



DISPLACEMENT PATTERNS, PROTECTION RISKS AND NEEDS OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

Regional Protection Analysis #2

Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia

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We are grateful for the extensive involvement and support of UNHCR's partners, local authorities, civil society, international organizations and donors. Most importantly, UNHCR would like to acknowledge the resilience and strength of refugees from Ukraine, who continue to share with us their challenges, fears and hopes.

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Cover photograph:

Republic of Moldova: Ukrainian refugee, Svetlana, 83, settles into her accommodation at MoldExpo, a specially converted exhibition centre, in Chisinau, alongside her son Andre. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

Executive summary

Key findings



1 Households including at least one individual with a specific need have higher levels of socio-economic vulnerability.

22% of households contain at least one member with a specific need. These households encounter difficulties meeting their needs in host countries, leading to increased protection risks and potential influence on return decisions, even in sub-optimal conditions in Ukraine.



2 Barriers to employment and underemployment continue to be reported.

While 27% of respondents are employed, many are in low-paying jobs that do not match their qualifications, and 9% work in the informal sector, exposing them to protection risks and leaving them without social insurance. Language barriers, limited job opportunities, limited childcare and non-recognition of qualifications contribute to these challenges.



3 25% of refugee households lack at least one civil status or identity document, 30% of whom are unable to obtain a replacement in host countries.

Vulnerable groups, such as older persons, appear less able to replace missing documentation. Missing documents affects refugees' access to rights, increases risks of statelessness and may create barriers to return when conditions permit. Whilst Ukrainian authorities are taking steps to address the issue, challenges persist, including due to high demand and missing supporting documents.



4 10% of respondents will need to find new accommodation in less than three months, mainly due to the termination of free accommodation programmes.

Access to longer-term accommodation remains a key challenge in the Ukraine refugee response, limiting access to rights including education, work, and social services and increasing vulnerability to protection risks such as exploitation and human trafficking.



5 Refugees continue to face barriers in accessing social assistance.

Restrictive interpretations of the Temporary Protection Directive, insufficient capacities and waiting times all limit access. Historical barriers such as lack of information, language barriers, lack of documentation and discrimination also hinder accessibility.

Key recommendations



1 Whilst commendable efforts have been made to include refugees from Ukraine in national systems, it is crucial that the most vulnerable are not left behind. Systematic identification of persons at heightened risk at an early stage is key to supporting access to healthcare, education, employment and vocational training opportunities and other forms of social assistance.



2 Access to decent work remains a key need. Existing barriers to decent employment need to be addressed - upskilling courses, intensive language training and facilitating skills recognition will help facilitate transition into sustainable employment commensurate with a person's education level. Refugees also require systematic access to information about their rights and entitlements in the labour market, including how to identify potentially exploitative labour practices.



3 Refugees' access to civil status and identity documents in host countries requires further support. Groups at heightened risk including older persons and persons with disabilities require additional support to access services for replacing documentation.



4 Transitions from emergency accommodation to longer term solutions must be carefully managed, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Mapping vulnerable groups which may be most impacted by these transitions and ensuring their continued inclusion in accommodation programmes or providing bridging support whilst their inclusion in employment and national systems is pursued will be key to mitigating potential risks which may rise.



5 Addressing barriers to social protection programmes continues to be vital to meet refugees' basic needs and support protection outcomes as humanitarian resources diminish. Short-term solutions include technical assistance, development cooperation and monitoring inclusion. Longer-term solutions include strengthening social security agreements and portability mechanisms between Ukraine and refugee-hosting countries and developing scalable social assistance mechanisms as part of contingency planning.



6 States require support to further develop capacities in housing, social assistance, education and other areas – not only for the benefit of refugees from Ukraine, but for all in need of these services.

Context

The war in Ukraine has caused millions of people to flee, with over 4.9 million registering for temporary or equivalent national protection schemes in Europe.

Since the onset of the crisis, UNHCR has been closely monitoring the protection situation of refugees from Ukraine and has conducted studies on the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), alongside establishing protection monitoring systems in countries neighboring Ukraine.

A revised protection monitoring questionnaire was used to complete 17,708 interviews in Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia between

October 2022 and mid-February 2023. This report analyses this data, alongside results of focus group discussions with refugee communities and data from other exercises conducted by UNHCR and partners (border monitoring data, intentions surveys, Multi Sector Needs Assessments). The results are intended to provide an update on the results of UNHCR's [2022 protection monitoring report](#) on the situation of refugees from Ukraine, as well as a partial update of UNHCR's report '[The Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive: Six Months On](#)'.



*Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))

Methodology

UNHCR conducts protection monitoring to systematically gather information on the challenges facing refugees and other populations of concern. Protection monitoring allows UNHCR to conduct evidence-based programming and advocacy, based on the experiences and perspectives of refugee communities.

UNHCR and its partners implemented a Protection Profiling and Monitoring exercise to regularly collect and analyze data about the protection situation of refugees from Ukraine and monitor changes over time. Interviews are conducted in different locations, including border and transit locations, reception and transit centres, collective sites, and information and assistance points. Trained enumerators digitally collect data through Kobo Toolbox, which is safely stored in a UNHCR server. Respondents are identified in the selected locations and asked for their consent to be interviewed using a harmonized regional questionnaire.

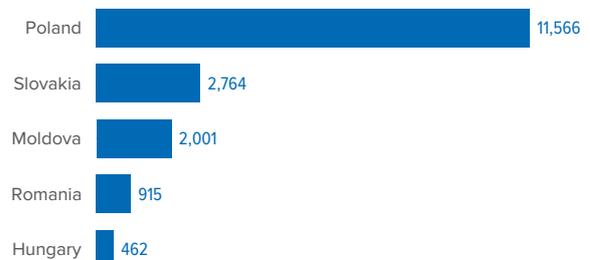
The results presented in this report must be interpreted according to the limitations of the methodology and the context, particularly:

- While the random selection of respondents and diversification in places of data collection are used to reduce potential bias and ensure the sample covers different segments and profiles of

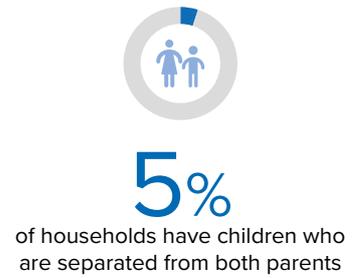
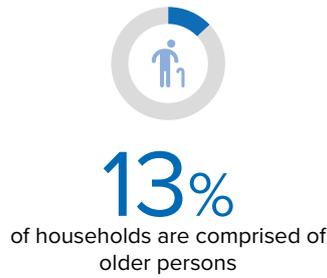
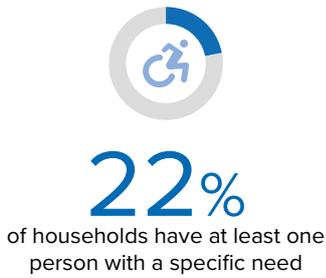
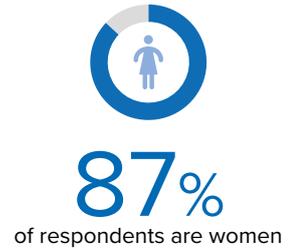
the target population, results cannot necessarily be extrapolated to the population of refugees from Ukraine as a whole, given the non-probabilistic sampling method used.

- Considering ongoing population movements and given that the distribution of number of interviews per country reflects in general the distribution of total estimated number of refugees from Ukraine recorded in the selected countries, country samples have not been weighted for this regional analysis.
- The results reflect refugees' situation and needs at the time of data collection, which may subsequently change depending on a wide range of factors.

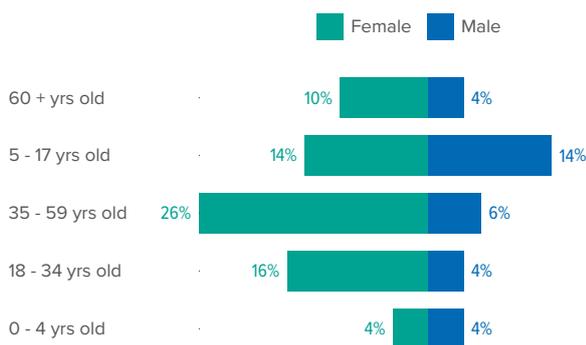
RESPONDENTS BY COUNTRY



Demographic profiles

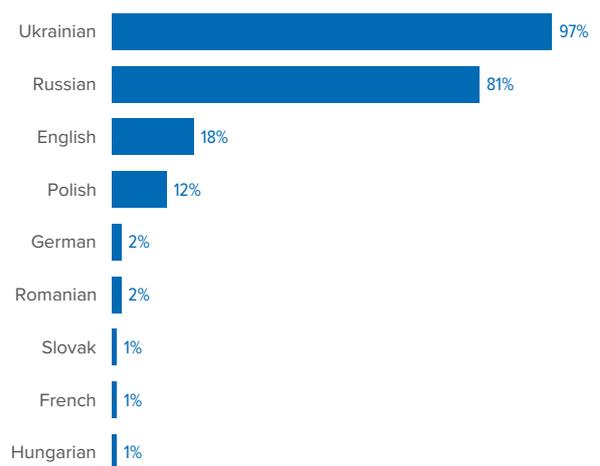


HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER



Including the respondent

TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN

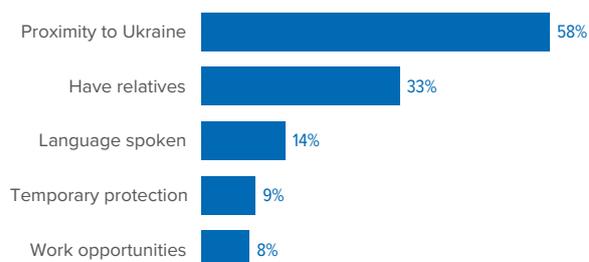


Multiple responses were possible. So percentages can go over 100% when added

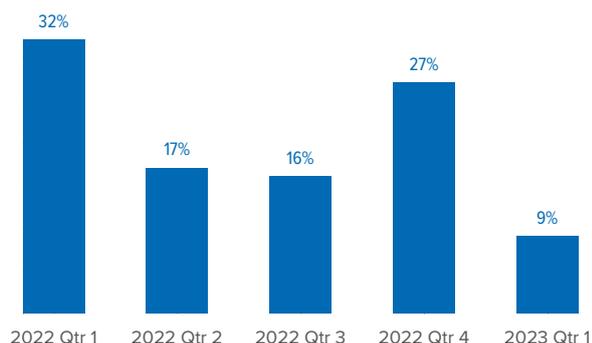
Displacement patterns

Most respondents arrived in host countries during the first quarter of 2022 and largely originated from Kyivska, Kharkivska and Odeska. The majority, 58% of respondents, cited proximity to Ukraine as the main reason for choosing to move to their current host country, followed by the desire to reunite with family and friends (33%). The language spoken in the host country is also reported as a motivating factor by 14% of respondents, with a higher proportion in Moldova.

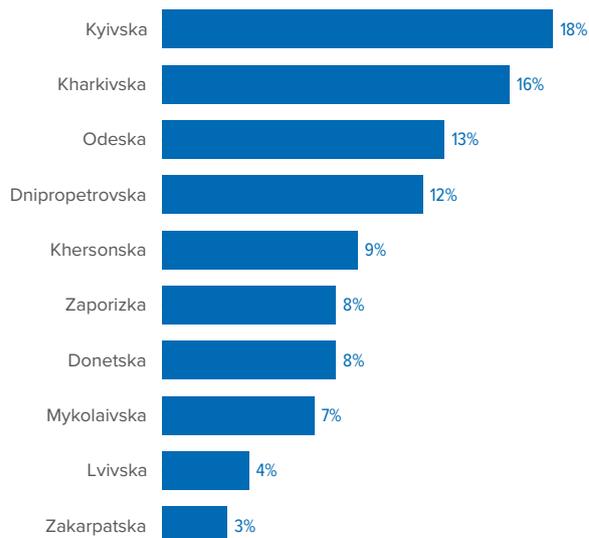
TOP FIVE REASONS FOR CHOOSING HOST COUNTRY



DATE OF ARRIVAL TO THE CURRENT HOST COUNTRY



TOP OBLASTS OF ORIGIN



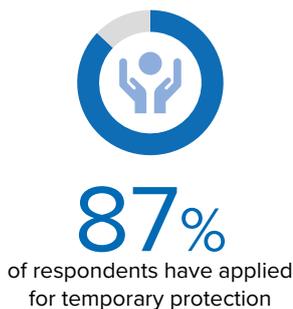
Due to rounding, some percent totals do not add up to 100%

Access to territory and temporary protection

Registration for temporary protection¹

On 4 March 2022, the EU Council triggered the application of the Temporary Protection Directive for an initial period of one year, which has since been extended for another year, until 4 March 2024. The implementation of the Directive has ensured refugees' swift access to legal status and associated rights.

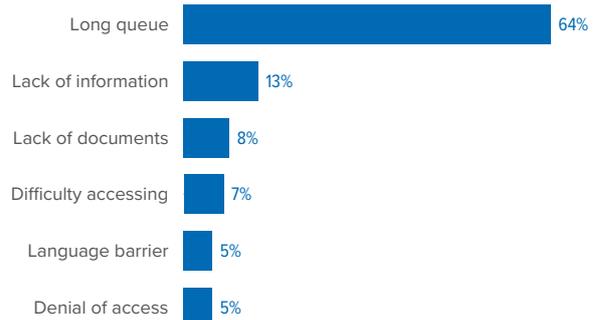
The vast majority, 87% of respondents, have registered for temporary protection – 96% of whom have received a positive decision. Only 4% of respondents faced challenges during the application process, mainly due to long queues and lack of information about the registration process.



This indicates that registration systems are efficient, and measures taken by states to expedite the process, including digitalization of registration procedures, have had a positive impact.

Out of the 13% of respondents who have not registered for temporary protection, 45% plan to register while 55% do not intend to register. Those in Hungary who do not intend to register for temporary protection mainly reported having applied for a residence permit instead, while those in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia mainly intend to move onwards.

TOP APPLICATION CHALLENGES



Moldova activates temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine

Effective from 1 March 2023, the Republic of Moldova activated temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine. UNHCR has [welcomed](#) the decision as an important step in ensuring refugees' access to rights and legal status. UNHCR will closely monitor the practical implementation of this temporary protection regime.

1. Findings for this section relate to Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary only

Access to temporary protection

UNHCR has identified an increasingly complex picture regarding the ability of refugees from Ukraine to access surrounding countries, particularly for third country nationals. Whilst the open-door and flexible approach adopted by States from the early days of the crisis remains in most cases, UNHCR has identified cases of third country nationals who should qualify for TP under the Council implementing decision (including recognized refugees and documented stateless persons from Ukraine), who have been denied permission to enter neighbouring countries.

UNHCR has also documented complexities for Ukrainian nationals holding non-biometric passports to move freely within the EU and reunite with family members in other states, in certain cases.

UNHCR continues to identify cases of refugees who are refused permission to register for temporary protection on the basis that they had previously registered in another EU Member State, despite European Commission guidance to the contrary.² This can negatively affect refugees' ability to reunite with family members and can create a state of legal uncertainty for those who cannot access protection effectively. This also risks undermining the agreement between EU Member States to not apply Article 11 of the Temporary Protection Directive on take back requests, which prohibits free movement within the EU.³

Poland: Refugee from Ukraine Katerina (40) holding her son Arsen (2). Katerina and her family (3 children and husband) live at a collective centre in Krakow with 400 other refugees from Ukraine.. © UNHCR/Anna Liminowicz



2. European Commission, 'Frequently asked Questions on the interpretation of the Temporary Protection Directive and Council Implementing Decision 2022/382' available at https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/Frequently%20asked%20questions%20received%20on%20the%20interpretation%20of%20the%20Temporary%20Protection%20Directive%20and%20Council%20Implementing%20Decision%202022-382_en.pdf
3. "A Member State shall take back a person with temporary protection on its territory if the person remains on or seeks to enter without authorisation onto the territory of another Member State during the period covered by the Council Decision referred to in Article 5. Member States may, on the basis of a bilateral agreement, decide that this article should not apply."

Temporary visits to Ukraine and impact on temporary protection

Since arriving in host countries, 24% of respondents have temporarily returned to Ukraine, primarily to visit relatives who remained behind, obtain documents and to check on property. Out of those who returned, 7% reported experiencing challenges upon their return, mainly due to deactivation of temporary protection status, difficulty crossing back into the host country and suspension of benefits previously enjoyed in the country of asylum.

Comparatively, most of the respondents who encountered difficulties re-entering their host country after a temporary visit to Ukraine are in Poland – with the majority reporting that their temporary protection status and PESEL UKR, which grants them access to benefits, had been deactivated because of their absence. Following legislative changes in Poland, any departure of a citizen of Ukraine for a period of more than thirty days deprives them of the right to stay in Poland as a temporary protection holder, with some exceptions.⁴ Whilst there is a possibility to reactivate temporary protection status should refugees be granted permission to re-enter Poland, UNHCR has observed that there is increasing confusion among

refugees around the reasons for deactivation, its consequences and the procedures to reactivate status based on the provisions of the law.⁵ There is also an absence of a formal notification, with some refugees only discovering the deactivation of their status when they are denied access to social assistance.⁶

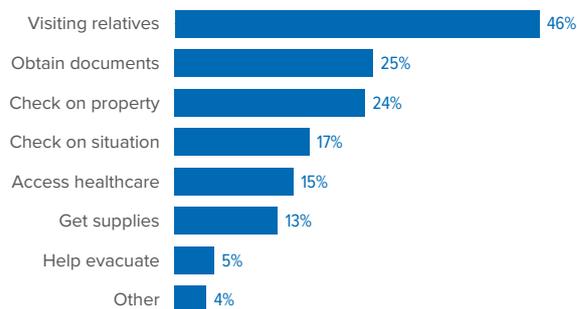
European Commission guidance states that ‘short visits’ to Ukraine do not lead to the loss of temporary protection and calls on States to refrain from implementing measures that would deter people from returning, including by stipulating ‘unreasonable periods of absence’.⁷ In Moldova, under the recently activated temporary protection regime for refugees from Ukraine, cumulative absence from the country for more than 45 days will result in cessation of temporary protection. [UNHCR has continuously advocated](#) for the temporary protection status of refugees who return to Ukraine to be unaffected in the event of a visit lasting less than three months to avoid administrative hurdles and facilitate access to rights under temporary protection should individuals need to return to host states at a later point.



24%

of respondents have temporarily visited Ukraine

MAIN REASONS FOR TEMPORARY VISIT



- UNHCR Poland (2023), Protection Monitoring Brief #2 available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99574>
- UNHCR Poland (2023). Protection Monitoring Brief #2 available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99574>
- UNHCR Poland (2023). Protection Monitoring Brief #2 available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99574>
- European Commission (2022), Frequently asked questions on going home to Ukraine on a voluntary basis in the context of the Temporary Protection Directive available at https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20on%20going%20home%20to%20Ukraine%20on%20a%20voluntary%20basis%20in%20the%20context%20of%20the%20Temporary%20Protection_en.pdf

Access to documentation

25% of respondents reported that at least one of their family members had an expired or missing civil status/identity document. The most commonly missing document was a biometric passport (21%), followed by a non-biometric passport (5%) and an internal passport (2%). Additionally, 3% of respondents reported that at least one household member did not possess any documentation.

30% of those missing a document report that they are unable to obtain a replacement in host countries, with a considerably high percentage in Slovakia (80%). This is likely because, until recently, refugees in Slovakia had to travel to Poland to renew/replace their biometric passports. Beginning from 1 February 2023, however, Ukrainian diplomatic/consular institutions in Slovakia have started issuing biometric passports.

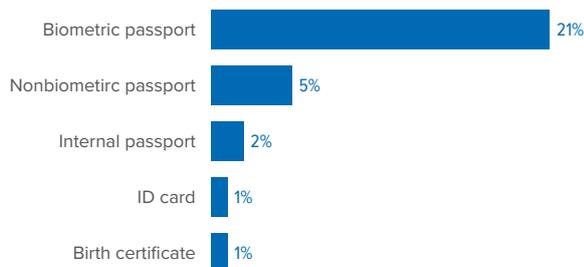
The requirement to present supporting documents is a major barrier for refugees to replace missing civil documentation. Some refugees have been asked to return to Ukraine to retrieve necessary documents, which is also supported by protection monitoring data. Of those respondents who temporarily visited Ukraine, 25% of them returned to obtain documentation. This requirement is especially difficult for stateless persons and Roma community members, who may not have any

documents prior to their displacement from Ukraine. The inability to afford associated fees and long processing times are also commonly reported barriers to replacing missing documents, with the issuance of biometric passports by Ukrainian diplomatic/consular institutions possibly taking up to six months in some cases.

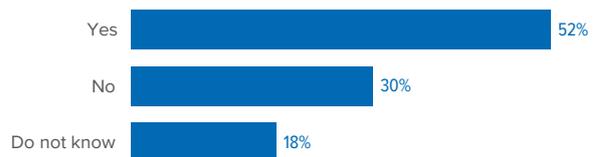
The absence of civil status and identity documents greatly restricts the ability of refugees to exercise their rights, such as education, work, social services, and freedom of movement. UNHCR has [previously reported](#) that reliable access to civil documentation is likely to become a pressing concern for many refugees to ensure they continue to access their rights and services. The absence of such documentation can also create obstacles to return and increase the risk of statelessness.

It is important to note that the Ukrainian authorities have taken measures to enable refugees to access documentation, including allowing Ukrainian diplomatic institutions abroad to issue and replace civil status documents. Measures such as extending biometric passports and issuing new identity documents have also been implemented. However, challenges remain due to limited appointment slots and long processing times, likely due to high demand and capacity constraints.

TOP MISSING DOCUMENTS



ABILITY TO REPLACE DOCUMENTS IN HOST COUNTRIES



The protection situation of persons with specific needs

22% of assessed households reported at least one family member with specific needs, such as disabilities and serious medical conditions, with a higher percentage in Hungary. Previous [research](#) by UNHCR demonstrated that persons with specific needs face increased obstacles to accessing their rights under the TPD, partly due to a lack of systematic identification procedures in host

countries. Protection monitoring data also indicates that households with members with specific needs experience greater challenges and vulnerability in meeting their socio-economic needs. As the displacement period extends, the vulnerability of these households may increase, impacting decisions to return to Ukraine even in sub-optimal conditions.

Persons with disabilities

12% of respondents reported at least one household member with a disability. A higher proportion of households with a person with a disability (PWD) reported difficulties accessing healthcare (39%) as compared to other households (23%), predominantly due to long waiting times. Moreover, in contrast to other households surveyed, a higher portion of households with a PWD are missing their biometric passport (27%). Persons with disabilities may face increased challenges to replace missing documentation due difficulties reaching locations where these services are offered, among other factors.

Protection monitoring data indicates that, as compared to other households surveyed, households with a PWD are likely to reside in collective sites (24%), with relatives (13%) and hostels by provided government (12%) rather than in rented accommodation, indicating more limited access to financial resources. Prejudice against persons with cognitive disabilities is additionally cited as a barrier for families searching for housing.⁸

8. UNHCR (2023), Risks of Gender Based Violence (GBV), and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), Relating to Private and Collective Accommodation, Livelihoods, and Accessibility, for Persons Fleeing Ukraine (Poland)

Data also indicates that households with a PWD are slightly less likely than other households to have access to long-term housing. 13% of households with at least one person with a disability reported the need to find an alternative accommodation in less than three months, mainly due to the ending of free accommodation programs. Even when accommodation is available, however, it is often not adapted to the needs of PWD. For instance, among assessed accommodation sites in Slovakia, only 34% are found to be accessible for persons with disabilities.⁹

51% of respondents, between 18 to 59 years, from households with at least one person with a disability have a higher-level education, bachelors and above, a level which is comparable to other households (54%). However, the rate of employment

among respondents from households with at least one PWD is significantly lower (21%) as compared to other households (34%). This, inter alia, suggests the unavailability of work opportunities that factor in the circumstances of PWD as well as possible caring responsibilities of other household members. During focus group discussions, some PWDs have highlighted the unsuitability of available work opportunities, as most are physically demanding.

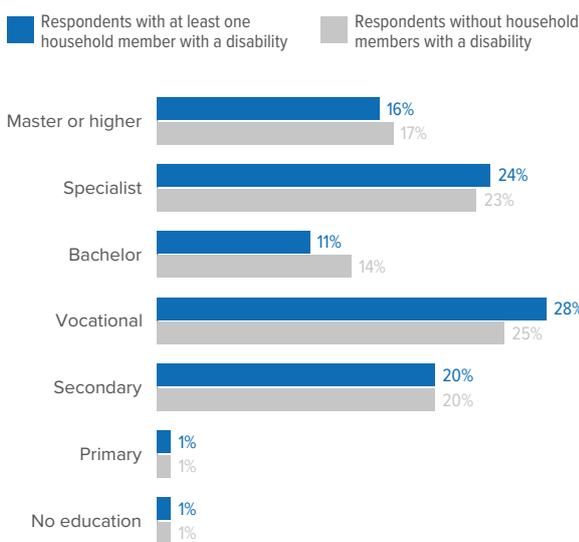
Likely driven by limited access to the labour market and services, households with PWD often struggle to meet their basic needs. Of those surveyed, 94% have urgent needs, substantially higher than other households (86%). Their top priority needs include healthcare (65%), material assistance (59%) and food (39%).



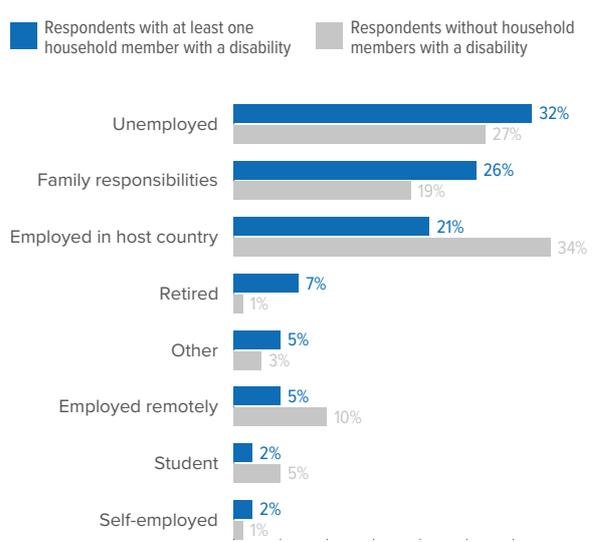
12%

of respondents reported having at least one household member with a disability

EDUCATION LEVEL



EMPLOYMENT IN HOST COUNTRIES



The education and employment levels of respondents aged 18 to 59 years

9. UNHCR Slovakia (2022), Protection Brief, [Document - Slovakia : Protection Brief - May - October 2022 \(unhcr.org\)](https://www.unhcr.org/slovakia/protection-brief-may-october-2022)

Older persons

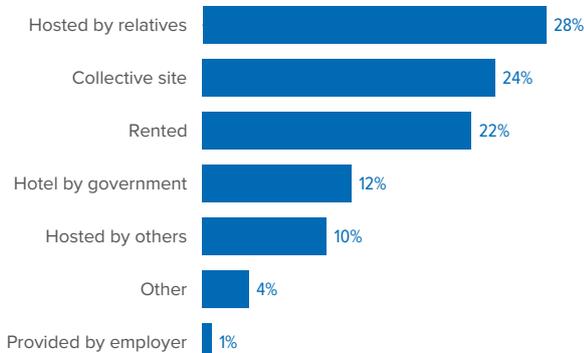
Some 13% of households are comprised of one or more older persons, aged 60 years or more. Households comprised of one or more older persons reported higher levels of serious medical conditions (37%) and disability (21%) than average. Households comprised of older persons also reported a higher percentage of household members who are unable to replace missing or expired civil status and identity documents than average (39%). This may reflect increased challenges in accessing information on how to replace documents or reaching locations where such services are provided.

The vast majority, 82% of older persons surveyed, are retired. Per [UNHCR's intentions study](#), most older persons rely on their pensions from Ukraine (60%) and social protection or cash assistance in the host country (46%) to sustain themselves, indicating limited sources of income among these households. Data from protection monitoring also identifies that households comprised of older persons are more likely to reside in collective sites (25%) or be hosted by relatives (28%) and less likely to be renting their own accommodation than average, likely a reflection of the higher level of economic vulnerability of such households.

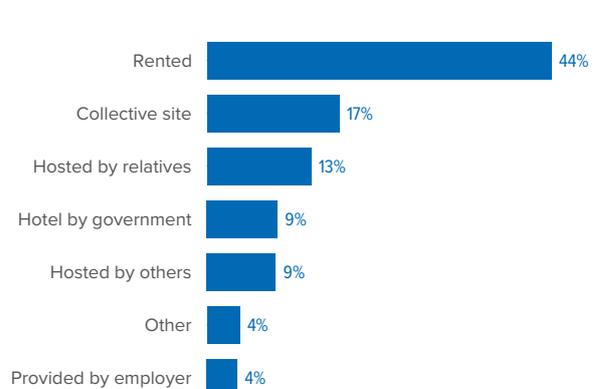
Likely due to their limited sources of income and health conditions, many older persons struggle to meet their basic needs. 92% of households comprised of older persons reported having urgent needs, slightly higher than other households (86%). These challenges are potentially impacting return decisions made by this group; UNHCR's intentions report identified that households comprised of one or more older persons were more likely to report plans to return to Ukraine in the next three months, likely associated with their vulnerability profile and challenges in sustaining themselves in host countries.

Despite requiring a high level of support for themselves, older persons are at times the sole providers for their families. For instance, 7% of households comprised of older persons reported having children, of whom 52% are separated from both parents. Given their heightened vulnerability, taking on caretaker responsibilities further reduces older persons' ability to meet their basic needs. Persons cared for by older persons are also more likely to have unmet needs. Households of older persons with children therefore require targeted interventions and support.

CURRENT ACCOMMODATION OF HOUSEHOLDS COMPRISED OF OLDER PERSONS



CURRENT ACCOMMODATION OF HOUSEHOLDS NOT COMPRISED OF OLDER PERSONS



Access to rights in host countries

Access to accommodation

Approximately 28% of refugees surveyed cited accommodation as one of their top three priority needs, mostly due to a shortage of affordable housing, landlords' preference for long-term tenants and soaring rental prices. Focus group discussions with refugees also highlighted problems with accessing housing markets for households with children.

At the beginning of the crisis, States introduced various programs, ranging from providing housing in State run accommodation centers to granting financial assistance to families hosting refugees. Refugees have highlighted the critical importance of these programs in ensuring their access to housing. However, many of these programs are coming to an end or eligibility to access them is becoming more restrictive.

Against this background, 10% of respondents reported that they will need to find an alternative accommodation in less than three months, predominantly due to the termination of free accommodation programs – mostly in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The largest portion of refugees who need to leave their accommodation in

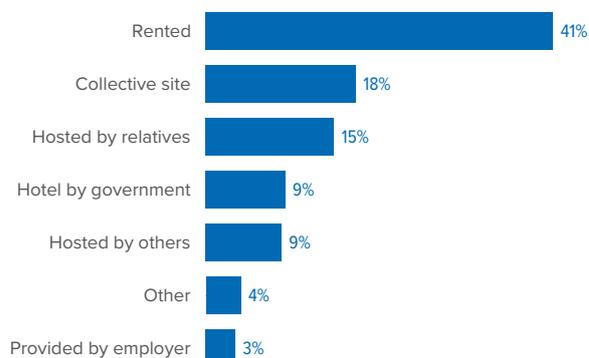
under three months are in collective sites and government provided hostels, highlighting the relatively precarious nature of these accommodation arrangements. Refugees in collective sites also frequently report overcrowding, lack of privacy and adequate cooking space. Focus group discussions highlighted the likely significant impact on members of the Roma community as free accommodation programmes end, due to large numbers residing in collective shelters, the inability of community members to afford rent and discrimination within the housing market.

Albeit to a lesser degree, refugees renting accommodation are also impacted. Among the 41% of respondents renting accommodation, 4% will be forced to leave their current accommodation in less than three months, primarily due to inability to afford rent (23%) and the ending of free accommodation programs (17%), mostly offered in the form of rental subsidies. As the war in Ukraine continues, refugee families increasingly report exhausting their savings, which will likely increase the number of families at risk of eviction due to their inability to pay rent and spiraling utility costs.

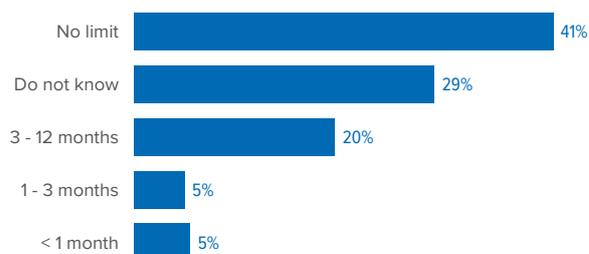
UNHCR has additionally identified a number of risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) relating to private and collective accommodation in Hungary and Poland. Refugees reported both a sense of obligation and tacit expectation to 'give back' to landlords hosting them in private accommodation, ranging from expectations of care-work to romantic or sexual exchanges. Overall, a lack of vetting and monitoring systems for private hosts and/or landlords, contributed to violence risks, as well as fear among refugees.¹⁰

As UNHCR has [previously reported](#), a lack of longer-term housing has had a multifaceted impact on refugees' ability to exercise their other rights including education, work, and social protection. For instance, some respondents reported being unable to enroll their children in schools owing to lack of registered address and repeated relocations.¹¹ Moreover, the lack of stable housing options amplifies refugees' vulnerability to various protection risks, including exploitation and human trafficking, as well as potentially contributing to premature decisions to return to Ukraine.

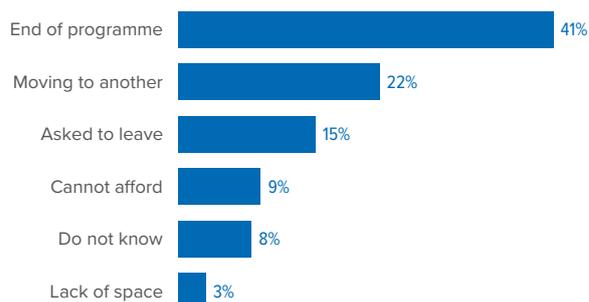
CURRENT ACCOMMODATION



LENGTH OF STAY IN THE CURRENT ACCOMMODATION



MAIN REASONS FOR HAVING TO LEAVE ACCOMMODATION WITHIN 3 MONTHS



Multiple responses were possible. So percentages can go over 100% when added

10. UNHCR (2023), Risks of Gender Based Violence (GBV), and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), Relating to Private and Collective Accommodation, Livelihoods, and Accessibility, for Persons Fleeing Ukraine (Hungary)

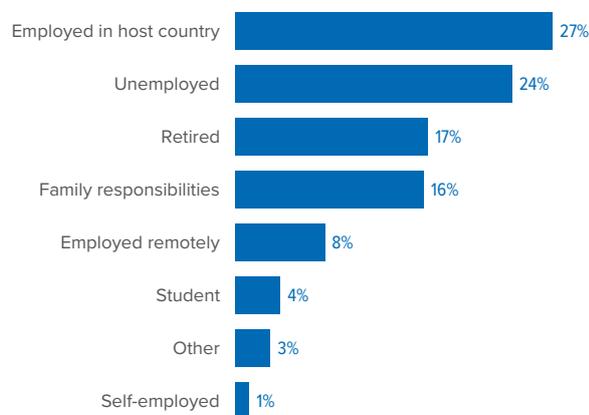
11. UNHCR Poland (2023), Protection Monitoring Brief #2 available at [Document - Poland Protection Monitoring Brief #2 \(August to November 2022\) \(unhcr.org\)](#)

Access to work

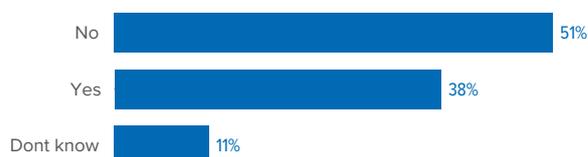
Employment remains one of the most pressing concerns for refugees – with 34% of respondents counting it among their top three priority needs. Of those interviewed, 27% of respondents reported being employed in host countries, whilst 8% reported working remotely and 1% self-employed. However, focus group discussions with refugees revealed that many are underemployed, engaged in low paying jobs that are far below their qualifications. Even with jobs, many refugees thus continue to struggle to meet their basic needs. Of those employed in host countries, 82% reported having urgent needs, mostly for material assistance (47%), food (27%) and even employment (30%).

As [previously reported](#) by UNHCR, language barriers are often reported as a barrier to accessing employment. Lack of decent work opportunities is another major contributing factor to refugees' unemployment in host countries and is compounded by difficulties refugees encounter with getting their qualifications recognized, with a higher proportion of refugees facing this obstacle identified in Moldova. Lack of access to childcare is also reported as an important impediment, particularly by single mothers. Among households who have infants aged 0 to 4 years old, 51% do not have access to childcare services.

CURRENT ACTIVITY IN THE HOST COUNTRY

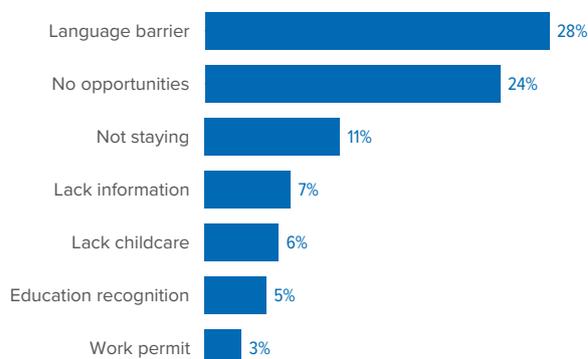


ACCESS TO CHILDCARE FOR FAMILIES WITH INFANTS (0 – 4 YEARS OLD)



Refugees have also reported practices which may amount to labour exploitation. During focus group discussions, some refugees reported being asked to work long hours or earning low salaries as compared to employees from hosting countries.¹² A recent study conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on the situation of refugees from Ukraine reported that 3 in 10 respondents experienced some form of labour exploitation at work.¹³ There are risks that exploitative working arrangements and informal employment may increase, especially if refugees are not systematically informed of their rights and entitlements and are not able to access advice and avenues for complaint should they experience challenges.

MAIN REASONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT



*Note: Out of those who indicated being unemployed
Due to rounding, some percent totals do not add up to 100%*

12. UNHCR Romania & REACH, Constanta area based assesement (July to August 2022) available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97698>

13. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights . (n.d.). Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced People's Experiences in the EU available at [Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europr.eu)

Access to healthcare

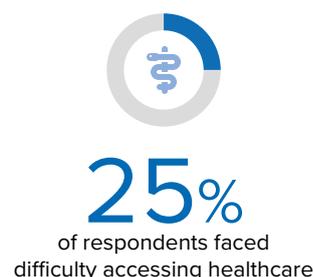
Some 25% of refugees surveyed had difficulty accessing healthcare, with the largest proportions recorded in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The main barriers to healthcare remain similar to those identified in UNHCR's [previous research](#), including long waiting times due to lack of capacity within the health system, language barriers and inability to afford medical and associated fees, including transportation costs.

Out of the 25% of respondents who faced difficulty accessing healthcare, 67% reported long waiting times as the main limiting factor. In Poland, because of long waiting periods, some refugees reported traveling back to Ukraine to access medical care.¹⁴ The limited capacity of health facilities is a challenge that predates the Ukraine crisis in many of the countries monitored. As UNHCR has [previously recommended](#), the integration of healthcare professionals from refugee communities into national healthcare systems would benefit both host and refugee communities, through enhancing health system capacities, addressing language barriers, facilitating information exchange and building trust.

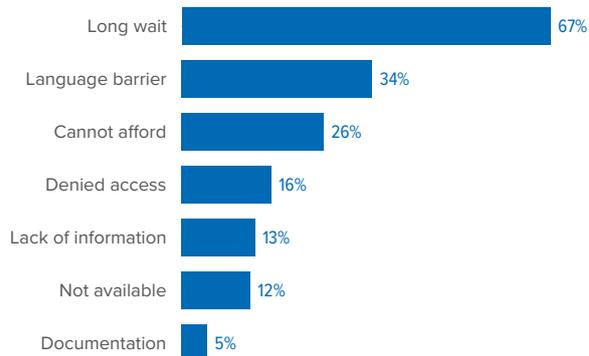
Language barriers are identified as the second important impediment limiting refugees access to healthcare, primarily in Hungary and Romania. The need to upscale and expand translation services to facilitate access to healthcare remains a key need, including in Slovakia, where the lack of organizations providing free translation services in health facilities has been identified as a challenge.¹⁵ The unaffordability of medical and associated fees is also reported as a barrier by 26% of respondents who faced difficulty accessing healthcare, proportionally high in Moldova. In general, refugees in Moldova report adequate access to primary and urgent care – but frequently report difficulty accessing secondary care and certain medications

due to high costs. Inability to afford medical fees and associated costs is also routinely reported by refugees in Romania and Slovakia.

Denial of access by medical facilities has also been reported as a barrier by 16% of refugees who reported difficulty accessing healthcare, mostly in Hungary and Slovakia. Access denial is largely attributed to limited awareness of applicable legal/policy frameworks guaranteeing refugees' rights to healthcare. For instance, in Slovakia, refugees from Ukraine are legally entitled to emergency medical care. However, refugees often report being denied access, primarily due to lack of clarity on what constitutes emergency healthcare as well as limited awareness of their entitlements to healthcare among medical professionals.



MAIN DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING HEALTHCARE SYSTEM



Note: out of those who indicated experiencing difficulties accessing healthcare. Multiple responses were possible. So percentages can go over 100% when added

14. UNHCR Poland (2022), Protection Monitoring Brief #1, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97143>

15. UNHCR Slovakia (2022), Protection Brief, [Document - Slovakia : Protection Brief - May - October 2022 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

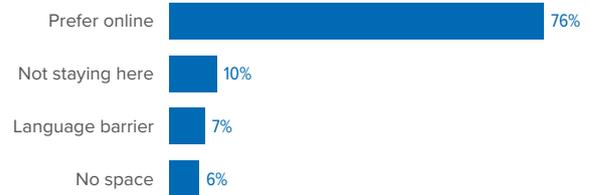
Access to education

Among assessed households, 45% have school aged children between five to 17 years. Of these, 44% reported having at least one child who is not enrolled in school in host States. The majority, 76% of respondents, cited a preference to study the Ukrainian curriculum online as the main reason for not enrolling their children in host countries. However, focus group discussions revealed various factors why families opt for online studies, including language barriers, curriculum differences between Ukraine and host States and long distances to schools, particularly for refugees residing in rural areas. Moreover, in two of the countries where the percentage of respondents who report out-of-school children is higher (80% in Romania and 70% Moldova), refugee children only attend classes as guest pupils or “audience members” and are not formally registered – discouraging families from enrolling their children.¹⁶

In certain cases, children attend both online courses in Ukrainian curriculum and in-person classes in host countries. This is partly because, in some countries, the enrollment of children of a certain age is compulsory. This also poses challenges; during focus group discussions, children highlighted feeling overburdened and having difficulty juggling online and in-person classes.

Some refugee children also struggle to follow online classes, mostly due to lack of computers and limited access to the internet. For children attending online classes, there is also limited opportunity to socialize, increasing feelings of isolation.

MAIN REASONS FOR NOT ENROLLING CHILDREN IN HOST COUNTRY SCHOOL



Republic of Moldova: On 31 October 2022, UNHCR together with UNICEF established a Blue Dot Safe Space, Protection and Support Hub in Galați, near the Eastern border with Ukraine. © UNHCR/Caroline Bach

16. UNHCR Moldova, participatory assessment (February 2023), UNHCR Romania & REACH, Constanta area based assessment (July to August 2022) available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97698>

Access to social protection

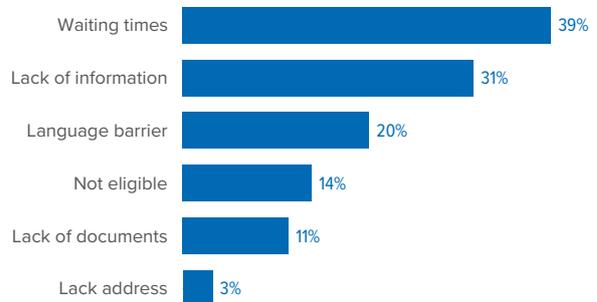
According to UNHCR's third intentions survey, 32% of refugees from Ukraine reported social assistance as one of their income sources. However, many refugees do not have access to the full range of benefits available to citizens, including due to government capacity constraints and lack of permanent residence, which is a pre-condition to access certain social protection schemes in some countries.

Among refugees who experienced challenges accessing social protection, the most commonly reported barrier is long waiting times, mainly due to cumbersome administrative processes. Barriers such as lack of information on available benefits and how to access them, complicated and lengthy administrative processes and language barriers also continue to hinder refugees access to social protection.

Ukrainian refugees' access to social assistance in Moldova is unique amongst hosting countries. Until the activation of the Temporary Protection Regime on March 1, 2023, emergency laws were adopted to facilitate refugees' access to rights, but these laws did not provide access to social protection. Under the current temporary protection law, social assistance is only limited to certain groups of refugees and to a reduced number of government programmes compared to laws governing the asylum systems. Moreover, effective access requires system strengthening and additional resources. At the time of writing, therefore, vulnerable refugees in Moldova mostly rely on humanitarian cash assistance, subsidies, and other forms of in-kind assistance.



MAIN DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING PUBLIC SOCIAL PROTECTION



Multiple responses were possible. So percentages can go over 100% when added

Urgent needs

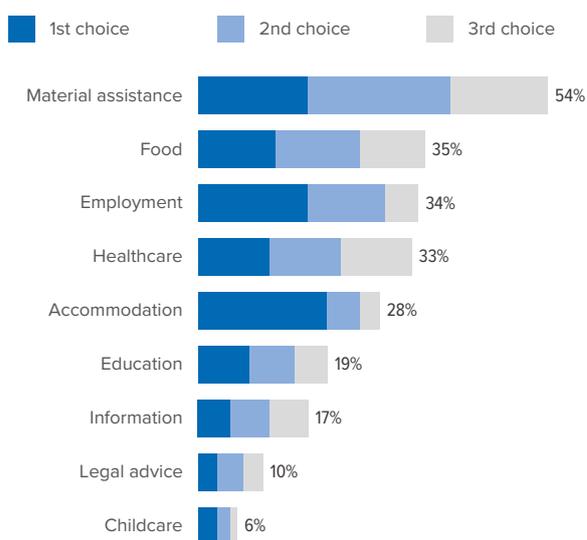
87% of respondents reported at least one urgent need, with material assistance being the most common (54%), followed by food (35%), employment (34%), healthcare (33%), and accommodation (28%). Urgent needs vary based on household and accommodation types. As compared to others, households comprised of older persons reported having a higher need for food and healthcare. Refugees living with host families reported a higher need for food, while those in collective sites and government-provided hostels reported a higher need for accommodation.



81%

of respondents with urgent needs prefer cash as a modality of assistance

TOP 10 URGENT NEEDS



Multiple responses were possible. So percentages can go over 100% when



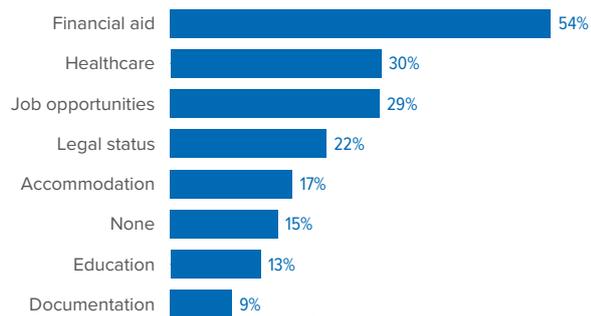
Poland: Refugees at UNHCR's cash enrolment centre in Krakow Tauron Arena. © UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa

Information needs

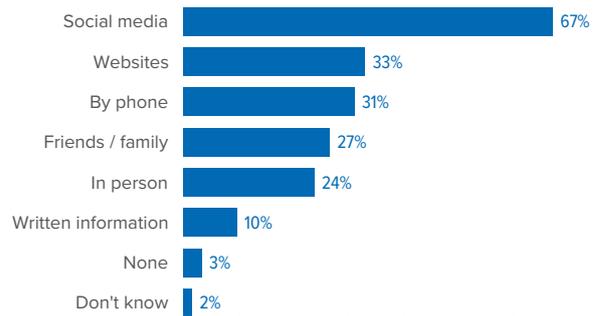
Similar to previous protection monitoring data, financial aid, healthcare, and job opportunities are top information needs. Depending on household composition, the area of information needs slightly varied; for instance, information on access to healthcare is a higher need amongst households with older persons, whilst the need for information on employment opportunities is greater among households comprised of adults with or without dependents.

The most preferred communication mediums continue to be social media (67%) and websites (33%). For older persons, however, the preferred information channel is communication by phone. Focus group discussion with Roma refugees also revealed that many women cannot read and/or do not own electronic devices such as phones and tablets, rendering both written and digitally presented information inaccessible to them.¹⁷ For these groups, the most trusted information sources are Roma community mediators.¹⁸

TOP INFORMATION NEEDS



PREFERRED INFORMATION CHANNEL



17. UNHCR Moldova, participatory assessment (February 2023)

18. UNHCR Moldova, participatory assessment (February 2023)

DISPLACEMENT PATTERNS, PROTECTION RISKS AND NEEDS OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

Regional Protection Analysis #2

Hungary, Poland, Republic of
Moldova, Romania and Slovakia

APRIL 2023



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<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>