNHCR with Ukrainian refugee women in Olomouc in June revealed that the new costs of accommodation that residents would be required to pay in collective accommodation facilities needed to be made available to support their informed decisions.

Findings from Protection Monitoring indicate 'where to find accommodation' as the third-most prevalent information need (19%). The main challenges in accessing information include not knowing where to look for it, not knowing which information to trust, and available information not responding to needs.

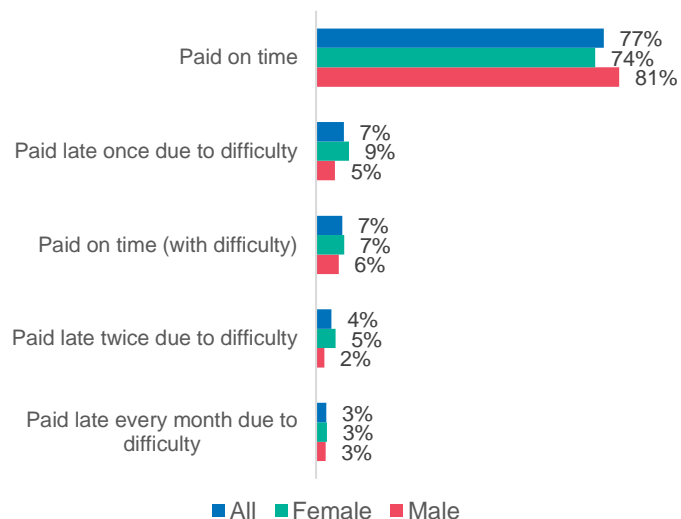
What challenges are you facing in accessing information that you need at the moment (including information on rights and entitlements, access to services)?



Female respondents (63% of total) were amongst those who reported facing specific challenges in relation to housing. Overall, they were slightly more likely to experience difficulties in paying rent.

Furthermore, Ukrainian elderly refugee women in Plzen consulted by UNHCR in April raised concerns over their ability to afford housing post-September, underscoring the difficulty of finding suitable housing within budget constraints.

In the last 3 months, how many times did you have problems paying rent on time? By gender (N= 877)



Protection Risk III

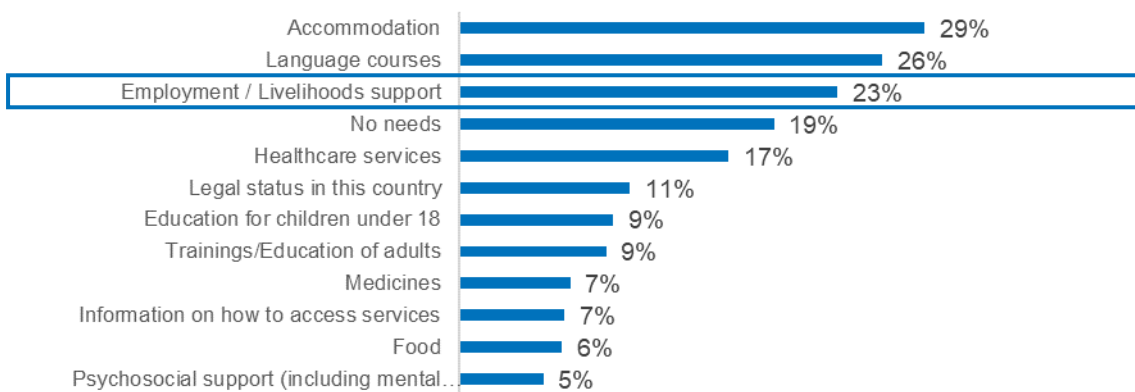
66%

mentioned difficulties in finding work in Czechia.

Access to decent work: Among the key barriers to accessing work, respondents mentioned a lack of knowledge of the Czech language (41%), inability to find a job with decent pay (24%), inability to find a job with a suitable or flexible schedule (18%), and lack of opportunities commensurate with skills or professional experience (18%). These findings were also reflected in focus group discussions conducted by UNHCR with Ukrainian refugee women in Plzen in April (elderly women) and in Cesky Krumlov in May.

Employment/livelihoods support was mentioned as one of the top three priority needs (23%) of interviewed households.

What are currently the top three priority needs of your household?

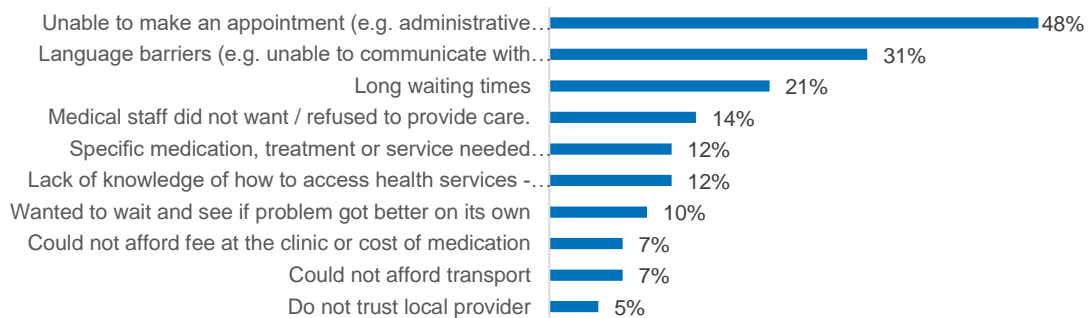


Moreover, in terms of information needs 35% of respondents indicated a need for more information about job opportunities; this was the highest reported information need.

Protection Risk IV

Access to adequate healthcare: As per the Protection Monitoring, 26% of respondents indicated having had a health problem in the last 30 days and needing to access health care. Of these, 6% were unable to obtain the needed healthcare. Key reasons for not being able to access the needed care included: inaccessibility of health facilities/inability to make an appointment (48%), language barriers (31%), long waiting times (21%), and refusal of staff to provide care (14%).

What were the main reason [this person] was unable to access health care?
 (N=42, asked to those who needed health care and were unable to access it)



Almost 25% of households indicated that they do not have access to a general practitioner in Czechia. Among households with at least one child, 13% indicated that they did not have access to a pediatrician. These findings are in line with reports from focus group discussions held by UNHCR with Ukrainian refugee women in Olomouc in June, some of whom reported to have had to travel to other towns for specific medical needs.

Calls to Action

UNHCR and partners will continue to share identified needs and to support the national response:

- Provide continued support to refugees transitioning to standard housing, including:
 - Provide practical guidance and orientation on housing for refugees residing in collective accommodation facilities including those who will need to move to private accommodation.
 - Continue proactive information provision alongside individual social counselling and support for vulnerable refugees, particularly elderly persons and single mothers, residing in collective accommodation facilities for housing solutions. Official information channels and hotlines, particularly those of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, should continue to be shared with refugees for trusted and up to date information on entitlements, housing, and available support. Refugees can also be referred to refugee-led organisations and NGOs, including UNHCR's partners, that can provide orientation on housing. Tailored social support through social workers, complemented by NGOs and refugee-led organisations, should in particular be directed at facilities that are expected to have high numbers of residents moving out.
 - Providers of collective accommodation should communicate to residents whether they would be able to continue to reside in the facilities, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future housing. They should also share information on the new prices that refugees are expected to pay from 1 September onwards to remain in these facilities.
 - Raise awareness of the protection risks associated with refugee women who experience challenges in paying rent and provide individualised counselling and support.
 - Information on the changes on humanitarian benefits, effective 1 August, should continue to be shared with vulnerable individuals and assistance in accessing these benefits should be strengthened.
- Share updated information on available Czech language courses offered by different providers, including the Labour Office, municipal community centres, NGOs, RLOs, language institutes, etc. Continue to broaden the provision of Czech language courses for refugees by tailoring them to the needs of relevant employment sectors.
- Share information on ongoing government initiatives that support the employment of refugees including career counselling services, job opportunities, provision of information on irregular employment risks, and employment rights.
- Strengthen collaboration with private sector companies to provide work placements, internship opportunities, and sustainable employment to refugees.
- Offer guidance sessions and seminars on navigating bureaucratic hurdles to starting private businesses, and to understanding employment rights, business and trade regulations.
- Continue to raise awareness about how to stay safe during the search for jobs to prevent and mitigate risks of exploitation and trafficking.

- Build upon ongoing activities sensitizing refugee communities about digital safety and online risks. Ensure wide dissemination of informational materials that can protect refugees from online harm, including UNHCR's *Safe Online* guide (<https://help.unhcr.org/czech/safe-online/>), and continue to deliver information sessions.
- Share information about the Ministry of Health's hotline, where refugees can seek support in the Ukrainian language, and may inquire about available interpretation services during doctor's appointments. Increase the number of volunteers, who may be interpreters at the doctor's appointment and spread information on such availability.
- Connect refugees with community-based resources including refugee-led organizations, and NGOs to support access to health services. Strengthen two-way communication with patients integrating refugees' feed-back into service delivery.