UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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UNHCR Regional Representation for Central and South-East Europe (RCSEE)

Based in Budapest, the Representation for Central and South-East Europe coordinates operations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and Kosovo[1].

RSCEE's Approach in Central and South-East Europe

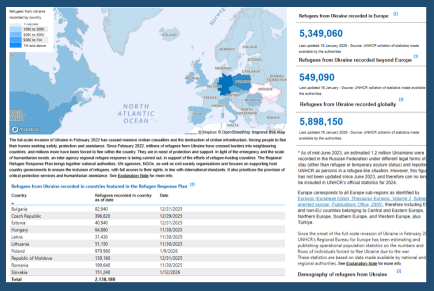
ROUTE-BASED APPROACH

The Western Balkans remains a key transit corridor for mixed and onward movements of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons. With an estimated 91,500 people in need of protection along the Western Balkans, UNHCR supports both Western Balkan partners and EU Member States to strengthen asylum systems and expand access to rights. UNHCR's Route-Based Approach (RBA) delivers a coordinated, protection-focused response along the route addressing needs at entry, transit, and integration stages in a coordinated manner. Through this approach, UNHCR supports States in managing movements more predictably and humanely, upholding international protection, easing pressures on asylum systems, and saving lives.

STATELESSNESS

UNHCR supports authorities across Central and South-East Europe to prevent and reduce statelessness, by strengthening civil registration systems, removing documentation barriers, and advancing universal birth registration. Across the region, UNHCR works with governments to strengthen or establish statelessness determination mechanisms, improve access to documentation, and ensure safeguards for persons at risk of statelessness. Most countries in the region have acceded to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions, reflecting strong regional commitment to the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

UKRAINE SITUATION



Nearly 170,000 Ukrainians reside across the RCSEE area of responsibility, including over 90,000 Temporary Protection (TP) holders.

While UNHCR actively supports Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers across all 9 locations covered by the RCSEE, the Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine primarily covers first countries of entry, where pressure is highest, notably Hungary within the RCSEE region. In Hungary, in coordination with national authorities, UNHCR oversees the Refugee Coordination Forum bringing together 69 organizations supporting Ukrainian refugees across 7 sectors. The 2025 – 2026 RRP Hungary chapter targets 70,000 refugees.

[1] *References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)*

Core Areas of Work

Access to Territory and Protection Monitoring

UNHCR supports authorities to safeguard access to territory and uphold the right to seek asylum. Protection monitoring and regular field visits at select border points inform advocacy on humane border management, early identification of people with protection needs, and access to national asylum procedures.

Strengthening Asylum Systems

UNHCR supports authorities to align asylum legislation and procedures with international and EU standards through legal advice, institutional capacity building, and quality assurance initiatives. Across the region, UNHCR aims to make asylum procedures fairer and more efficient, supporting EU Member States in implementing the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, and helping Western Balkan partners advance accession-related asylum reforms.

Inclusion and Livelihoods

UNHCR works with authorities to remove legal and administrative barriers that limit access to national services for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. Across the region, UNHCR supports vocational training, language classes and job-placement initiatives, working with public employment services and private-sector partners to promote socio-economic inclusion and ensure long-term self-reliance.

Data Collection and Policy Guidance

UNHCR's Regional Protection Monitoring System (RPMS) provides **evidence-based insights** into the experiences, protection risks, and movement intentions of refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants arriving in South-Eastern Europe.

Capacity Strengthening

UNHCR works with national authorities, social services, and frontline staff to strengthen capacities across asylum, reception, child protection, and social welfare systems. Support includes capacity-building for national institutions, support to Western Balkan partners on EU accession–related reforms, and targeted activities on identification, referral and protection from violence and exploitation.

Legal Aid

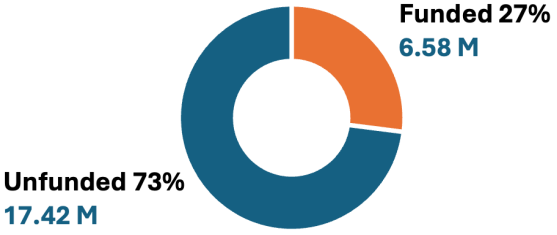
Across the region, UNHCR and partners provide free legal aid to refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people, from first instance through appeals. Support is delivered through civil society partners across EU Member States and the Western Balkans, while UNHCR also helps authorities strengthen free legal aid systems to progressively transition services to national ownership.

UNHCR donated more than 600,000 aid packages to refugees and Hungarian families in need

READ MORE VIEW VIDEO

FUNDING UPDATE

RCSEE Financial requirements 2026: **USD 24.0 million**



UNHCR is grateful to the donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the 2026 global programmes.
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UNHCR is also grateful for the generous contributions from the private sector and individuals.

RCSEE is grateful to the donors for its 2026 programme.
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