

PROTECTION BRIEF

CZECHIA

JULY- SEPTEMBER 2024

Operational Context

Based on the number of Ukrainian refugees who applied for an extension of Temporary Protection in 2024 (320,000), the figures of Temporary Protection holders in Czechia, including new arrivals, were updated to **384,558** people as of **29 September 2024**, compared to 373,745 at the end of 2023 (source: Ministry of the Interior).

This report presents an overview of refugees' profiles as well as main findings regarding protection risks and priority needs of refugees from Ukraine in Czechia. The brief is based on the analysis of **438 Protection Monitoring interviews** conducted with refugees from Ukraine in all the 14 regions as well as findings from focus group discussions in the third quarter of 2024.

Key Figures

384,558

Temporary Protection holders in Czechia as of 29 September 2024¹

71%

of Temporary Protection holders are women and children²

98%

of Protection Monitoring respondents are Temporary Protection holders

34%

of respondents consider accommodation as their highest priority need

67%

of working age respondents are employed in Czechia

29%

of respondents need more information about job opportunities

¹ Ministry of the Interior, Czechia

² Ministry of the Interior, Czechia

Protection Risks and Needs

As part of a regional Protection Profiling and Monitoring exercise, UNHCR collects and analyses on a quarterly basis data about the profiles, protection risks, and needs of refugees from Ukraine in Czechia, through individual interviews and focus group discussions with diverse groups. The key findings are highlighted below.

Protection Risk I

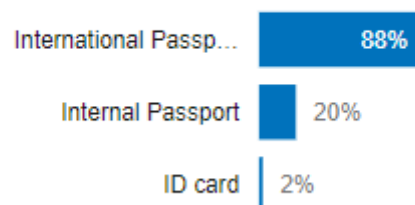
Access to Temporary Protection (TP): 98% of the respondents are holders of Temporary Protection in Czechia. Only 1% (five individuals) provided that their application for Temporary Protection was pending, whilst also 1% (four individuals) did not apply for Temporary Protection in Czechia. The reasons being, that they applied for refugee status, did not meet the eligibility criteria, did not stay in the country, or had since transitioned to a different legal status. Overall, access to Temporary Protection in Czechia continues to remain high.

13% of respondents (55 individuals) reported facing some challenges with the Temporary Protection application or extension process.

In line with previous reports, the main challenges related to applying for Temporary Protection were long waiting times to receive a decision (44%), a lack of required documents (such as ID or proof of address) to complete the registration process (40%), and, despite its overall decrease in prevalence, a lack of interpretation (20%). Awareness of the process continues to be relatively high with only 16% of respondents reporting lack of information on the registration or extension of their status.

Access to documentation: With respect to identity documents, 24% of respondents reported at least one household member not having documentation or holding expired documents. The main type of missing document was an international passport (88%) and the most common reason for the inability to renew or replace the missing or expired document was the unavailability of service (70%). 47% of households with missing documents indicated being impacted by this, most often by not being able to move freely or to access basic services.

Top missing documentation



Protection Risk II

Access to adequate housing: As for Q2 (April-June), findings from Protection Monitoring interviews highlighted accommodation as the highest priority need for respondents (147 respondents, 34%).

34%

reported accommodation as their highest priority need

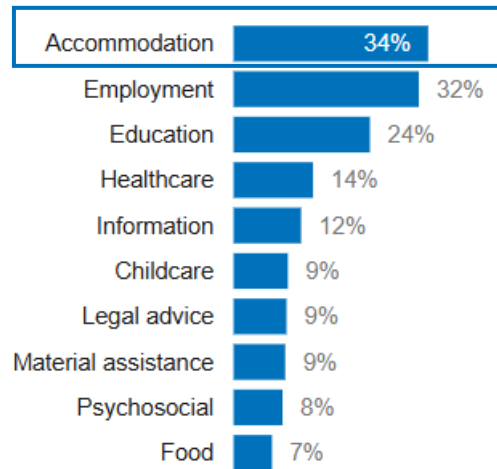
However, this figure rose to 68% amongst respondents living in collective accommodation facilities. This group highlighted the precariousness of their living arrangements with all respondents providing that they have to leave their accommodation within three months due to the end of their housing programme (100%). Half of respondents indicated that their departure is on account of being asked to leave (50%), being unable to afford rent (50%) and/or renting another place (50%).³

Furthermore, 32% of respondents in collective accommodation facilities are not sure how long they can stay in their accommodations. In comparison, 7% of those living in rented accommodation do not know how long they can stay. The lack of information affecting residents of collective accommodation facilities likely emanates from changes in the law limiting state-provided housing to those newly arrived effective 1 September 2024. During focus group discussions conducted in Brno, Ostrava and Prague in August and September, some participants paying to live in collective accommodation facilities reported being worried about having to leave their accommodation in the coming months should there be need for collective accommodation facilities to create additional space for newcomers. Participants also expressed significant financial strain in covering the costs of their accommodation.

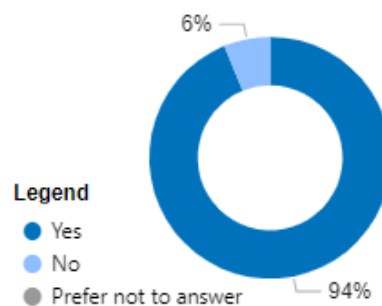
While only 4% of respondents (17 households) reside in accommodation provided by their employer, it is noteworthy that their information and other priority needs are heightened. While accommodation was indicated as a priority need by only 13% of respondents, employment and information needs were much higher for this group, mentioned by 53% and 27%, respectively, compared to 32% and 12% of respondents overall. This group also highlighted a much higher need for information on legal status (40%), Temporary Protection (27%) and how to claim asylum (20%) than the overall respondents (26%, 15% and 5% respectively). These findings may reflect that Ukrainian Temporary Protection respondents living in employer-provided housing face barriers to accessing information and may be seeking assistance in finding new employment and in relation to their legal status.

Finally, out of those who do not have a rental contract (6%), the majority of respondents (92% in comparison to 75% in Q1) are in this situation because the unit is rented by another person or entity. This may indicate a prevalence of sublease schemes. During UNHCR's focus group discussions with Ukrainian Temporary Protection holders in Brno and Prague in August, some participants highlighted having encountered challenges with sublease schemes, including facing higher than market-rate rent propositions.

Most urgent needs



Rental contract with owner



Note: out of those who are renting

³ Multiple responses were possible.

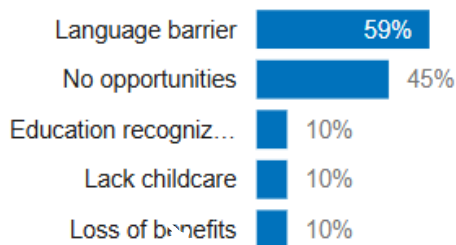
Protection Risk III

Access to decent work: The key barrier to accessing work, according to respondents who are unemployed, is a lack of knowledge of the Czech language (59%). This finding was also reflected in focus group discussions conducted by UNHCR with Ukrainian refugee women and men in Brno, Ostrava in Prague in August and September, where refugees reported challenges in securing jobs that matched their qualifications due to language barriers. All participants in the focus group discussions emphasized the need for better language proficiency to improve their employment prospects.

67%

of Protection Monitoring respondents of working age are employed in host country

Barriers to accessing employment *



Note: out of those who indicated being unemployed

Nevertheless, 67% of respondents reported being employed compared to 60% in Q1. ⁴ Moreover, respondents' access to earnings also increased from 87% to 93% during the same time period. Working excessively long hours also decreased from 24% to 16%. These findings ostensibly indicate an improvement in access to employment and in working conditions amongst Ukrainian Temporary Protection holders.

Employment continued to be mentioned as one of the top two priority needs (32%) of households interviewed.

Moreover, in terms of information, 29% of respondents indicated a need for more information about job opportunities; this continued to be the highest reported information need.

Most urgent needs *



Information needs *



⁴ As per the 2024 Socio-Economic Insights Survey conducted by UNHCR, this figure could be as high as 79% amongst working-age Ukrainian refugees. The data was collected in the period 15 May-16 July.

Key Advocacy & Action Points

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

- Continue to support refugees transitioning to standard housing from collective accommodation facilities during this period of transition. Support to affected refugees, particularly those considered to be vulnerable, could include:
 - Continuing to proactively provide information alongside individual social counselling: Official information channels and hotlines, particularly those of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, should continue to be shared with refugees for trusted and up-to-date information on entitlements, housing, and available support. Tailored social support through social workers, complemented by NGOs including UNHCR's partners and refugee-led organisations, should in particular be directed at facilities that are expected to have high numbers of residents moving out.
 - Continuing to provide information by providers of collective accommodations to residents on their possibilities to continue to reside in the facilities, enabling refugees to make informed decisions about their future housing and to request tailored social support.
- Continue to provide targeted support to refugees residing in employer-provided housing, including by monitoring their employment and housing situation, assessing their needs, and providing information on their rights and obligations and access to Temporary Protection, where applicable.
- Continue to share information on available Czech language courses offered by different providers, including Labour Offices, municipal community centres, NGOs, refugee-led organisations, language institutes and other actors. Continue to broaden the provision of Czech language courses for refugees by tailoring them to the needs of relevant employment sectors.
- Continue to strengthen collaboration with private sector companies to provide work placements, internship opportunities, and sustainable employment to refugees.
- Continue to share information on available guidance sessions and seminars for refugees on understanding employment rights.
- Engage with the Labour Inspectorate and other national bodies to strengthen the monitoring of employment conditions and to safeguard the rights of Ukrainian workers.