



# Slovakia

As of 24 May 2022

Confronted with the largest refugee emergency in its history, Slovakia has responded with generosity and solidarity, moving quickly to establish a Temporary Protection Status under domestic law and mobilizing authorities at all levels along with civil society, private sector actors, volunteers and local communities to receive refugees and support them in meeting their needs. Nearly 450,000 arrivals from Ukraine have crossed into Slovakia since the war began and over 75,000 refugees have applied for temporary protection status here. The Government has assumed strong leadership of the refugee

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

The *Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP)* contributes to a “whole-of-society” response in support of refugees from Ukraine as well as the people and governments of host countries – and is specifically designed to complement the Government’s clear leadership. The

Slovakia chapter involves 21 partners comprising a total of \$91.9M financial requirements by December 2022.

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

## KEY FIGURES\*

**449,509**

total arrivals of non-Slovak from Ukraine since 24 February (as of 25 May)

**193,134**

total non-Slovak departures to Ukraine since 24 February (as of 25 May)

**87%**

of Ukrainian arrivals to Slovakia are women and children (as of 25 May)

**75, 499**

applications for temporary protection status in Slovakia (as of 19 May)

**70,000**

refugees and vulnerable third country nationals targeted for interagency cash assistance

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

**USD 1.85 B**

Overall financial requirements

**USD 617 M**

Funding received

**33%**

Per cent funded

**USD 91.9 M**

Financial requirements for the Slovakia response

**21**

Partners reflected in the Slovakia RRP chapter

\*See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) and the [Slovakia portal page](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources. \*\*See the [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) for a breakdown of sectoral response priorities and requirements and the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#) for RRP funding information.

### Operational context

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

### ✓✓✓ PREPAREDNESS

Strengthening contingency planning for increased arrivals and other potential scenarios related to the situation in Ukraine continues to be a top priority. A contingency planning workshop was held on 20 April in Košice co-facilitated by UNHCR and the Government, bringing together for the first time local authorities, UN agencies, civil society organizations and volunteers to draw out key lessons from the initial refugee response; to identify preparedness actions, including linkages with Government-led response structures and sectoral coordination mechanisms; and to articulate action points and next steps for both the Government and partners. Next steps for preparedness have been further developed with more detailed data and analysis, in preparation for a follow-up workshop to take place on 9 June in Bratislava; this inter-ministerial workshop will elaborate technical details of planning and preparation to feed into the Government's contingency plan.



20 April contingency planning workshop in Košice with local authorities, UN agencies, civil society and volunteers © UNHCR / C. Lensing Hebben

### 👤 PROTECTION

UNHCR developed an internal protection strategy for the response that covers the rest of 2022. This strategy is in line with the Government's own approach, which is organized around two phases: Phase One, the "Last Mile Project", led by Ministry of Interior/Crisis Centre Management Board, covers the first ten days after a refugee's arrival to Slovakia and Phase Two focuses on longer-term inclusion. The protection strategy sets out a holistic approach, with evidence-based interventions designed to build and strengthen safeguards in areas such as child protection, particularly regarding unaccompanied and separated children; risks of exploitation in the context of accommodation and labor market; prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse; accountability to affected people; as well as ensuring the requisite capacity for specialized services, such as services to prevent and address gender-based violence, that are especially important for this population of mostly women and children fleeing an armed conflict characterized by violence and trauma.

The RCF's Protection and Inclusion Working Group (PIWG) coordinates the protection response and solutions, and benefits from participation of key national and local protection actors in the weekly sessions. The Government also attends the PIWG. It is co-chaired by UNHCR and Human Rights League, a well-established and respected Slovak NGO. Under the umbrella of the PIWG, there are sub-working groups that specifically focus on Child Protection, Inclusion and Anti-Trafficking.

RCF partners are present at border crossing points to support and reinforce government protection structures; monitor protection issues; maintain two-way communication with communities; identify, offer service referrals to,

and follow up with persons with specific needs; as well as prevent and mitigate risks for vulnerable groups (e.g., human trafficking). UNHCR has launched a capacity-building initiative to support on-the-job training of partner staff, including interpreters, serving at Protection Desks. As of 23 May, UNHCR and its partners are in the process of rolling out the Regional Protection Monitoring Tool in Slovakia, which will help build an evidence base for interventions, programming, as well as a refugee protection narrative.

A repository of service providers is under development to ease referrals to specialized services for child protection; gender-based Violence; older persons; persons with disabilities; persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identify, gender expression and sex characteristics; protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; minority groups; and others. UNHCR works with its partners to establish case management systems. Referral pathways have become even more important given the ongoing identification of protection cases and persons with specific needs as part of the cash enrolment process which started on 2 May.

**SPOTLIGHT ON REFUGEE-LED ORGANIZATION:  
“ UKRAINE-SLOVAKIA SOS / SME SPOLU”**

This multi-faceted organization led by Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia, among many other activities, runs a community centre in Bratislava that aims at promoting social cohesion and social integration, supports formal and informal education of Ukrainian children and youth and provides a safe space for refugee women to connect to each other. The community centre brings together Ukrainian professionals and volunteers who specialize, inter alia, in education and social work. The centre plans to initiate a programme that promotes intercultural dialogue through arts in its summer programme.

UNHCR is starting to engage with and support refugee communities in the response, including setting up a community outreach volunteer network, a Refugee Advisory Board and grants to refugee-led organisations to help strengthen their capacity. Also, the [UNHCR Help Page for Slovakia](#) is now operational.

### **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

A PSEA Task Force has been created, aiming to assessing the existing complaint and response mechanisms; strengthening the PSEA capacity of all organizations involved in the humanitarian response in a victim's based approach to the extent possible; assessing relevant risks and developing accessible complaint mechanisms in consultation with the affected refugee community; and developing standard operating procedures and interagency referrals with respect to the sensitivity and confidentiality of received complaints.

### **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

Progress has been made in bringing together GBV actors in eastern Slovakia. RCF partners recently facilitated training for 36 frontline workers and 204 border guards that covered basic GBV prevention and response training, including sessions on enhancing the protective environment for children at heightened risk and persons with specific needs, accountability to affected people and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. UNHCR, UNICEF and partners have established a [Blue Dot](#) Information and Support Hub in Bottova, and assessment of planned Blue Dot locations is ongoing; expanding the Blue Dot network will help with communicating with communities as well as identifying, referring and following up with children at risk, GBV survivors and other vulnerable persons. This will help improve accessibility, continuation, and standardization of services provided by the broadest range of formal and operational partners.

### **Targeted Support to LGBTIQ+ Individuals**

LGBTIQ+ people continue to face widespread discrimination, including barriers to social inclusion, and access to housing, health care such as gender-affirming treatment, and to education. Many of these problems are compounded by the circumstances of armed conflict in Ukraine – further complicating, for example, the ability of LGBTIQ+ children and youth to seek safety abroad due to their families' refusal to release custody to allow them leave the country or, in the case of individuals who were born male, their current or prospective eligibility for military service. UNHCR and partners are advocating on behalf of this group through coordination mechanisms.

## Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

Reliable and up-to-date information remains crucial to ensuring refugees are able to access the services they need, make informed decisions, and actively participate in the response, including on prevention and response to Sexual Harassment and Abuse. RCF partners are working to ensure they have access to relevant information through preferred channels, feedback and complaint mechanisms, community networks, and are able to participate in all stages of the response. Challenges remain regarding provision of timely and accurate information in a coordinated way, particularly in light of the multiple channels being used by the variety of actors involved. Active disinformation and rumours circulating increase the risks of confusion; in addition, this dynamic environment means that even well-intentioned information can become outdated quickly and exacerbate such risks if not updated or removed. Notably, refugees' information needs can also evolve over time; for example, more information is now needed on longer-term services, opportunities and inclusion within host communities. At the same time, Slovak society must also be engaged and included to promote social cohesion.

RCF partners are mapping complaint and feedback mechanisms and setting Standard Operating Procedures for receiving, responding and referring feedback as needed, with an eye to harmonizing approaches wherever possible. Feedback received will be analysed and brought to relevant working groups to inform their decision-making. To help mainstream AAP across the response, a workshop conducted with Slovak and Ukrainian organisations, other partners and government counterparts was held on 10 May in Košice; workshop outcomes included sector-specific recommendations for action.

Questions about your  
**rights, obligations,**  
and available **services**  
**in Slovakia**

Meet the HELP website!

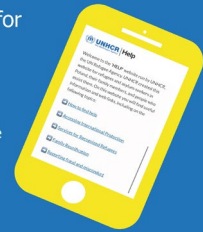
[Help.unhcr.org/Slovakia](https://help.unhcr.org/Slovakia)

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## CHILD PROTECTION

In line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, child protection issues are addressed by the Child Protection Sub-Working Group (CP SWG), co-chaired by UNICEF, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MoLSAF) and UNHCR. Child protection issues are also mainstreamed in the work of other relevant platforms, such as the PIWG, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Sub-Working Group, the PSEA Network, and the Inclusion Sub-Working Group as regards education, cash enrolment, and temporary accommodation.

In this current phase of operations, child protection preparedness and response is focused on providing immediate assistance to people in need, through Protection Desks at border crossing points as well as main registration/service centres in Košice, Michalovce, Nitra, Žilina and Gabčíkovo, as well as through [Blue Dots](#), while at the same time reinforcing already existing protection structures in the country. Relevant child protection services offered via Protection Desks include case management, identification, rapid assessment and referral of children and women at risk, psycho-social support, legal aid and counselling. Additional services might include medical first aid, safe sleeping areas, specific NFIs and others, as needed. In addition, together with partners, UNICEF supported the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in capacity-building on prevention and response to trafficking and exploitation of children, identification and response to child victims of trafficking and improving child-sensitive communication. This training targets more than 300 border police officers as first responders to potential child trafficking and exploitation, and will be further adapted for two more target groups: child protection workers and representatives of organizations working with volunteers. UNICEF also contributed to a training on child safeguarding for organizations involving and mobilizing volunteers and child protection personnel assisting with the response, encompassing topics such as specific child safeguarding risks in emergency situations, safer recruitment, risk assessments, supervision of volunteers, and others. Ongoing protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) training is designed to help ensure that all RCF members are fully equipped to mainstream PSEA across all activities that involve children, including timely reporting, referrals and respond to any potential SEA cases.

The CP SWG is analyzing the current legal and policy framework for alternative care, and supporting national efforts to prevent family separation and transition to an approach based on family, as opposed to institutional, care. Another priority is coordinating an inter-sectoral referral pathway, supported by an information management system, to ensure that children and women can access the assistance they need. These efforts include helping improve the Gabčíkovo Humanitarian Center, managed by Mol's Migration Office, with stronger safety and security protocols, prevention and response services regarding gender-based violence, and child protection facilities.

There are 92 unaccompanied minors currently in the national system, of which 86 children are in child and family centres across the country. In these centres, children are assessed by social workers and can contact their family members including those in Ukraine. Further efforts will also be invested into strengthening child rights monitoring, in collaboration with the National Human Right Institute, the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Children rights, and other key human rights bodies.

### ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Within the PIWG, there is a dedicated technical forum on preventing and responding to risks of human trafficking, chaired by IOM, the Ministry of the Interior (Mol), *Slovak Catholic Charity* and Mol's *Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and for Crime Prevention*. This Anti-Trafficking Task Force focuses on 4 areas: awareness-raising (including producing more materials for distribution at key entry points), capacity-building (including training for first responders and workers at longer term accommodation sites), direct assistance (including strengthening the referral system, relying on partners to help map available services) and facilitating dialogue among stakeholders such as NGOs, Mol, and law enforcement on issues like how to work with sensitive data on this issue.

### ACCOMMODATION

If refugees decide to stay in Slovakia, they are offered short-term accommodation in sites established by district authorities, for example in gyms or cultural centers with a capacity of at least 50 beds. Refugees can stay in these sites for 10 days, during which time they can apply for temporary protection and receive food as well as medical, social and humanitarian aid. Temporary protection status entitles them to access an application called *Bookio*, which was designed by a private company for the Ministry of Transport and Construction to identify and reserve spots in accommodation sites like hotels, hostels, and other voluntary providers. The Government has requested collaboration in refining this app and ensuring that refugees know how to access it.

The Government currently provides a financial allowance to private individuals who host refugees (7 euros/person/day); these payments were set to end on 30 June and the Government has indicated that they will be extended further and possibly increased as well. To date, RCF partners have conducted rapid assessments for at least 26 sites of tented and transit shelters in Košice and Prešov regions, to help identify how the sites can be better adapted to this context (e.g., minor maintenance works, equipment to assist people with special needs, suggestions for expanding capacity, etc.). Partner organisations are also present in accommodation centres to provide information, non-food items like kitchen supplies and psychological support.

Regarding current gaps, RCF partners do not have access to a comprehensive database of accommodation sites, which limits analysis of whether capacity is sufficient in the short-, medium- or long-terms. Notably, the Government is considering opening new accommodation centers and emergency transit venues, as needed. Still, the capacity may be outpaced by demand if the rate of arrivals increases significantly. Also, as the conflict is drawn out in Ukraine, more longer-term accommodation solutions are also needed, particularly in light of the limited space available for each individual in existing sites. The Ministry of the Interior is currently in the process identifying available accommodation sites ('passportization' of buildings) and estimating related costs, as some empty buildings are reportedly available but would need to be refurbished to be suitable.

 **INCLUSION**

The need to further adapt the response towards medium- to long-term solutions for inclusion and integration requires not only supporting the Government in adapting relevant policies, as needed – but also helping expand the required infrastructure and capacity of government and civil society actors to sustainably implement at the necessary scale.

The PIWG has embraced inclusion as a top priority, highlighting the importance of mainstreaming refugees into national services and ensuring their effective access to rights and services as soon as possible. An initial group of partners who have already been working in the area of inclusion and integration came together on 6 May: led by *People in Need Slovakia*, this group includes government line ministries, *Human Rights League*, *Mareena*, *CVEK (Center for Ethnicity and Culture Research)*, *Slovak Youth Council*, *ETP Slovensko - Center for Sustainable Development*, *Nadácia DEDO*, *Who Will Help Ukraine* (private sector coalition), *Tenenet*, *People at Risk*, *IOM*, and *UNHCR*. This group discussed the parameters for the Inclusion Sub-Working Group and a related action plan to be co-led by the Government. The group continues work on, inter alia, improving channels of communication with authorities at different levels as regards who is responsible for which aspects of inclusion.

**Social cohesion**

The war in Ukraine has had significant impacts on Slovakia’s economy. Consumer prices in March were nearly 2% higher than February, and 10.4% higher than March 2021. Energy prices is another public concern: recent media reports noted that Slovakia gets 85% of its natural gas from Russia and roughly half of that goes to industry. The President succinctly linked these economic pressures to the public perception of the refugee response in a 12 April newspaper quote: “[T]he wave of solidarity in connection with the refugee crisis is right and good, but at the same time it is necessary to help the people in Slovakia”.

RCF partners are committed to helping the people and Government of Slovakia navigate this context constructively. This includes recognizing refugees’ important potential to contribute to Slovak society and the economy, as well as ensuring that all RCF activities are designed to support host communities in maintaining their essential role in the response.

The Government asked for collaboration particularly on the communications angle. The NGO *Mareena*, for example, will help to increase the focus on social cohesion through inclusion support to refugees as well as engagement with host communities. Still, further resources will be needed to ensure adequate civil society capacity, and to reinforce and expand strategic communications and programming with host communities to address medium- to longer-term risks of tension.

**“OTHER LOCAL SOLUTIONS”**  
**(EXCERPT FROM *THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES*)**

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

 **EDUCATION**

30,000 of temporary protection applicants are children (40% of total). The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports (MoES) provides subsidies to schools that enroll refugees (200 euros/child). Currently 9,732 children from Ukraine are enrolled in Slovak schools, of which 1,581 are in kindergartens, 7,287 in primary schools and 864 children in secondary schools. This figure of just under 10,000 enrolments is unprecedented,

especially given the population size and available resources in the country. Bratislava region has the highest number of these children enrolled.

The Inclusion Sub-Working Group identified a domestic legal gap in that Temporary Protection status holders, other refugees benefiting from temporary residence arrangements and asylum-seekers are exempt from compulsory education rules, which means that the attendance of children who are not permanent residents is left to the discretion of their parents and legal guardians. MoES and other stakeholders will continue to seize the momentum of these first exchanges to further collaborate and address challenges in ensuring access of Ukrainian children to education. The Inclusion Sub-Working Group will also address inclusion in education of youth (tertiary education and informal education), of minorities, in particular the Roma and LGBTIQ+ persons.

UNICEF is working closely with the MoES and the National Institute for Education (NIE) on development of partnerships to support children's right to education. The signing of MoU with MoES and NIE has been scheduled for the first week of June. MoES has also requested UNHCR support in areas such as adult education, youth inclusion, and training of teachers to facilitate inclusion of refugee children in the national education system, including through the [UNHCR Teaching About Refugees](#) programme in the new school year. The MoES indicated another area of possible collaboration regarding adult education for Ukrainians as well as working with youth through the MoES's *Institute for Youth*.

Another government initiative of note is the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family's (MoLSAF) "children groups", which aims to help address insufficient capacities in pre-school facilities. This measure offers financial incentives for a private person (for example, one mother) to provide care for a group of children in a home environment as an alternative to care in official facilities. A legislative proposal to enable the creation of these "children groups" was [submitted](#) to the Parliament on 16 May. This follows an earlier government move to expand capacity limits for preschools from earlier in the response, which highlights the Government's concerns about insufficient capacities in pre-schools – which affects Slovak and refugee children alike.

As the number of temporary protection cases continue to increase, and in light of the upcoming start of the new school year in September, there is a need to increase the capacity of schools in terms of both physical infrastructure and resources – including a need for more Ukrainian teachers. Consultations with refugee representatives also highlight how the upcoming summer holiday presents additional challenges in securing suitable temporary housing and childcare; families are anxious about managing livelihoods while ensuring children can continue accessing education. Gaps in physical infrastructure also remain a major obstacle.



Under Slovak law, persons granted asylum or subsidiary protection are entitled to access national health services on par with Slovak citizens. Temporary protection status, in contrast, includes access to a smaller but still substantial set of healthcare services that fall under the Government's definition of "urgent" care as well as services that are deemed "necessary"; such healthcare is covered by *Všeobecná zdravotná poisťovňa* (VZP), the general health insurance company in Slovakia. There is limited information available now on the scale at, and ease with, which refugees with temporary protection status are accessing such healthcare in practice – though VZP data indicates that hospital services have been accessed by temporary protection status holders in all districts within the country. WHO will soon receive comprehensive primary care usage information from the Ministry of Health, which should help to clarify refugees' access to health services.

RCF partners continue to support Ministry of Health leadership and identify emerging gaps. A Health Working Group has been established, chaired by WHO, and meets regularly to coordinate health stakeholders in assessments, design, planning, implementation, advocacy, resource mobilization, monitoring and. WHO is undertaking a health needs assessment exercise to identify gaps in how the system works in practice and explore mid- to long-term needs of refugees from Ukraine in Slovakia. Access to and utilization of health care services will also be monitored as part of the ongoing Multisector Needs Assessment.

One emerging good practice is an outpatient clinic for refugees in Košice hospital supported by Ukrainian health staff. This excellent initiative could be emulated in different cities and countries where there are Ukrainian health workers, who have been trained or certified in Slovakia.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)**

Wartime displacement has imposed upon Ukrainian refugees a range of adversities: exposure to violence; loss of or separation from loved ones; loss of homes and belongings; poor living conditions; physical injuries and illnesses; to name a few. Supporting them in processing and recovering from such stressors is an essential priority of RCF partners.

**SPOTLIGHT ON CIVIL SOCIETY: IPČKO**

IPčko is a non-governmental organization founded in 2012 with the aim to provide professional psychological help and support to people who need it. IPčko is an organization made up of mostly young volunteer professionals: psychologists, special educators, and social workers whose mission is to provide 24-hour, accessible help. The aim of IPčko is to address the needs of young people by providing them with professional help, strengthening existing projects/services and ensuring their sustainability as well as creating new, innovative and trend-setting forms of professional assistance. IPčko operates three helplines, field crisis intervention teams for persons in acute mental health crisis (alongside firefighters, police and other authorities), online outreach via social networks, crisis intervention centres across the country, a virtual reality psychological lab – in addition to refugee-specific interventions at border crossing points, service centres and registration centres for both refugees and humanitarian workers. In addition, their Emergency Terrain Crisis Intervention Team provides psychosocial support to refugees in accommodation sites where psychological care would otherwise not be available to refugees dealing with post-traumatic stress, flashbacks, panic attacks and other symptoms of wartime trauma.

To this end, the MHPSS Sub-Working Group, chaired by WHO and the League of Mental Health, has 69 partners from 30 organizations, of which eight work directly at border points. The group promotes and supports quality MHPSS interventions through joint capacity building activities to ensure quality standards.

All RCF partners need to mainstream MHPSS considerations – including dedicated resources if necessary – into their programming (e.g. Psychological First Aid training) to ensure the safety of refugees as well as frontline staff. How services are delivered is vital to help promote recovery and avoid exacerbating stressors unintentionally at all stages of the response.

Ongoing efforts also focus on expanding sustainable access to MHPSS at Blue Dots and in all relevant program activities, including by finding more opportunities to identify and treat distress and trauma within the immediate response.



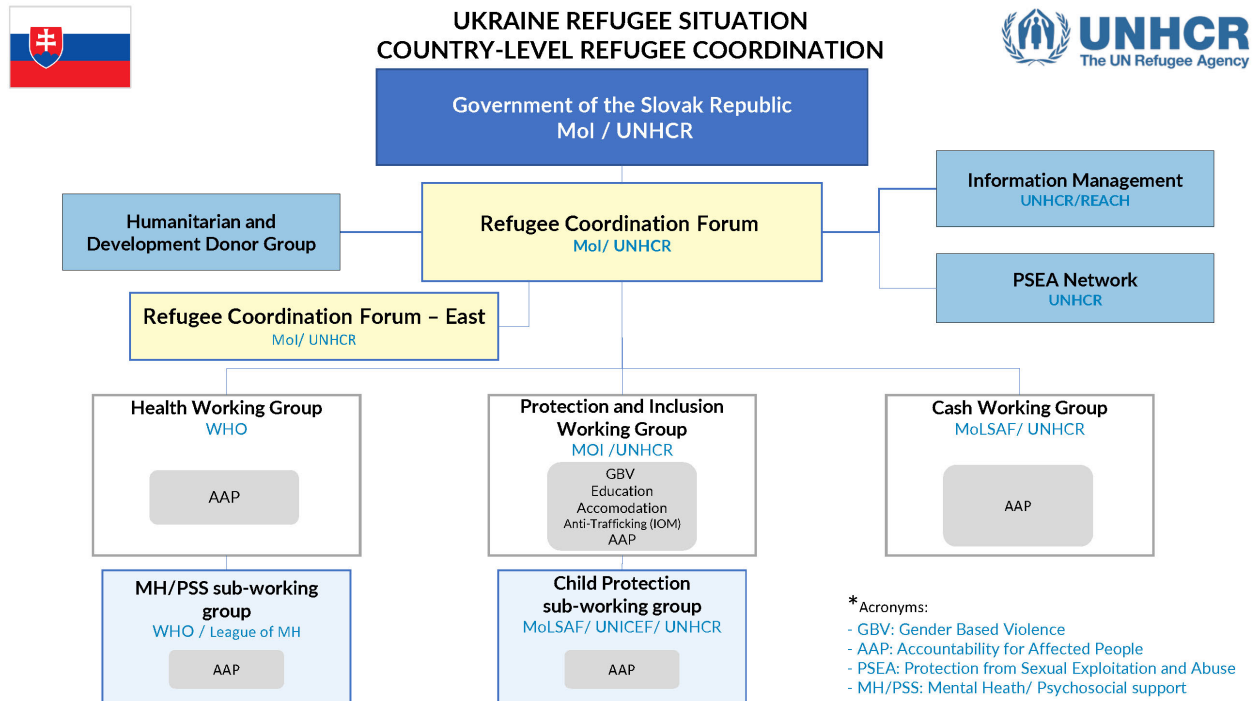
Domestic and international goodwill, along with the solidarity it has generated for refugees, provides an opportunity to strengthen national protection and inclusion frameworks. This is an important focus for the RCF, as regards both immediate reception and humanitarian aid as well as medium- and longer-term approaches to resilience and solutions.

## Working in partnership

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



- *The Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)*: Established at both the national level as well as in the east, co-chaired by the Government on the overall refugee response.
- *RCF Working Groups, Sub-Working Groups and Task Forces*: Within the umbrella of the RCF, these coordination sub-fora focus on technical issues related to particular themes to maximize collective efforts on tasks such as needs assessments, planning, monitoring, reporting and information management within and across sectors.
- *Humanitarian and development Donor Group*: This group brings together representatives of donor countries to keep them updated on the response, including on areas where their support has been instrumental and where further support is most urgent.



This mechanism is specifically designed to help the Government coordinate an inclusive, accountable, predictable, and transparent refugee response. It involves all stakeholders in collectively identifying and addressing the most pressing needs. Partners are also actively working to broadening the support base in Slovakia, by bringing a wide array of stakeholders into the response, including private sector coalitions, while placing an important focus on capacity-building of civil society, volunteer groups and refugee-led organizations already engaged.

In recognition of the RCF’s contributions to the Slovak refugee response, the Government has built useful linkages with its own internal coordination mechanisms in recent weeks. First, it created the *Steering Committee for Coordination of the Humanitarian Relief Actions* and invited UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, WHO and IFRC, as a high-level interface between the RCF and relevant ministries and bodies – including notably, the Central Crisis Management Board (CCMB). As the co-lead of the RCF, UNHCR has also been invited to join the Governments’ crisis board daily meetings, at both the strategic and technical levels. These new arrangements are important steps to improving how information is shared and collective efforts can best be leveraged towards the common goal of an effective, efficient and sustainable refugee response in Slovakia.

The Government and RCF partners held a national launch for the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) on 11 May at the Ministry of the Interior. The Interior Ministry’s [press release](#) and Facebook [post](#) lauded the close coordination amongst all stakeholders including Government, the UN, civil society, private sector, volunteers and refugee-led organizations. State Secretary Leitner presided over the event, emphasizing the importance of supporting refugee inclusion including by facilitating access to labor markets. Other speakers included UNHCR, IOM, donors, Slovak civil society, private sector and a refugee-led organization – who thanked MoI and UNHCR representatives for respecting them as “equal partners in the response” and as “a community that can deliver”.

## The Slovak Republic in the *Global Refugee Forum*



Amid turbulent times in many places around the world, Slovakia provides a much-needed example of good practices in responding to displacement with humanity, responsibility and pragmatic vision. Their ongoing engagement with the [Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\)](#) is an important means of systematizing and sharing these practices with other countries facing similar challenges. The GRF is rooted in the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#), which was affirmed by the UN General Assembly in 2018 as a framework for strengthening international solidarity with both refugees and affected host countries. The GCR recognizes that sustainable solutions to refugee situations are impossible without cooperation; it provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees are supported in regaining control over their lives. To this end, the GRF brings together States and other actors every four years to share good practices and help implement the GCR through financial support, technical expertise and policy improvements.

Slovakia made three pledges at the first-ever Global Refugee Forum in 2019, manifesting its commitment to the GCR in the form of humanitarian and post-humanitarian projects in the Middle East, financial support to refugee education and equal opportunities, and deploying national expertise to help other EU countries responsibly manage refugee influxes. Since then, they have regularly updated on these pledges and continue to make progress. The war in Ukraine presents an opportunity to further deepen this engagement with the GCR at next year's GRF. Good practices related to, for example, keeping its border open to refugees fleeing the war, or the swift activation of a temporary protection scheme to ensure refugees have access to a secure legal status and social services, among other important steps, have played an important role in avoiding or mitigating many of the protection risks that refugees often face in other situations. Importantly, this response also allowed the Government to focus resources on activities that minimize refugee vulnerability – and maximize their contributions to Slovak society – over time.

RCF partners stand ready to help Slovakia develop and highlight practices and pledges related to its national response, as well as advocate for supporting pledges from other countries, at next year's GRF. In this way, the lessons of this response can echo beyond this immediate context to help improve how the world handles such situations in the future.

### CONTACTS

**Tim Shoffner**, External Relations Officer  
shoffner@unhcr.org, Tel: +421 949 489 441

**Caroline Lensing-Hebben**, Senior Inter-Agency Officer  
lensingh@unhcr.org, Cell +41 76 682 55 64

### LINKS

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