



Slovakia

As of 22 June 2022

Confronted with the largest refugee emergency in its history, Slovakia has responded with generosity and solidarity, moving quickly to establish a temporary protection status under domestic law and mobilizing authorities at all levels along with civil society, private sector actors, volunteers, and local communities to receive refugees and support them in meeting their needs. Just over 517,000 arrivals from Ukraine have crossed into Slovakia since the war began and over 79,000 refugees have applied for temporary protection status here. The Government of Slovakia (GoS) has assumed strong leadership of

response, with important support from civil society, the private sector, volunteers, and international organizations. UNHCR helps the Government coordinate humanitarian actors via the *Refugee Coordination Forum for the Slovak Republic (RCF)*, which includes sector-specific working groups aligned with the national response.

The *Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP)* contributes to a “whole-of-society” response in support of refugees from Ukraine as well as the people and governments of host countries, and is specifically designed to

complement the GoS’ clear leadership. The Slovakia chapter involves 21 partners comprising financial requirements of USD 91.9M through December 2022.

The RCF brings together a still broader group of stakeholders now operating in the country – including the GoS, civil society, refugee-led initiatives, donor countries, the private sector, the UN, and other international organizations to ensure a harmonized and effective response. The [5W tool](#) is designed to identify RCF partners and their activities, and will continue to be updated as the response evolves.

KEY FIGURES*

528,727

Total non-Slovak border crossings from Ukraine since 24 February (as of 22 June)

275,584

Total non-Slovak border crossings to the Ukraine since 24 February (as of 22 June)

86%

Of Ukrainian arrivals to Slovakia are women and children (as of 22 June)

79,580

Applications for temporary protection status in Slovakia (as of 22 June)

70,000

refugees and vulnerable third-country nationals targeted for inter-agency cash assistance

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

USD 1.85 B

Overall financial requirements

USD 793 M

Funding received

43%

Percent funded

USD 91.9 M

Financial requirements for the Slovakia response

21

Partners involved in the Slovakia RRP chapter

*See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) and the [Slovak portal page](#) 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

Traditionally, Slovakia has been mainly a transit country, but is increasingly becoming a country of destination. Both for the Government and for the public, managing such a large population of refugees is a relatively new challenge. Prior to the current emergency, Slovakia hosted just 409 refugees (including subsidiary protection holders) and the UN presence in the country was limited to IOM and WHO. The Government of Slovakia (GoS) welcomed the UN's recent scale up in capacity. Operationalizing a comprehensive refugee response in Slovakia therefore has required setting up several systems, workflows, and structures in support of the GoS that, in other countries nearby, already existed. Notably, the civil society members of the RCF have been on the ground and active since before the war began.



Progress Update

- The Protection and Inclusion Working Group (PIWG) has provided a platform for coordinating relevant activities of RCF partners operating in support of the Government of Slovakia's (GoS) response to Ukrainian refugees. These efforts are ongoing, including the 5W, which provide an overview of activities and mapping protection gaps. PIWG partners are also involved in advocacy, particularly in providing a platform of GoS-civil society exchanges on the protection regime and access to rights under temporary protection and leveraging inter-agency capacities and assessments. There are currently 190 asylum-seeker cases, and the number is likely to increase very soon. For this reason, the refugee response needs scaled up activities.



Protection Profiling

On the 17th May 2022, UNHCR rolled out the protection monitoring and profiling exercises in Slovakia. Data as of 22 June 2022

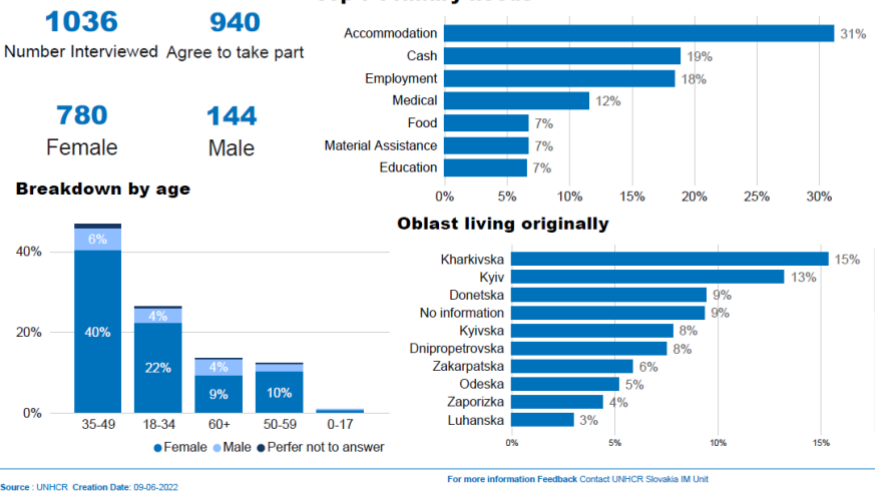


Figure 1: Protection Profiling Overview

- UNHCR and partners have rolled out Protection Profiling and Monitoring (PPM) in eight sites, including at border crossings, registration centres, and transit areas throughout Slovakia, and has conducted 835 surveys in the period between 17 May and 18 June. A participatory assessment has also been rolled out, and a programme to identify and capacitate community outreach volunteers has been launched.

- The protection profiling tool helps empower refugees and enhance their voice in identifying protection gaps and how to address them.

- In June, UNHCR has launched a Hotline to address the gaps in refugee access to information (as of 20 June, 469 calls were received), and launched focus groups discussions to engage with the refugees and listen to their concerns and views.

- REACH has published its [first factsheet](#) on a longitudinal study “Challenges, intentions and movement trajectories of Ukrainians in displacement”.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Need for data on refugees’ needs as well as how they see these needs should be addressed.



Figure 2 Snapshot from REACH longitudinal study, Challenges, intentions and movement trajectories of Ukrainians in displacement

- There is also need to understand the motivations of those refugees who are going back to Ukraine, as well as the nature of those movements. UNHCR and partners are addressing this gap through Protection Profiling and Monitoring, as well as participatory assessment.
- Need to train Government authorities as well as partners on participatory mechanisms and assessments (eg. working with government on engaging and consulting the community on the design and implementation of interventions).
- Need to establish Community Based Protection Approach, particularly in locations with a high concentration of refugees.

SPOTLIGHT ON “Blue Dots: Safe Space, Protection and Support Hub”

UNHCR and UNICEF in coordination with authorities and partners have established Blue Dots at registration centers where critical information on services and support is being provided to children and families who are refugees from Ukraine. In Bratislava, at Bottova registration centre, there is an established Blue Dot while another Blue Dot has been established in the East (Michalovce Registration Centre), with three other locations planned for Blue Dots pending site visits. The Blue Dot services at these sites includes legal and social services, child protection services, and referrals. They are provided by UNHCR and UNICEF partners with support from the municipality.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Progress Update



Figure 3: PSEA workshop in Michalovce, @UNHCR/Ramazan Cebe

PSEA trainings by UN agencies to humanitarian workers are ongoing. To date, three training sessions have been conducted (two online and one at Michalovce registration centre), involving 40 staff and 4 partners (Human Rights League, Slovak Humanitarian Council, Mareena, People in Need) and the Fire Brigade. Additionally, 40 community members were reached on core humanitarian principles in relation to PSEA with awareness raising material, which was shared by refugees in their social community networks.

- UNHCR is taking the opportunity of ongoing Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to identify Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) risks and raise awareness on PSEA among the refugee communities, which is well received by refugees. The final findings of the FGDs will be shared with the members of the PSEA Task Force and the Government of Slovakia (GoS).

- Two members of the refugee community were identified, who have volunteered to reach out to their community networks to raise awareness on PSEA through online channels.

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Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The need to include national NGOs in PSEA assessments was identified by the PSEA Task Force. During a joint PSEA workshop that will be delivered (24 June) by UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, IOM) and IFRC for implementing and operational partners, an assessment exercise by the local partners has been included. The workshop will help to identify existing best PSEA practices in Slovakia, as well as assess main gaps in internal policies and complaint and response mechanisms.
- The main findings from FGDs with refugee women regarding SEA risks are related to accommodation offered by unvetted volunteers, cost of transportation, access to food, and safe spaces for children (i.e. daycare, after school activities), labour exploitation of refugees, and misinformation regarding the effectiveness of reporting sexual crimes to the police.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Progress Update

- RCF partners mapped out available hotlines and other limited services that are available to respond to GBV survivors.
- RCF partners have trained more than 200 police officers on the prevention and response to GBV; and 36 partner staff have been trained to support referral pathways.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- A team of GBV actors continues to identify key players and develop safe referral pathways for specific locations. There are limited number of actors providing specialised GBV services. Further strengthening the capacity of stakeholders is a key priority as well as strengthening coordination between stakeholders.
- Other gaps include limited awareness and knowledge of roles, responsibilities, and guiding principles, including on the survivor-centred approach.
- There is a need for technical support of capacity of national response services as well as other professionals (social workers, counsellors, case managers, etc), including the social and counselling services related to GBV needs of persons of concern. RCF partners may wish to explore working in supporting technical efforts to increase such capacities.
- In addition, RCF partners may provide support to the 23 counselling centres (where many refugees reside) and family shelters established by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MoLSAF), and to support MoLSAF in providing strategic capacity development with public and civil society sectors.
- Advocacy is underway with the Government of Slovakia (GoS) to establish a system for tracking host families and other private accommodation providers – to help better address risks of sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and other forms of GBV.

Targeted Support to LGBTQI+ Individuals

Progress Update

- Ukrainian NGO Gender Stream is a feminist organization from Ukraine established in Dnipro in 2016. Since March 2022, it has been working with Ukrainian LGBTQI+ refugees in Europe, and IDPs in Ukraine. Gender Stream runs a safe house for LGBTQI+ IDPs, especially gay and transgender people who are eligible for conscription in Ukraine, in the Zakarpattia region. LGBTQI+ people are awaiting opportunities to enter into Slovakia. Gender Stream has also established a safe house for LGBTQI+ refugees in Bratislava. It has helped 130 people, including 60 transgender people, to cross the border into Europe. UNHCR has built a partnership with Gender Stream as a refugee-led organization, and Gender Stream actively takes part in the RCF fora.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- LGBTQI+ refugees do not have safe access to accommodation, education, or health care (including access to gender-affirming hormone replacement treatment, mental health, and psychosocial support). UNHCR and Gender Stream will conduct a participatory assessment with LGBTQI+ refugees in Bratislava and Košice, and will organize a number of workshops to build alliance with key professionals, including in the health sector. Areas of cooperation with Gender Stream include:
 - Advocacy with the Government of Slovakia (GoS);
 - Alliance building with Slovak civil society and professional groups/service providers;
 - Engaging and empowering the community to identify and address protection needs;
 - Awareness raising to improve inclusion of LGBTQI+ refugees in Slovakia;

Accountability to Affected People (AAP)

Progress Update

- A common way of capturing and classifying feedback provided by refugees and Slovak communities has been agreed and shared at the inter-agency level to support data collection and analysis on feedback that will inform decision making.
- Multiple channels are available across agencies for refugees and Slovak communities to receive priority information and to provide feedback through trusted channels including hotlines, Facebook groups, Telegram channels, Telegram bots, and organizations' websites.
- Feedback from refugees – including emerging trends, key concerns, and commonly reported issues – is now a standing agenda item at RCF meetings, and is being used to inform discussions and actions.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Providing updated information in a coordinated and consistent way through preferred channels remains a challenge, given the myriad sources of information and conflicting advice reported by refugees.
- Different information is now needed by refugees to reflect their changing priorities of establishing themselves in Slovakia, particularly around entitlements, benefits, and access to specific services in the locations where they are, rather than that available at the main reception centres only.
- Consistent access to feedback mechanisms remains a gap in some areas and services. Such mechanisms must be established across activities for refugees to allow them to more easily provide feedback and to give and share their opinions.
- Refugee responses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist. In view of strengthening organizations led by refugees, UNHCR signed two grant agreements for two refugee-led organizations: one with the Ukrainian-Slovak House Community Centre on inter-communal dialogue through art, and the other with Gender Stream on alliance-building with public and civil society actors and professional groups to enhance inclusion of LGBTQI+ refugees.



MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

Progress Update

- The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MoLSAF) provides social assistance benefits (cash) to vulnerable households whose incomes are under the minimum living wage, under the Material Needs programme. Some 60,000 Slovak citizens are currently receiving this Material Needs cash from MoLSAF. Since 24 February, it has welcomed refugees into this system; the first cash payment to refugees was on 14 April, and a subsequent payment was made on 15 May to around 20,000 families.
- However, given the size of the refugee influx and the limited capacity of their systems and resources, the Government of Slovakia (GoS) has requested temporary international support (for an initial 3 months) with enrolment of new refugee applications and provision of short-term emergency cash assistance as a

“bridge” until other resources, potentially EU funding, are available and the GoS has the capacity and systems to take this on. This cash programme is a coordinated inter-agency approach which includes UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, and IFRC, and is enrolling 70,000 refugees and vulnerable third-country nationals during this transitional period.

- The inter-agency involvement in CBI enrolment is helping to improve data collection for persons with specific needs (i.e. those with particular circumstances such as being a single parent or having a disability). As of 14 June, around 16% of the current beneficiaries have been identified as having one of the enumerated vulnerabilities. RCF partners are working to strengthen referral pathways and provide additional training on identification of persons with specific needs.
- Enrolment is ongoing at five registration centres across the country. As of 20 June, 45,785 persons have been enrolled, including 5,045 persons directly enrolled by UNHCR and interviewed to identify specific needs; and an additional 40,740 persons enrolled by the Government. Of the enrolment target of 57,500, UNHCR will support payments for 34,500 people, and UNICEF will support payments for the other 23,000.
- Following its agreement with the MoLSAF on 27 April, UNICEF is putting targeting, payment, and monitoring systems in place to launch two cash transfers: a material needs benefit and a Carer's Grant for children with severe disabilities. A partner mapping has been completed and a questionnaire for identifying children with severe disabilities has been endorsed by the GoS and will be used for training government and NGO partners.
- The Slovak Red Cross is also enrolling and prioritizing cash assistance for the most vulnerable individuals displaced from Ukraine due to the conflict. IOM will be supporting families that have an adult with disability. The inter-agency poster on the Coordinated Short-Term Emergency Cash Assistance in Slovakia is finalized; it provides answers to some of the questions currently being received by persons of concern and partners.

Čo je program núdzovej finančnej pomoci v hmotnej núdzi na Slovensku?

UNHCR, UNICEF a Červený kríž podporujú Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny pri poskytovaní krátkodobej núdzovej finančnej pomoci ľuďom, ktorí museli utiecť z Ukrajiny kvôli konfliktu ide o obmedzenú pomoc, ktorá má ľuďom pomôcť s ich počiatočnými potrebami, ako je jedlo, oblečenie či ubytovanie, a na podporu ich pobytu na Slovensku. Tento program je oddelený od programu sociálnej pomoci slovenskej vlády a je financovaný Organizáciou spojených národov a Červeným krížom. Všetky organizácie budú poskytovať rovnakú finančnú pomoc. Ak ste zapísaní, alebo prijímate núdzovú finančnú pomoc od jednej organizácie, nebudete sa môcť zapísať a prijímať núdzovú finančnú pomoc od druhej organizácie.

Kto má nárok na núdzovú finančnú pomoc v hmotnej núdzi?

UNHCR/UNICEF
Všetci ľudia so štatútom dočasného útočiska a žiadatelia o azyl, ktorí boli na 24. februára 2022 a ktorí sú v núdzi. Aspoň jeden člen rodiny musel opustiť Ukrajinu 24. februára alebo neskôr, aby mala rodina nárok na túto finančnú pomoc.

Slovak Red Cross
Slovenský Červený kríž uprednostňuje finančnú pomoc pre najzraniteľnejších ľudí, ktorí sú v dôsledku konfliktu vysídlení z Ukrajiny. Musia tiež spĺňať aspoň jedno z nasledujúcich kritérií:

- Domácnosť s rodičom samoživiteľom, s jednou alebo viacerými závislými osobami (deti vo veku 0 – 17 rokov, alebo osoby vo veku 60 rokov a staršie)
- Domácnosť, ktorej hlavou sú staršie osoby (60 a viac rokov)
- Domácnosť s jednou alebo viacerými osobami so špecifickými potrebami
- Domácnosť s jednou alebo viacerými tehotnými ženami
- Ženy, ktoré cestujú samé alebo bez sprievodu
- Hlava domácnosti nie je schopná čítať ani písať v štátnom jazyku
- Domácnosť s aspoň jedným členom patriacim k etnickej menšine (napríklad rómskej komunity)
- Domácnosť s členom, ktorý sa identifikuje ako osoba utekajúca pred sexuálnym a/alebo rodovým násilím, podmierneným násilím, rodinným násilím alebo násilím zo strany intímneho partnera

Kolko núdzovej finančnej pomoci poskytuje program?

Ak máte nárok na túto pomoc, každý mesiac dostanete stanovenú sumu eur. Suma bude vypočítaná na základe počtu členov vašej rodiny a ich veku, maximálne však do výšky 380 EUR. Tieto sumy stanovila vláda SR podľa nižšie uvedenej tabuľky. Všetky organizácie zapojené do núdzovej finančnej pomoci sa s vládou SR dohodli na poskytnutí rovnakej pomoci.

Kategória	Definícia	Suma na jednotlivca za mesiac
Dospelý	od 18 rokov	€ 80,00
Dieťa	(dojča a batola) <3 roky	€ 160,00
Dieťa	3+ do <18r	€ 60,00

Figure 3 Inter-agency poster on the Coordinated Short-Term Emergency Cash Assistance in Slovakia

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR and UNICEF are collaborating on a Complaint Feedback Mechanism and are establishing a Helpline, to address queries and complaints on the UN cash programme. This initiative and the communication strategy are done in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.



Progress Update

- In this current phase of operations, child protection preparedness and response are mainstreamed by UNHCR and UNICEF with partners through information provision on services, cash enrolment programme, protection profiling exercises, and immediate assistance to people in need at border crossing points, as well as main registration/service centres in Bottova, Košice, Michalovce, Nitra, Žilina, and Gabčíkovo, as well as through Blue Dots, while at the same time reinforcing already existing protection structures in the country. Relevant child protection services offered via Protection Desks and Blue Dots include identification, rapid assessment and referral of children and women at risk, psycho-social support, legal aid, and counselling.
- In close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MoLSAF), UNHCR and UNICEF are ensuring the response services (protection, referral, etc.) to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and children at risk. As of 1 June 2022, 86 UASC were identified by the Slovak authorities, with substitute care arrangements as well as legal guardianships facilitated. Children within the national system have access to education, protection, psychosocial services, and contact with families in Ukraine.
- Within partnership of UNICEF and NGO Tenenet, a range of child protection and psychosocial services has been provided to children and their caregivers in the Blue Dot in Bratislava and through Tenenet's community mobile outreach teams. The aim is to protect children and families affected by war through holistic, community-based services, such as provision of mental health and psychosocial support and counselling, assistance in job search, child friendly spaces where children can rest and play, dedicated mother and baby spaces where women can breastfeed and clean their babies in private areas, primary health care, etc. Mobile outreach teams operate 24/7 in various accommodation facilities. Approximately 3,500 refugees per week are reached by Tenenet, whereas psychosocial support services are provided to approximately 500 persons per week.
- In partnership of UNICEF and NGO Mareena, child protection and psychosocial support interventions have been provided in the largest accommodation center Gabcikovo with around 300 children reached, in particular through leisure, extracurricular and educational activities, language support, as well as inclusive activities involving participation of the local community. Similarly, through the recent agreement with NGO Ipčko, psychosocial support is provided in Kosice and Presov.

RRP Indicators	To Date	Target
# of participants trained on child protection and children's rights	240	1,000
# of children provided with child protection services	146	10,000

Figure 5: RRP Targets Child Protection

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Child boys at risk of conscription, LGBTQI+ children, children with disabilities, children from the Roma community, children at risk of trafficking remain challenging to address given the lack of capacity among relevant actors and limited data on current situation.

- Child-friendly information materials are not yet widely available. Child and youth consultation through participatory assessments and including them in the development of these materials are currently in progress.
- Availability of comprehensive data relating to the situation of children and data analysis.
- In partnership of UNICEF and NGO Mareena, refugee children and families will have access to anonymous free psychosocial first aid provided by Ukrainian experts through telephone, email, and video counselling.



ACCOMMODATION

Progress Update



- REACH and UNHCR have worked together to map out accommodation centres through a combination of data from the Ministry of Interior (Moi) and site visits by partners. This map will be updated as more information becomes available.

Figure 6: A map of accommodation sites based on combined data from Ministry of Interior, UNHCR and REACH

- Ukrainian refugees are accommodated in private and collective accommodations throughout the 79 districts, including within five districts of Bratislava and four districts of Kosice regions. The Government of Slovakia (GoS) has been paying EU 4.9 M to municipalities for hosting refugees in May – covering a reported 8,765 accommodation providers for 33,830 residents. The GoS continues to provide financial contributions to those who accommodate refugees in privately owned facilities.
- RCF partners continue the assessment of accommodations where refugees are settled to identify existing gaps and advocate for the provision of required interventions.
- A site monitoring tool, outlining a systematic approach for capturing essential information about displaced communities residing collectively in various locations, is in the final stages of approval. It is expected to start rolling out before the end of June.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- A complete list of all accommodation types – both centres and host families, along with details of capacity and occupancy.

- Maintaining a database on accommodation – to be updated regularly with information on the number of collective accommodations, as well as those that are occupied, those whose rooms are available, those and which could accommodate refugees threatened with eviction.
- Partners will need to continue assisting the GoS and local authorities with the identification of the gaps and needs through assessment of accommodations.



INCLUSION AND OTHER LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Progress Update

- A coalition of NGOs (Human Rights League, Mareena, CVEK, People in Need, Foundation of Milan Šimečka), published and presented to the President and Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic a [policy paper on refugee integration](#) – “Integration of persons from Ukraine – solution proposals“. Its main goal is to assist the GoS, municipalities, and other actors in designing integration measures for persons with temporary protection from Ukraine. [Measures are being proposed in specific areas](#), which include employment, self-employment, social services, financial aid, housing, access to information legal aid, health care, education, and vocational and language trainings. The current

“OTHER LOCAL SOLUTIONS”

(EXCERPT FROM *THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES*)

100. In addition to local integration — where refugees find a durable solution to their plight — some host countries may elect to provide other local solutions to refugees. Such solutions entail interim legal stay, including to facilitate the appropriate economic, social and cultural inclusion of refugees, and are provided without prejudice to eventual durable solutions that may become available. Depending on the context and the needs identified by countries electing to provide other local solutions to refugees, States and relevant stakeholders will contribute resources and expertise, including technical guidance on legal and institutional frameworks that foster the peaceful and productive inclusion of refugees and the well-being of local communities, and to address issues such as documentation and residence permits.

- situation provides a unique chance to set up a functioning integration system for wider groups of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons; and to improve services for all refugees.
- A new integration centre was launched on 20 June by a coalition of partners in Kosice, the motto of the centre is “Integration Centre of the Kosice Region, for people fleeing war from Ukraine, for all foreigners who have chosen Kosice and its surroundings as their new home”.
- A new cooperation has started among Human Rights League, Tenenet NGO, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family on employment law counseling, which will be provided at Bottova Centre.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Partners are working closely with relevant local authorities in eastern Slovakia to identify refugees' needs beyond the emergency phase, with a view to ensuring appropriate accommodation capacity and employment prospects for refugees
- There is an increasing need for interpreters and translators with knowledge of English, Ukrainian, Russian, and Slovak. Furthermore, the capacities of the community interpreters are limited, especially in terms of skills in interpreting and translating sensitive or expert topics.



INTEGRATION
OF PEOPLE FROM UKRAINE



Progress Update

- The Inclusion sub-Working Group (IsWG) provided a platform for dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Migration Office, leading to agreement to collaborate with the civil society actors. While the Ministry of Education (MoE) is mapping capacity issues and gaps, civil society will collaborate to bring proposals to the MoE to address capacity gaps, mental health, ensuring school attendance, and pre-school activities. The IsWG will coordinate with the national authorities to prepare for the next academic year in September to ensure that refugee children and youth have access to education.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- An important protection concern that the partners identify is the absence of compulsory education for Temporary Protection holders and, more broadly, refugees who don't have permanent residence in Slovakia. Ministry of Education is in the process of mapping out capacity gaps.
- UNICEF signed a memoranda of understanding with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports (MoESRS), the National Institute for Education (NIE) and the City of Bratislava. The aim of the partnership with the MoESRS is to strengthen the support function of schools and kindergartens and create a supportive environment for integration of refugee children in pre-school, primary, and secondary education; increase social inclusion, peer relations, and institutional capacities; and to to implement and monitor the integration of Ukrainian children in the overall education system.

- The partnership with the NIE aims to develop and roll out the methodological guidance and training for preschool providers, teachers, and administrators to ensure integration of Ukrainian children into the preschool education system; as well as to print and distribute language textbooks for learning Slovak as a second language for young learners, and to implement Slovak language courses for Ukrainian teachers.
- The MoU signed with the City of Bratislava aims to establish 35 play-and-learn hubs for 700 children as well as to reach 3,000 children through provision of play-and-learn materials and psychosocial support. In addition, the partnership with the Wide Open School aims at promotion of early childhood learning in the east of Slovakia through establishment of the early childhood Play Hubs targeting 2,000 children.
- For the recognition of certificates in regulated professions (eg. medical certificates of doctors), the procedure is complicated. RCF partners stand ready to support the government in identifying and operationalizing a simplified process of recognition of diplomas and certificates.

SPOTLIGHT ON MAREENA

Mareena is a non-governmental organization which seeks to help Slovakia become a welcoming country for everyone regardless of where they come from. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has impacted Mareena and its activities significantly. While prior to war, Mareena was providing integration assistance in Bratislava, Nitra and Košice, right after the conflict had started, Mareena focused all its efforts where they were needed the most.

Since February 26th, Mareena has operated directly at the Slovak-Ukrainian borders as a point of first contact, providing information and assistance to all people crossing the borders. Simultaneously, Mareena expanded its free Slovak language courses for refugees in Bratislava and Nitra, while also organizing weekly information seminars about education or work opportunities relevant for the people who had to flee Ukraine.

Furthermore, Mareena is covering all the child services for approximately 300 Ukrainian children accommodated in Gabčíkovo, which is the largest accommodation facility for refugees in Slovakia. Working together with numerous volunteers, Mareena also organizes community activities connecting Ukrainians with local communities in Bratislava and Nitra, provides inclusion assistance in Košice and together with other NGOs, published policy recommendations for the integration of people from Ukraine in Slovakia, which were handed to the Slovak government.



HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

- The main healthcare provider to refugees is the Government of Slovakia (GoS), with support from civil society and international organizations. The GoS has decreed the scope of medical services to refugees that are fully reimbursed by the public insurance fund: under law, temporary protection status entitles an individual to “urgent” and “necessary” care. “Urgent” healthcare refers to care prompted by a sudden change in one’s state of health that directly threatens life or any basic life functions. “Necessary” healthcare is care that must be provided, considering the nature of the healthcare and the person's expected length of stay, so that the person does not have to return to his or her country earlier than originally intended for the necessary treatment; such care is provided to all individuals regardless of their

status. To date, more than 4,600 refugees have been treated in Ministry of Health facilities according to the National Health Information Centre, including 193 surgeries.

- WHO is working closely with the Health Ministry to develop a longer-term health strategy and referral mechanisms for refugees from Ukraine, to ensure sustainable access to health care.
- MHPSS partners UNHCR, UNICEF, Tenenet, Mareena and Ipčko provide a range of child protection and MHPSS services to children and their caregivers in the Blue Dot in Bratislava and through mobile outreach teams in Gabčíkovo, as well as in Košice and Prešov.
- With the reduction in new arrivals, partners providing first aid, health care, and psychological first aid services have decreased their presence at border crossing points and have re-focused support to urban areas.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Ministry of Health has confirmed that current national health system capacities can provide care for approximately 70,000 to 100,000 refugees. Currently, nearly 80,000 refugees have temporary protection status in the country. Additional support may be required if more refugees arrive.
- Refugees frequently lack information on which health services they are entitled to, and how to access them. There is also currently no system for individual referral–complaint mechanisms. Additional efforts are needed to share available information and adapt information products to meet refugees’ needs.
- Psychological first aid and stabilization services are provided at border crossing points and refugee reception centers. While these address immediate psychological needs, there is little follow-up afterwards. More advanced psychological and psychiatric support are provided by different organizations and medical facilities across Slovakia, so clear referral pathways and linkage to services are required to ensure a continuum of care.
- More broadly, there is a general lack of awareness about mental health among many Ukrainians and the topic remains stigmatized, highlighting the risk that people do not seek needed help or treatment. Further outreach would be a useful part of future mental health strategies for services targeting refugees from Ukraine.
- Finally, as regards specific health needs of child refugees, more specialized services are needed to address their urgent mental health and psychosocial support needs, and their disabilities.



- The Government of Slovakia (GoS) has taken strong leadership of the response. The GoS has adopted a generous and open approach overall. As of 1 March, it has activated the Temporary Protection Directive and has issued a series of legislative measures known under the name of *Lex Ukrajina*, a complex package of laws including the Act on asylum and the Act on residence of foreigners.

SPOTLIGHT ON HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE

*The **Human Rights League (HRL)** is a Slovak non-governmental organisation established in 2005 with the aim to provide legal aid to asylum seekers, refugees, and other third country nationals with special attention being paid to unaccompanied and separated minors.*

*Within the Slovak humanitarian response to Ukrainians, the HRL staff is providing legal aid at the border crossing point in Vyšné Nemecké, at the Railway station in Bratislava, at the Department of the Foreigners Police in Trnava (in cooperation with Law Faculty of Trnava university), via hotline (+421 800 222 350), and via a special website created together with **Mareena** and at the Assistance and Information Centre at Bottova in Bratislava. HRL is applying the holistic approach, with focus on provision of legal aid together with suggestions for legal changes to the asylum legislation.*

- A number of sector plans are under development, including a strategy for integration, a strategy for MHPSS, and an action plan on education. RCF partners can lend their expertise to inform the policy measures that will facilitate an enabling environment for refugees and their hosts and also encourage inter-governmental dialogue on refugee policy.

- For example, on 1 June, the GoS **adopted the First Action Plan to Fulfill the Strategy of Inclusive Approach in Education 2022-2024**. The Plan addresses matters such as enhanced inclusion, training, or de-stigmatization. This Plan includes the following specific action: "Create a system of measures regarding the inclusion of children from Ukraine". Furthermore, the general areas the Plan addresses are highly relevant to the

refugee response. For example, there are activities such as supporting free transportation to schools for students, or identifying children with different native languages. RCF partners will follow up with the GoS on its implementation and advocate for addressing the refugee situation through the relevant areas and activities.

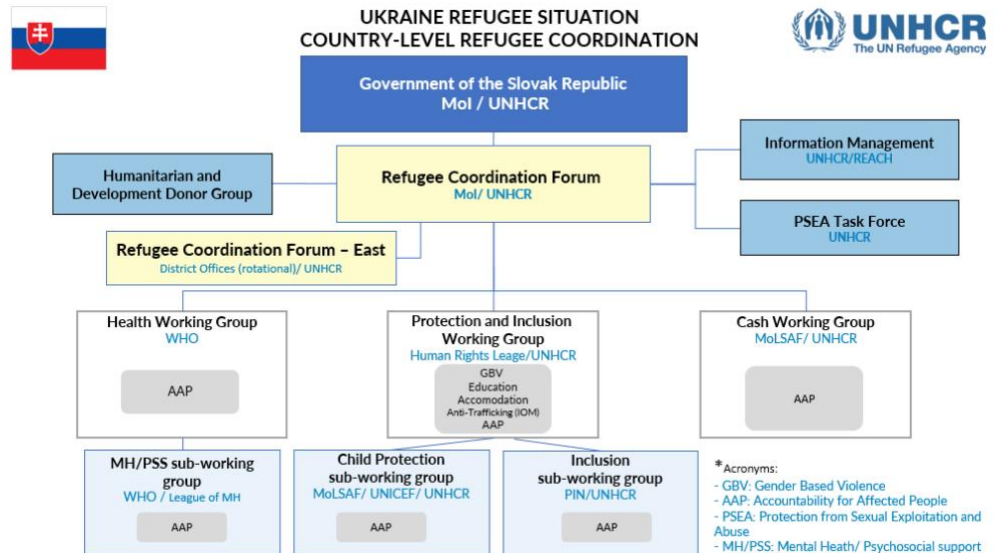
Working in partnership

UNHCR's coordination functions for refugee situations are derived from the [Office's mandate](#) as defined in the UN General Assembly resolutions and other sources of international law and policy. As the Global Compact on Refugees makes clear, this role is intended to be "supportive and catalytic" with regards to the indispensable contributions of myriad other actors that collectively comprise the refugee response in Slovakia. Along with the Government of Slovakia (GoS), UNHCR co-convenes the Refugee Coordination Forum for the Slovak Republic (RCF) – outlined below – which applies the traditional Refugee Coordination Model in alignment with the national response in Slovakia through three main elements:

- *The Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)*: Established at both the national level as well as in the east, co-chaired by the Government on the overall refugee response;
- *RCF Working Groups, sub-Working Groups and Task Forces*: Within the umbrella of the RCF, these coordination sub-fora focus on technical issues related to particular themes to maximize collective efforts on tasks such as needs assessments, planning, monitoring, reporting, and information management within and across sectors;

- *Humanitarian and development Donor Group:* This group brings together representatives of donor countries to keep them updated on the response, including on areas where their support has been instrumental and where further support is most urgent.

This mechanism is specifically designed to help the Government coordinate an inclusive, accountable, predictable, and transparent refugee response. It involves all stakeholders in collectively identifying and addressing the



most pressing needs. Partners are also actively working to broaden the support base in Slovakia, by bringing a wide array of stakeholders into the response, including private sector coalitions, while placing an important focus on capacity building of civil society, volunteer groups, and those refugee-led organizations already engaged.

- In April, the government mapped out the number of volunteers and type of services provided for refugees from Ukraine across number of districts and municipalities. The services delivered by 1,247 volunteers in 33 identified districts include primarily material assistance as well as translation, accommodation, and health assistance.
- In recognition of the RCF's contributions to the Slovak refugee response, the Government of Slovakia (GoS) has built useful linkages with its own internal coordination mechanisms. First, it created the Steering Committee for Coordination of the Humanitarian Relief Actions and invited UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, WHO and IFRC, as a high-level interface between the RCF and relevant ministries and bodies – including notably, the Central Crisis Management Board (CCMB).
- As the co-lead of the RCF, UNHCR has also been invited to join the Governments' crisis board daily meetings. In early June, the Prime Minister announced the activation of the "Steering Committee on Integration and Inclusion of Foreigners", which met for the first time on 20 June, led by the Ministry of Interior. Its Working Groups will focus on key elements of the integration process: housing, education, employment, social services, health, and data management. These new arrangements are important steps to improving how information is shared and how collective efforts can best be leveraged towards the common goal of an effective, efficient, and sustainable refugee response in Slovakia.

The Slovak Republic and the Global Compact on Refugees

A rising tide lifts all boats:

Excerpt from ***THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES***

“66. Humanitarian assistance remains needs-driven and based upon the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Wherever possible, it will be delivered in a way that benefits both refugees and host communities. This will include efforts to deliver assistance through local and national service providers where appropriate (including through multipurpose cash assistance), instead of establishing parallel systems for refugees from which host communities do not benefit over time.”

Slovakia’s refugee response provides a live example of the Global Compact on Refugees in action. As one instance, an initiative of Cash Working Group partners highlights how GCR principles can benefit refugees and host communities alike. RCF partners are providing temporary support to the Government’s own initiative to include refugees from Ukraine in the Material Needs programme of social assistance for Slovak nationals; this interagency support is designed to help bolster capacity to quickly enrol and issue cash aid to refugees and

specific categories of vulnerable third country nationals for three months. Besides the substantial benefits of helping vulnerable households make ends meet during a difficult time, this programme helps catalyze increased government capacity for its national system, millions of dollars of additional money spent in local economies, and potential knock-on effects of helping more beneficiaries increase their resilience — and therefore their capacity to become more productive members of the host communities who have welcomed them

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LINKS

[Regional data portal](#) – [Slovakia portal](#) – [Ukraine Situation RRP](#) – [Refugee Funding Tracker](#)