



# Romania

December 2023

Since the start of the international armed conflict in Ukraine which has forced some 5.9 million people to flee their homes to seek safety, protection, and assistance across Europe, more than 5.1 million border crossings into Romania have been recorded. The Government and partners including civil society, the private sector, volunteers, and international organisations have responded to the crisis with generosity and hospitality.

UN agencies and NGOs, support the national response in coordination of humanitarian actors under the framework of the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) and through the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) and sector working groups. The 2023 Romania RRP is aligned with the Government National Plan of Measures (NPM) for the protection and socio-economic inclusion of refugees from Ukraine.

UNHCR leads the Inter-Agency platform comprising of 34 appealing partners implementing humanitarian activities for the refugees from Ukraine. During December, after consultations with high-level government officials and members of the sectoral working groups, the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit finalised the RRP 2024 narrative and submitted the document for a final review.

## KEY FIGURES\* (as of 31 December 2023)

**5.9 M**

refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe

**5.3 M**

border crossings from Ukraine and Moldova into Romania

**85,710**

refugees from Ukraine present in Romania

**150,547**

refugees obtained temporary protection in Romania

**57%**

of refugees with temporary protection are women and girls

## 2023 REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN (RRP) FOR THE UKRAINE SITUATION\*\*

**USD 153.6 M**

Financial requirements for the Romania response\*\*\*

**USD 77.9 M**

Funding received for the Romania response\*\*\*\*

**34**

Appealing partners involved in the Romania RRP

\*See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) and the [Romania portal page](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources. \*\*See the [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan 2023](#) for a breakdown of sectoral response priorities. \*\*\*See the [Romania Chapter of Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan 2023](#). \*\*\*\*See the [Refugee Response Financial Tracking \(RRFT\), Romania](#)

## Operational context

Since 24 February 2022, more than 5.9 million people from Ukraine have sought refuge across Europe. As of 31 December 2023, more than 5.1 million border crossings from Ukraine and Moldova into Romania have been recorded by border police. Around 148,736 Ukrainian (149,116) and Third Country Nationals (1,458) obtained temporary protection in Romania, which provides access to healthcare, education, and the labour market. The number of refugees from Ukraine present in Romania increased during the past month from 81,072 (on 30 November) to 85,710 on 31 December.

Several pledges were submitted by Romania during the Global Refugee Forum: The Government of Romania pledged to continue its efforts to resettle refugees as part of the EU solidarity mechanism, to enhance the refugee reception capacity, and to continue operating the Emergency Transit Centre in Timișoara. The Bucharest municipality pledged to develop a comprehensive public policy to foster inclusion, combat discrimination and promote diversity and communication. Brașov municipality pledged to maintain the KATYA Centre as a one-stop-shop service centre for refugees. In Galați, local authorities confirmed their continued support for inclusive access to services and infrastructure for refugees, fostering an environment that enables self-reliance and socio-economic contribution to the local community. Timișoara municipal Directorate for Social Assistance pledged to build an inclusive community with a human-rights-based approach, involving all stakeholders, with a focus on education, health, work, culture, and social services. A municipal team will be dedicated to refugee integration which will further build bridges between the local community and the refugees. Members of the Livelihoods Economic Integration Working Group coordinated by UNHCR, pledged to further harmonise coordination and assistance between all stakeholders to ensure refugee's access to the formal labour market, while maintaining an individual and tailored focus as well as advocating for social inclusion.

In December, after various consultation rounds within the sectoral working groups and with different authorities (line ministries, DSU, and the Chancellery) the narrative of the Romania Chapter of the Regional Refugee Response Plan 2024 was finalised and sent for integration into the regional document containing, one of 11 country chapters covering the regional response.

On 23 December, a coordination workshop took place involving the new coordinators who had joined the RRP coordination structures in the recent months. The purpose of the gathering was to reinforce coordination principles and identify coordination gaps in view of the year ahead.

### Spotlight on: Transitioning Blue Dot services to Blue Grid integrated services provision.

As the war in Ukraine continues and displacement becomes protracted, population flows are shifting, and the needs of children and families are evolving. As a result, UNICEF is adapting its programmatic response to these changing needs, ensuring continued provision of information and protection support, while developing a sustainable and systems-integrated model for the service provision with Government at the centre, in other words, moving from a "Blue Dot" to a "Blue Grid" approach in strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus in a high-income country such as Romania.



While Blue Dots are mostly an entry door to available services, the Blue Grid concept aims at ensuring that services are provided by a sustainable network of professionals or service providers, working in coordination with local authorities and/or specialised decentralised/deconcentrated authorities at county level. The Blue Grid aims to improve accessibility to quality services provided by accredited service providers, through consolidated communication and coordination between the public authorities, NGOs, and other relevant authorities.

In this context, between 13-17 November, UNICEF convened around 70 participants, involving national, county, and local authorities from 8 counties with significant refugee populations and services (Brașov, Constanța, Iași, Maramureș, Satu Mare, Suceava, Tulcea, and Vaslui), NGOs, including key CPSWG partners, UNHCR and IOM. The purpose of the event was to document and orient participants on the transition from the Blue Dots (and other interventions) to Blue Grids and to develop updated cross-sectoral emergency preparedness county plans. The next steps include finalisation of county transition plans for 2024, which will be a useful tool for county coordination and response, as well as for advocacy and fundraising purposes.



## Protection

### Achievements and Impact

- To enhance inclusion of refugees and integration into existing national systems, protection partners advocated for better access to social assistance programmes for holders of Temporary Protection (TP) permits. The fact that the TP document does not include the holder's residential address has in practice caused severe obstacles when it comes to accessing social programmes, including, but not limited to child allowance. An analysis of the documents that can serve as proof of address in Romania for social protection purposes has been shared by UNHCR with Ms. Victoria Stoiciu, State Counsellor at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister's Office. Jointly with UNICEF and IOM, UNHCR was also requested to analyse whether any legislation relating to specific social protection schemes needs to be changed, whereas UNICEF is working on a cost estimation for the inclusion of TP holders.
- Protection partners continue to provide information and protection services to refugees from Ukraine. Save the Children provided services for 10,347 children and adults at border crossings, transit points, in accommodation and reception centres as well as in Integrated services and counselling centres. Those assisted received informational and legal counselling, support with finding accommodation, support in obtaining TP permits, opening bank accounts, obtaining certificates needed to access the government support programme and for registering with family doctors, accompaniment, and support with translation services for accessing services provided by other organisations and institutions. The Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) supported 4,544 refugees from Ukraine on protection and integration at the border crossing points and in Bucharest, Braşov, Constanţa, Galaţi, Iaşi, and Suceava. Protection partners provided counselling services through helplines to 1,204 individuals. Terre des Hommes (TdH) assisted 220 adults with protection interventions, either through direct services or referrals, including the provision of food, medical appointments, assistance with legal documentation, translation services, and transportation to various essential services. A total of 225 adults benefitted from either group or individual MHPSS sessions through TdH. Protection partners including Action Against Hunger, Autism Voice, CNRR, IOM, the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), and Fundația Sensiblu provided community-based psychosocial support activities to 1,740 individuals in December.
- Having identified efficient access to the disability certificate in Romania as an important barrier for accessing services, protection partners have supported the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ANPDPD) with reviewing and adapting existing info materials and translating them into Ukrainian and Russian language. The revised materials are expected to soon be published on the ANPDPD's website.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Protection partners identified the increasing backlog of payments within the government housing support program as the main concern for most beneficiaries of TP. In December, civil society actors welcomed the long-awaited proposed amendments of the conditions of enrolment in the government housing support program, but their effects will only show themselves following their adoption by the government.
- Conflicting information found in online groups of refugees on the eligibility of TP holders for state child allowances led to an increased interest in applications for this type of social assistance. The absence of an address reference in the document and an express mention of the temporary holders among the beneficiaries in the relevant legislation constituted the main obstacles in accessing the given social program.

- Refugees' access to healthcare and family medicine continued to be hindered due to lack of family doctors, worsened by partial strikes, language barriers, and issues related to the health information system. Some refugees also reported being denied medication by pharmacies, despite having prescriptions from Romanian specialist doctors. Protection partners have concluded that this situation is related to an existing conflict between the National Health Insurance service and medical providers regarding the timely reimbursement of funds as well as a lack of awareness about the rights of refugees.



## Child Protection

### Achievements and Impact

- Considering reported initial plans to return unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) from some care institutions in Romania to Ukraine, UNICEF and UNHCR coordinated with national and local child protection authorities in Ukraine and Romania to ensure that the best interest of the child prevails, and that agreed and institutional processes are duly followed. UNHCR and UNICEF will jointly continue collaborating with the National Authority for the Protection of Child's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA) and local authorities as appropriate to assess and monitor different groups of UASC, exploring supporting mechanisms in 2024 to ensure the well-being of children in care institutions. UNICEF will provide additional financial support with more sustainable budget allocation to be planned at national level. An underlying principle will be to ensure any return of children to Ukraine only takes place in a safe and voluntary manner, based on the views, and wishes of the child, together with the assurance of the child's best interest determination throughout the process.
- From the beginning of the humanitarian crisis until 31 December 2023, NAPCRA reports that 7,470 children were registered in the records of the Directorates General of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPCs), of which 574 unaccompanied children were identified between 24 February 2022 and 18 March 2022, and 6,896 unaccompanied children referred by Border Police between 19 March 2022 and 31 December 2023, based on the provisions of Joint Order no. 20362/31/3386/812/400/2022 on the approval of the cooperation procedure between the authorities regarding entry, registration, transit, stay, as well as ensuring the protection of the rights of unaccompanied minors, who come from conflict affected areas in Ukraine.
- NAPCRA reports that local authorities provided individual case management to 6,747 Ukrainian children throughout the country, according to Primero data. ASSOC, a partner of UNICEF provided access to different types of safe spaces to Ukraine refugees in Baia Mare, Halmeu, and Sighetu Marmăției, reaching a total of 653 refugees, including 89 girls, 73 boys, 358 women and 133 men. Services at these safe spaces include support groups of different types, counselling and referral services, and dedicated mother and baby/toddler spaces. Four Change and DGASMB also provided access for Ukraine refugees to different safe spaces in Bucharest including 33 girls, 51 boys, 72 women and five men.
- In partnership with UNHCR, TdH continued supporting children in Baia Mare, Bucharest, Braşov, Constanţa, and Suceava, providing MHPSS sessions, educational activities, information, referrals, and individual protection assistance. These interventions assisted 236 children in the five cities. TdH also reached 1,495 children with MHPSS sessions, involved 168 in Resilience Innovation Facilities activities, engaged 73 in afterschool programs, and brought cultural events to 574 children across the five locations.
- Save the Children assisted 3,809 children and 6,538 adults from Ukraine through integrated hubs and counselling centres across various Romanian cities. Among them, 109 new children and their families benefited from case management services. In Baia Mare, a webinar on parenting skills addressed issues such as bullying in Romanian schools and post-traumatic stress, providing recommendations for the 14 participants. Additionally, 10 beneficiaries in Baia Mare attended three parenting workshops covering

integration challenges, online schooling, and everyday problems. In Suceava, a group session with 12 participants discussed cyberbullying, prevention methods, and offered useful tips for parents.

- World Vision reached over 1,000 Ukrainian refugee children at “Happy Bubbles” socio-educational centres in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Iași, Suceava and Râmnicu Vâlcea through Child Protection and MHPSS programming. The bi-monthly integration events, involving over 1,500 Romanian and Ukrainian children, emphasised Christmas-themed workshops and festivities, fostering cross-cultural friendships and community bonds. In all locations, parents/caregivers attended group sessions covering MHPSS aimed at reducing stress, promoting positive coping mechanisms, and enhancing parent-child relationships. Furthermore, over 70 staff members attended basic first aid training provided by the Red Cross, ensuring the safety of children at the Happy Bubbles centres, and preparing staff for emergency responses.



## Gender-Based Violence

### Achievements and Impact

- In partnership with UNHCR, Sensiblu Foundation organised roundtables in Bucharest on “Resilience, Adaptation and Integration in solidarity with refugees from Ukraine - United to prevent and respond to gender-based violence”. The roundtables were also in line with the 16 Days of Activism to “UNITE! Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls” campaign, inviting different stakeholders to reflect on the achievements of 2023, while also discussing the challenges and way forward to strengthen prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV). Key highlights of the session were the concerns of increasing vulnerabilities, linking it to heightened GBV risks, as the situation protracts while limited assistance is provided to the refugee population. Amid this backdrop, stronger linkages between relevant authorities and refugee population are required, tailored approach to address protection needs as well as mainstreaming GBV through different area of responsibilities is essential.
- Between December 5-6, Sensiblu Foundation brought together 20 Ukrainian specialists in psychology, psychotherapy, and social assistance to a training of trainers on “Psychosocial Intervention in Cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence”. Crucial topics encompassed creating safe spaces, building trust, maintaining confidentiality, and providing appropriate services for survivors’ recovery and reintegration. The latter part of the course emphasised coping strategies for emotional impact, stress, and secondary trauma.
- Sensiblu Foundation organised a workshop on Empowerment through Self-Defence Training in Băile Olănești targeting more than 40 refugees. The session was tailored to accommodate the varying physical abilities of the participants. It emphasised not only physical techniques but also mental preparedness, situational awareness, and de-escalation strategies, aiming at empowering refugees to navigate potential threats and assert their autonomy in challenging circumstances.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Adolescent girls and boys in Romania continue to report issues such as bullying and harassment at school, thus awareness-raising campaigns on GBV targeted at young people remains a key priority.
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## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- Overall, 34,822 refugee children from Ukraine are now recorded as officially enrolled in the Romanian education system<sup>1</sup>, including 10,338 who have acquired full pupil status, and 20,290 children and youths who are engaging in Romanian schools with a transitional status as audients. According to the [latest UNHCR data](#) on beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Romania, some 73 per cent of refugee children from Ukraine (RCU), corresponding to approximately 90 per cent of those of school age, are now enrolled with the Romanian education system. This increase is largely a result of the reform introduced by the Government in April 2023, making access to social assistance available in the context of the TP scheme conditional on enrolling school age refugee children from Ukraine in school or in non-formal education services. 72 education hubs have officially registered with the Ministry of Education providing alternative or complementary learning opportunities - including learning continuity by the Ukrainian curriculum - to reportedly an additional 9,718 RCU in December 2023. While no official data is available on the participation of refugee children from Ukraine registered in Romanian schools, information gathered from several county school inspectorates suggests that up to one third of all refugee children registered as audients attend school on a regular basis since the start of the new school year in September, with a significant proportion attending school irregularly and participating in education hubs, online learning, and language courses in parallel, at least until they can improve their Romanian language skills.
- Members of the Education Working Group provide support to ensure that all refugee children from Ukraine can access quality education services and progressively integrate or transition to the Romanian education system, through diversified learning pathways and bridging modalities including attending Romanian schools, online learning, special classes, after-school activities offering learning support ('education hubs'), and Romanian language training. RRP partners continue to promote access primarily to classroom-type education encouraging face-to-face learning and personal interactions, as well as Romanian language courses, MHPSS, and activities fostering local integration, and only facilitate access to online learning (in a complementary or alternative manner) when necessary. Most RRP partners offering alternative or complementary learning support through education hubs increasingly require, and often facilitate, refugee children's registration in the Romanian education system and their participation in Romanian language classes, hence preparing children for progressive integration into the national education system.
- Coordination in the education sector remains critical, both at national and decentralised levels, to extend the provision of educational services and ensure that refugee children can progressively transition to the Romanian education system. UNICEF and JRS have continued to assume the coordination of the Education Working Group in partnership with other UN agencies (IOM and UNHCR), the World Bank, the Government of Romania (the Ministry of Education in particular), as well as NGOs and other development partners supporting the delivery of educational services. In December, efforts focused on

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<sup>1</sup> Source: administrative data, Ministry of Education, as of 8 December 2023.

local coordination arrangements, on facilitating increased access to Romanian language courses, identifying options for refugee children having difficulties enrolling and participating fully in local Romanian schools, and facilitating access to alternative or complementary learning modalities when necessary. Technical support and advocacy efforts geared towards national authorities were extended by RRP partners, including on monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities, mutual recognition of studies, regulatory frameworks for the provision and certification of Romanian language courses delivered by local NGOs, and exploring support mechanisms to facilitate the integration of Ukrainian refugee teachers in the Romanian education system.

- In December, UNICEF engaged with several county school inspectorates and local NGOs to ensure continuity of education support services, including preparation of new partnership agreements to help prolong the operations of education hubs throughout the current academic year where deemed necessary, and the organisation of additional Romanian language courses under the leadership of county school inspectorates in order to meet the high demand, with particular focus on Bucharest and Timiș, in addition to Brașov, Constanța, and Cluj. New partnership agreements were concluded in December with NGO Sus Inima for operating the SIPRI education hub in Sibiu, and with PATRIR for operating education hubs in Cluj-Napoca and Sighișoara, which are expected to benefit an additional 600 Ukrainian refugee children. A new partnership agreement was also concluded with the British Council to strengthen teachers' capacities, particularly focusing on trauma informed teaching and learning as well as on the management of linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom.
- To date, IOM Romania printed 11,150 Romanian language manuals and workbooks for adults and children who are attending language courses at IOM premises and across Romania. The manuals are distributed based on requests from county school inspectorates, NGOs, and partners. Further materials are available electronically via [www.romaniaeacasa.ro](http://www.romaniaeacasa.ro). IOM provides Romanian language courses for children and adults in several cities across Romania, including Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj-Napoca, Galați, and Oradea. The courses may also be accessed online for beneficiaries living in remote areas or small cities. Overall, 2,191 persons, adults, and children attend Romanian language courses with support from IOM. In addition, IOM provides cultural mediators (interpreters) at schools and to the County School Inspectorate in Bucharest where Ukrainian children are enrolled. IOM, in collaboration with county school inspectorates, held eight training sessions in Bucharest, Brașov and Constanța where a total number of 170 educators and teachers attended training sessions on teaching Romanian language as a foreign language.
- In December, World Vision reached around 1,000 refugee children through preschool and after-school programs run in eight "Happy Bubbles" socio-educational centres. In the after-school program, social educators assisted children who require help with their homework and support with online classes, and four hours of Romanian language lessons per week. Children also took part in various craft classes, which proved to be useful in fostering children's confidence and motivate their learning and creativity. In collaboration with the Finish school in Bucharest, support was extended to deliver formal Romanian educational activities (preschool, primary, secondary) benefiting 60 refugee children. In Constanța, remedial activities supporting the integration of Ukrainian children and host communities were implemented in collaboration with JRS through a mentorship and educational support program for Ukrainian children attending Romanian formal education. The project team is implementing remedial integration activities in two schools in Bucharest for 21 Ukrainian children who went through initial assessments and started to receive support with Romanian language and mathematics to address specific learning needs and enhance their integration into local education.
- JRS delivered regular non-formal educational programs to some 3,000 Ukrainian children at 19 learning centres in seven towns and cities in Romania. Seven Educational Hubs opened in public schools, a playground centre at UNHCR's integrated service hub at Romexpo, as well as five centres accommodating preschool aged children. Support and monitoring was also provided to promote children's enrolment as audients or students at Romanian schools. A total of 137 Ukrainian teachers and social educators provided educational support through JRS activities, including twelve who have engaged in Romanian classes for children. Support was also provided to the School Inspectorate of Constanța to provide 19 Romanian language classes in Constanța and Năvodari. Furthermore, six

Ukrainian psychologists are present in education hubs ensuring that children receive necessary emotional and psychological support, while one Ukrainian doctor visits education hubs in Bucharest to offer direct medical assistance and referral to school cabinets for Ukrainian children who are present in the school. More than 120 children received hot meals within early childhood centres located in Bucharest, Constanța, and Galați, and other activities were organised including interventions fostering interactions between Ukrainian and Romanian children, with a particular emphasis on peer-to-peer engagement.

- In December, TdH focused its efforts on various educational initiatives in Bucharest and Brașov, including afterschool programs, Resilience Innovation Facility (RIF) activities, and language classes. These efforts were made possible through its partnership with the Civic Resource Centre for in Constanța. Additionally, the RIFs in Bucharest, Brașov, and Constanța continued their engagement with 3D printing, vinyl cutters, and other tools, all complemented with a MHPSS component. TdH is setting up another RIF in Baia Mare. Overall, TdH's contributions during this reporting period benefited 168 children who participated in RIF (i.e., STEM) activities, and 73 who participated in TdH afterschool programs.
- In Sibiu, Sus Inima operated the 'SIPRI Edu Hub' as a bridging programme to support the progressive integration of Ukrainian refugee children in Romanian schools through additional language support for Ukrainian children and adults. The program covers remedial education, homework assistance, and extracurricular activities, promoting holistic child development. In December, 110 children engaged in Romanian language courses, 112 in education support activities, 218 in socio-cultural activities, and 709 in play-based activities.
- In partnership with UNICEF, Four Change Association and the UTCB Transit Centre for Refugees provided social and educational support to a total of 40 children (18 girls and 22 boys), including non-formal education activities focusing on remedial education (mostly in Ukrainian language and literature, history, maths and science), pre-school activities, and non-formal education activities (e.g. drama classes/theatre courses aimed to develop self-discovery and resilience, as well as music therapy).
- CNRR continues to offer counselling on access to education in Bucharest, Brașov, Constanța, Galați, Iași, and Suceava. This includes assisting refugees with the school or kindergarten enrolment procedure; the procedure of recognition and equivalence of studies and diplomas; translation of documents for vulnerable categories, referral to Romanian language courses and other educational activities. In December, CNRR distributed approximately 300 Romanian language learning manuals to various educational organisations.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Most Ukrainian refugee children are now enrolled in Romanian schools but continue their studies in the Ukrainian education system in parallel through online or home-schooling arrangements, sometimes in education hubs. Significant language barriers remain, with few opportunities to access Romanian language courses and adequate learning support materials, hindering children's effective participation at school.
- Ukrainian refugee children, and youths in particular, have limited opportunities to engage with their Romanian peers, though essential for social cohesion and effective integration.
- There is still a shortage of places at kindergartens in big cities as well as in rural areas. This particularly affects parents looking for employment because they cannot leave their children unattended.
- Romanian language courses for both children and adults remain critical to ensure social integration and smooth transitioning to the national education system. Their provision needs to be accelerated and sustained throughout the school year in coordination with county school inspectorates.
- Several communities and schools continue to express the need to assign cultural mediators (Ukrainian speaking educators who can facilitate communication with parents, children, and teachers) in schools to support the effective integration of Ukrainian refugee children in Romanian schools. Such arrangements could also help school communities improve social cohesion.



- Diverse experiences are reported suggesting heterogeneous capacities in Romanian teachers, calling for additional efforts on teacher training, support, and supervision to ensure the effective integration of Ukrainian refugee children in general, and of those enrolling as students in particular.
- More clarity in the procedures for certification and mutual recognition of studies is still expected. The mutual recognition of studies between Romania and Ukraine was subject to a bilateral agreement signed in 2023 but still pending ratification in Romania.



## Health and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- Psychological support is a key health need for Ukrainian refugees in Romania. During December 2023, WHO cultural mediators delivered 39 psychosocial support sessions both in-person and online in Bucharest, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa, and Târgu Mureş. WHO cultural mediators organised over 21 hours of art therapy, attended by more than 35 refugees and three mindfulness and meditation sessions, each attended by three beneficiaries. Activities such as these are highly effective at addressing stress and anxiety among the Ukrainian community.
- UNICEF provided mental health support to refugees, with over 3,000 beneficiaries receiving counselling services throughout the year as of December 2023.
- WHO cultural mediators provided 61 consultations on how to navigate the Romanian health system in December. Topics ranged from broad to personalised, allowing for specific issues to be addressed.
- Access to primary care remains a priority for Ukrainian refugees. To facilitate primary care access for Ukrainian refugees, WHO Romania provides financial and administrative support to selected family medicine clinics in Bucharest, Braşov, Galaţi, and Suceava incentivising their engagement in the refugee healthcare program. During this reporting period, WHO supported family doctors provided 244 consultations to Ukrainian refugees.
- In parallel, UNICEF continues to support the delivery of primary health services to Ukrainian refugees both directly at public health centres and through implementing partners. As of December 2023, UNICEF have supported primary healthcare delivery for 8,340 children and women, and vaccination administration for 178 children.
- WHO county coordinators work with local authorities to map refugee inclusive family doctors and other service providers. In December, 30 additional health facilities were mapped by the WHO county team in Constanţa.
- Given the high proportion of women in the Ukrainian refugee population, easy access to sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) is paramount. WHO midwives, located in Galaţi, conducted 18 midwifery consultations for Ukrainian women during December 2023.
- Refugee women are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence and sexual assault. Supporting survivors has thus been a core pillar of WHO's Ukrainian response and, in line with WHO's continued commitment to strengthen existing systems, the country office launched a 'GBV Training of Trainers' in December 2023. Two pilot training sessions were delivered by WHO SRH experts attended by 15 health facility managers and eight family doctors. The training introduced core principles in responding to and preventing GBV as well as key indicators, policies, protocols, and guidelines that should be in place for staff to adequately respond to survivors. WHO plans to conduct additional trainings in 2024 to further strengthen the GBV response capacity in the country.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- WHO cultural mediators highlighted that requests are still being received for services to reduce anxiety and stress levels.
- Significant information gaps remain for refugees seeking healthcare services which reduce their ability to navigate the health system and access care. These information gaps range from confusion regarding health entitlements, to limited understanding of how to enter the national health system, to difficulties in locating medical practices willing to accept refugees.



## Basic Needs

### Achievements and Impact

- Basic needs partners are working closely to enable the most vulnerable refugee population in Romania and their host communities to meet their basic needs through delivery of humanitarian assistance. In coordination with authorities, basic needs partners have stepped up their support in the 2023-2024 winter season, distributing humanitarian aid to assist refugees from Ukraine during winter, assessing sites for potential transit accommodation, as well as providing top-up cash assistance to support the most vulnerable families facing additional winter expenses.
- Save the Children Romania remained dedicated to assisting refugees from Ukraine, distributing 1,014 core relief items, including hygiene kits and school kits, in nine locations around Romania. Save the Children Romania also provided targeted financial assistance to meet the winter needs of persons with specific needs. It distributed 2,144 vouchers as well as financial assistance to 2,080 individuals and 629 families, with each recipient receiving RON 720 (US\$ 159). Basic Needs Support comprising of 32 vouchers each worth RON 200 (US\$44) was provided to 19 persons. This type of support can be accessed more than once based on specific needs, making the support flexible and tailored to individual circumstances, covering a wide range of essentials, such as food, clothing, and other necessities, improving the overall well-being of recipients.
- NGO Light into Europe provided support to Ukrainian families in Romania, including food, medicines and disability enabling equipment. During the winter holidays, the NGO reported a significant increase in the number of beneficiaries, for which Light into Europe delivered about 500 kg of food.
- During December, UNHCR and its partners together with local departments of social assistance distributed more than 3,300 core relief items including bedding, hygiene kits, winter clothing, and thermoses to 939 refugees and vulnerable members of host communities in Botoșani, Buzău, Galați, Iași, Mureș, Sibiu, Suceava, Timiș, and Tulcea counties.
- UNHCR disbursed Cash for Winterisation payments to 2,432 refugees from Ukraine received a one-time payment of RON 720 (US\$159) per person to mitigate specific protection risks as well as the risk of not being able to meet basic needs during this period.
- In Timisoara, AidRom organised a cooking session as part of a series of events aimed at creating a welcoming and supportive space for Ukrainian refugees at Multifunctional Centres for Counselling. A Ukrainian chef joined the group and helped participants make traditional Ukrainian food providing and opportunity for emotional and social interactions.
- In November, World Vision provided support to meet the basic needs of some 6,164 vulnerable Ukrainian refugees through distribution of food vouchers and hygiene kits. During the past month, World Vision distributed approximately 2,184 hygiene kits and 2,185 food vouchers at six locations around Romania.



## Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion

### Achievements and Impact

- On 6 December, HEKS EPER organised a job fair in Cluj-Napoca attended by 58 refugees from Ukraine. Seven employers were present at the fair, offering jobs in various fields including hairdressing, restaurant, nail-technician, administration, and front/back-end development. This month, HEKS EPER also provided vocational training to 40 refugees from Ukraine in several professions including nail technicians, hair stylists, and chef assistants.
- Ateliere Fără Frontiere (AFF) organized 13 “digital competencies” workshops focused on teaching the basics of Microsoft Office to refugee job seekers to enhance their employability. In total, 122 refugees from Ukraine participated. AFF continued to provide Romanian language courses for refugee job seekers with 59 individuals being enrolled this month. Throughout 2023, a total of 501 refugee job seekers were linked to language courses through AFF.
- Through their website [www.jobs4ukr.com](http://www.jobs4ukr.com), Project Voiajor continued to gather useful resources and available employment opportunities for refugee job seekers. In 2023, a total of 2,279 job seekers (an increased by 69 in the past month) and 159 employers (increased by three in the past month) joined the platform and 520 job “matches” (increased by 24 in the past month) were facilitated. Since the start of the year, 162 refugees from Ukraine were employed through Jobs4Ukraine’s platform and offline job counselling services.
- On 15 December, World Vision organised a job fair in Bucharest attended by 20 refugees from Ukraine, three employers and a representative from the General Directorate of Social Assistance of the Municipality (DGASMB). The fair aimed to provide refugee job seekers with information about the Romanian labour market, an overview of current career opportunities across different sectors, and to facilitate their introduction to employers.

## Cross-Cutting Priorities



## Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

### Achievements and Impact

- On the 7-8 December, IOM trained 32 representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church, including priests serving communities in the north-east of Romania, to identify and assist victims of human trafficking and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- Additionally, on 14-15 December, 19 IOM staff benefited from PSEA refreshment training. IOM contributed to advancing and testing guidelines for the effective implementation of focus groups with beneficiaries and staff. This initiative was carried out under the guidance of the PSEA Regional Coordinator. The initiative included:
  - In-person and online meetings with the guide's author, who assessed the PSEA situation and risks at the country level.

- Active involvement through providing feedback during the process.
- participation in on-the-job training sessions in Bulgaria for PSEA Focal Points in the region with the aim of testing the guide's effectiveness with both beneficiary communities and IOM staff.
- In December, TdH continued the series of refresher training on (child) safeguarding, including PSEA, to three implementing partners. The refresher training was held on 4, 8 and 12 December in Baia Mare, Braşov, Suceava to a total of 37 staff members from NGOs Agentia Metropolitana Braşov, BRCT Suceava, City Makers, and TdH. During the training, participants reviewed safeguarding including PSEA concepts and measures, learnt how to carry out a safeguarding risk assessment, and developed skills on how to provide psychological first aid to the victim/survivor of a safeguarding incident.
- During the past month, 11 PSEA/Safeguarding Focal Points representing Romanian civil society organisations participated in the Investigator Qualification Training Scheme (IQTS) Tier 2 with the support of TdH and UNHCR. Through this course, participants developed knowledge and skills on how to conduct an SEAH workplace administrative investigation.
- Save the Children provided a one-day, in person, training on 4 December for 20 of its staff from centres in Constanţa and Năvodari. The aim of the training was capacity building and awareness raising in the four commitments (awareness, prevention, reporting and responding). The training focused on risk mitigation practices for safer programming within the response. Aspects related to power dynamics in relation to PSEA concerns were approached during the one-day training, by discussing case studies. The training encouraged an interactive and participatory setting, allowing the participants to share their insights and challenges in their daily activities.
- Between 12 and 14 December, Save the Children provided training with media representatives on safeguarding children in media and communication including consideration of power dynamics, PSEA related risks, and risks associated with re-traumatisation.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Securing funds is crucial to empower the 11 participants enrolled in IQTS Tier 2, facilitating their progression to Tier 3 and eventual certification as workplace administrative investigators. This request is of utmost importance to address the demand for skilled Romanian workplace administrative investigators and ensure justice for victims/survivors of SEAH and other forms of misconduct.



## Youth and Adolescents

### Achievements and Impact

- During December, UNICEF launched a U-Report survey dedicated to assessing mental health needs of Ukrainian young people. In relation to this, social media materials (videos) have been created on issues such as trauma, depression, anxiety, and self-esteem based on youth participatory methods with Ukrainian and Romanian young people. The materials can be used in addressing such topics in activities with young people.
- After documenting previous cultural workshops where youth highlighted similarities between the two communities, in December, Romanian Angel Appeal (RAA) promoted how the common language of collaboration supports the integration of young people. [A video showcasing the initiative](#) reached 58,000 people on Facebook. In December, RAA also started using the U-Report instrument with the teenagers attending the Youth Hub and continued to work on the first version of a compendium consisting of a variety of informal activities with the aim of supporting Ukrainian and Romanian adolescents to prevent and to work on mental health issues. It will become a valuable instrument not only for adolescents but also for specialists and teachers that are working with them.
- During winter 2023, the Duke of Edinburgh International Award Foundation initiated a 13-hour pack programme in the context of the Stand By Me project in collaboration with UNICEF, which includes

theatre and sports activities undertaken in a safe space. 60 young people (Ukrainians and Romanians) took part in it.

- In 2023, the National Youth Foundation (FNT) reached 6,900 young people (47 per cent of which were Ukrainians and 51 per cent Romanians) through its 10 youth centres in Romania. Most participants were aged 14-24 years old. FNT programmes were based on periodic consultations with young people, and the activities were mainly starting from their preferences, needs, and implemented through volunteers, thus aiming at youth participation.
- Building on November's achievements, in 2023 the Youth for Youth Foundation in collaboration with UNICEF implemented a comprehensive socio-emotional programme both in and outside schools on topics such as gender-based violence, sexual reproductive health and mental health prevention for some 8,500 adolescents, including 715 Ukrainians. To improve outreach to the Ukrainian community, Ukrainian-language learning materials were made available, including through [online](#) resources. The activities will continue until the end of the current school year.
- During 2023, the Association Ideas and Projects for Active Young People (IPTA) worked with youth workers who work directly with Ukrainian young people living in Romania on preventive education, addictions, and unhealthy behaviours, as well on healthy relationships and personal growth of adolescents. IPTA organised international Erasmus+ youth exchanges in September and December with some 50 youths taking part, including eight Ukrainians living outside Romania. The projects were focused on a two-week non-formal-learning programme addressing preventive education on addictions and healthy relationships. The activities increased emotional literacy, awareness of the importance of mental health and, indirectly, their sense of belonging to the European community.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- As many projects addressing mental health dedicated to the Ukrainian community are finishing in December, needs related to mental health are still critical. For instance, this can be illustrated by the urgency for Ukrainian children to integrate into the Romanian school system and achieve the required level of Romanian language to become full students. This is a challenge especially for Ukrainian high-school students given the social pressure and the structural differences of the school curriculum.



## Trafficking in Persons

### Achievements and Impact

- During 7-8 December, IOM in partnership with the Patriarchate of Romania through the Pro Vita Department, delivered a two-day Counter Trafficking and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse training workshop. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of the risks of trafficking, to explore safeguarding strategies to reduce the risk of SEA, as well as to foster the exchange of experiences and good practices. The participants, which included high ranking priests, members of the regional centre of ANITP, and a selection of local NGO partners, received valuable insights and knowledge on:
  - Protection and assistance of victims of trafficking in human beings.
  - Assistance and counselling for victims of trafficking in human beings.
  - Key concepts, core principles, practical steps, and practices for PSEA.
  - Reporting mechanisms and support services for survivors of SEA.
- IOM and CRATTF co-lead eLiberare hosted an extraordinary online meeting on 5 December with representatives from the Bulgaria National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB), as well as representatives from the Romanian government involved in anti-trafficking efforts, to share information and their efforts related to combating human trafficking during the Ukraine refugee crisis.

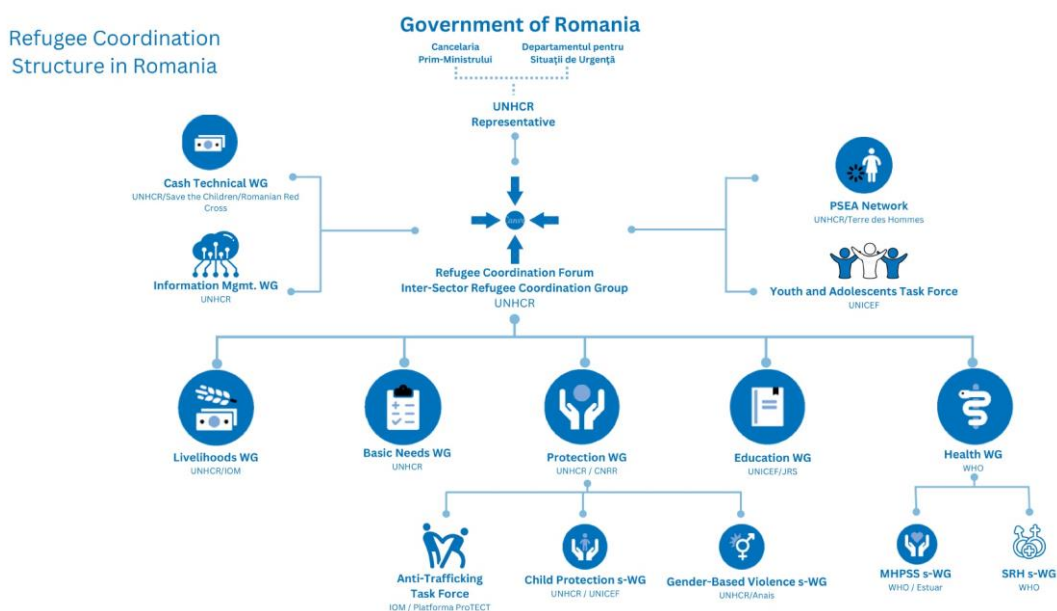


- In December, eLiberare had an online reach of 19,721 persons through videos and online info sessions.
- In the past month, ECLER held three trainings and 11 workshops/conferences, reaching a total of 2,145 participants, including Ukrainians, professionals, and children in contact with Ukrainian communities.
- ECLER supported the development of the Ukrainian Women Forum that organised its first event in the Romanian American University on the 16 December, bringing together 126 Ukrainian women.
- ECLER supported 29 Ukrainian persons with disabilities, elders, and children in difficulty with buying winter shoes and clothes, as well as food for the winter holidays.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Among the Ukrainian target group that ECLER is in contact with (the Ukrainian Women Forum, persons with disabilities, and children with special health needs, or single mothers with three or more children), the inability to cover basic needs (food and accommodation), as well as access to health services was identified.
- Other challenges identified by ECLER relate to fair access to the labour market (many are working without a labour contract), support for childcare, support for independent small business activities and personal development, community organising activities for cultural meetings (traditional food, poetry, singing etc.), awareness about disinformation methods and fake news.

### Working in partnership



### CONTACTS

**Sebastian Der Kinderen**, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer, Romania

[kinderen@unhcr.org](mailto:kinderen@unhcr.org)

**James Weatherlake**, Senior Reporting Associate (Inter-Agency), Romania

[weatherl@unhcr.org](mailto:weatherl@unhcr.org)

### LINKS

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