

HUNGARY

January – February 2023

As of February 2023, **2,835** vulnerable refugees received winter items distributed by UNHCR and partners. UNHCR has successfully concluded its winter season NFI distribution.

The **Regional Refugee Response Plan 2023** for Hungary was launched on 7 March. The event was attended by over 100 guests, including ambassadors and the diplomatic community, representatives of UN organizations and RRP partner organizations.

Since the opening of the UNHCR/IOM **Budapest Helps! Community Centre** nearly 2,500 refugees from Ukraine had been provided with access to information, legal assistance and various social services. Most requests for information are for education, accommodation and healthcare.

KEY FIGURES since 24 Feb 2022

4.2 M total border crossings to Hungary (15th March 2023)

2.2M crossing directly from Ukraine

2.0M crossing via Romania border

34,248 applications for Temporary Protection in Hungary (5th of February)

176,083 temporary residency certificate were issued to Ukrainian nationals in 2022

4,965 enrolled in primary and secondary education (State Secretary for Public Education)



Ukrainian mother finds safety in Hungary but aches for home. She shares her [story](#) following the 1 year mark of the start of the Ukraine Crisis. Photo credit UNHCR/Zsolt Balla

UNHCR PRESENCE IN HUNGARY

STAFF:

- **61** Total staff
- **20** International Staff

OFFICES:

- **1** UNHCR Representation for Central Europe located in Budapest



Operational Context

As of mid- March, the number of border crossings from Ukraine has totaled 4.2 M, with 2.2 M crossings directly from the Ukraine border and 2 M crossings from the Romanian border. While the significant majority move on to other European countries, over **34,248 individuals have applied for Temporary Protection status in Hungary** (as the 5th of February). Many have urgent protection needs and underlying vulnerabilities, including **persons with disabilities**. Pendular movements between Ukraine and Hungary remain a consistent trend as people return to Ukraine to obtain documents, check on family members and personal properties.

UNHCR ensures a safe and protective environment for vulnerable refugees and their families, in close cooperation with the Hungarian Government, and **equitable access to basic assistance and protection of all refugee women, girls, men, boys and persons with specific needs, including Roma refugees**. UNHCR and partners continue to actively support refugees arriving in Hungary to meet their basic needs and access protection and emergency assistance, such as receiving vital access to information, referral to psycho-social support, and assistance finding short and long-term accommodation, and accessing specialized services. “Blue Dot” support centres provide information and assistance to those arriving to Hungary in Zahony, Beregsurany, and Tiszabecs. To date, over 13,000 people have been assisted through the Blue Dots. As the winter season has concluded, UNHCR and partners distributed winter jackets, socks, hats and gloves to 2,835 vulnerable refugees throughout Hungary.

As the arrival of refugees from Ukraine is placing pressure on the national systems, UNHCR has evolved its response to also focus on strengthening national capacities to **support refugee inclusion into national systems and socio economic self-reliance**. The Budapest Helps! Community Center, in coordination with IOM and the Budapest Municipality, is leading inclusion focused capacity-building, empowerment, and community events for refugee communities, in collaboration with partners and refugee-led organizations, focusing on the most vulnerable.

UNHCR and partners are continuing to reinforce **information provision and legal counselling** to ensure those arriving from Ukraine remain fully informed about procedures for applying for Temporary Protection, as well as the associated rights and services. Additionally, UNHCR is working with local counterpart organizations to improve screening and identification of those with **specific vulnerabilities**, notably older people and persons with limited mobility or physical impairments, while identification and referral of **unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) to specialized services** continues to be prioritized.

Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) remains a critical priority for those in displacement, particularly for women at risk and within the digital landscapes. Ensuring that people of concern understand their rights, can access assistance, and can communicate any risks or report instances of sexual abuse and exploitation to humanitarian actors is crucial. Ongoing investment and capacity building is needed to prevent the threat of illegal activity along border crossing points, including **trafficking and exploitation** – particularly given the arriving population is mainly comprised of women and children.



At the Budapest Helps! Community Center, Ukrainian women participate in a workshop to learn embroidery skills. Not only are women able to learn a new skill, but they are able to come together as a community to relax, decompress, and learn a new skill. Photo Credit: UNHCR/Zsolt Balla

Working with Partners

UNHCR works in close coordination partners to support refugees and asylum-seekers as well as with state entities including local and municipal authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, humanitarian partners, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders providing assistance to those seeking protection.

As part of the Ukraine Situation response, UNHCR leads and coordinates the **Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)** at country-level in Hungary, bringing together over 70 stakeholders to ensure harmonized response within national efforts and among inter-agency partners, NGOs, volunteers and other stakeholders, with associated **Working Groups** (Protection – including Child Protection and Education, and Basic Needs – including Shelter, Food, and Non-Food Items) and two cross-cutting task forces (PSEA, MHPSS) to effectively coordinate inter-agency partner’s response.

UNHCR has 11 partnership agreements with the following organizations: Cordelia Foundation, Hungarian Baptist Aid, Hungarian Charity of the Order of Malta, Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC), Hungarian Red Cross, Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, Mandak House, Menedék, Next Step, Romaversitas, and ULE Association.

UNHCR Response

Protection

- On 21 February 2023, UNHCR co-organized an event with IKEA and the Embassy of Sweden on promoting the employment of refugees in Hungary. Over 35 people attended with the participation of 10 multinational and local companies, the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, the Hungarian Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers and UNHCR partner NGOs. The event highlighted the profile and situation of refugees in Hungary, the main barriers of their access to the labour market, and best practices from Hungary and abroad. IKEA and UNHCR partner Menedék presented their Skills for Refugees program, UNHCR the findings of its multi-sectoral needs assessment, and the Boston Consulting Group an assessment of the refugees labor market situation in Hungary.



Working together for inclusion: IKEA, Embassy of Sweden in Budapest and UNHCR invited interested companies and organizations to discuss how to unlock employment opportunities in Hungary for refugees and employers alike. Photo credits UNHCR

- UNHCR, IOM and Menedék conducted a joint workshop on 22 February, focusing on the risks of labour exploitation or trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation within the context of the Ukraine refugee crisis. The workshop was attended by 31 people from national partners, and Hungarian government counterparts (Unit of Counter-Trafficking and Horizontal Issues, Ministry of Interior and European Employment Services (EUREST), Ministry of Economy Development). Key topics of discussion were global trends on trafficking, labour exploitation, higher risks for Romas, and a presentation by EUREST on labour market information provision and prevention that is available in Hungary. Follow-up will take place at both the Inter-agency level and through the Protection Working Group.
- UNHCR held a training for members of the law students’ organizations ELSA (European Law Students Association) Hungary and JOSZ (Organization of Self-Educating Law Students) on 27 February. The training focused on international protection and the mandate of UNHCR and the legal protection of refugees from Ukraine. Overall, 19 students from across the country participated in the online seminar

event. The training provided a good opportunity to mainstream refugee law and the work of UNHCR among university students in Hungary.

Education

- With UNHCR's support, Menedék developed an information and advocacy video around international families and how their children are managing to integrate into the Hungarian education system. The video is one building block of UNHCR's increased communication regarding the education system in Hungary to encourage enrolment, show positive examples and.
 - In Hungary, foreign children between the ages of 3 and 16 are subject to compulsory schooling. Many parents are unsure or concerned about schooling in Hungary since they are non-Hungarian speakers and not native to the country. The [short film](#) is primarily aimed foreign families and refugee families who want to hear positive stories about the successful school success of foreign children.

Inter-agency Coordination

- The [Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) for Hungary took place on 7 March 2023, with the participation of Miklos Soltesz, State Secretary for Relations with Churches and National Minorities. The event was attended by over 100 guests, including ambassadors and the wider diplomatic community, representatives of UN organizations and RRP partner organizations as well as a variety of Government department interlocutors. Hungarian media was also present to cover the event. The [Hungary RRP](#) will work to address the urgent needs of refugees, stateless individuals, and TCNs in the country, including at-risk groups and individuals with specific protection needs, by means of improved protection monitoring and strengthened inclusion and social cohesion. RRP partners will support existing government efforts through a multisectoral humanitarian response, reinforcing reception standards, strengthening the national protection systems and their workforce, building the capacity of frontline professionals, and improving information-sharing. Partners will aim at strengthening national authorities' response at border crossings and collection/help points in Budapest, urban areas and the rest of the country.



For 2023, the participation of organizations in the RRP was expanded, from 22 partners in 2022 to 37 in 2023, mobilizing new actors to the response. In line with the localization agenda, RRP partnership in Hungary heavily relies on Hungarian organizations (75 per cent of the partners), including local NGOs (18) and charities (6), as well as organizations led by refugees (4).

The total Inter-agency financial requirements are 67.2 M USD of which UNHCR is requesting 17.5 M USD.

Communication and Provision of Information

- UNHCR's [Help Page](#) for Hungary provides refugees with information on Temporary Protection procedures, key contacts and addresses, and referral information for specialized services, including family reunification and legal/social counselling. Links to dedicated information videos in English, Hungarian, Ukrainian and Russian provide general information on Temporary Protection and associated services available in Hungary. Additional communication channels include an SMS line and a dedicated email to respond to queries, and to allow individuals to provide feedback and share any complaints. As of the 13th of March there have been 122,000 visits to the website.

- UNHCR established a Telegram Channel that enables one-way communication with Ukrainian refugees in Hungary. To date, there are over 1,400 subscribers. The Telegram Channel allows for refugees to access the important update and information in a platform that is widely used by Ukrainians. Following routine monitoring, the majority of inquiries involve information regarding financial support, education, healthcare services, employment and accommodation.
- Due to a noted gap in information, and upon the request of many refugees on Telegram, UNHCR has designed “Health Information Cards” in Hungarian, English and Ukrainian. The cards contain information on how to access the Hungarian health system and will be distributed among partners and at the IOM/UNHCR joint Community Center, Zahony border train station and the Blue Dot locations. In addition the [Hungary Help Page](#) was updated with the new health-related information.



Where and how do I find a medical doctor in Hungary?

Entry point to the Hungarian health care system - general practitioner (GP) assigned to the location where you live.

Scan the QR code to search for the right general practitioner based on your address and follow the steps below:

1. Select your county of residence
2. Select your place of residence
3. If there are multiple GP offices in your municipality: Select the GP office which is closest to you
4. Contact GP office at the provided phone number(s) for an appointment. Always indicate if you are looking for a pediatrician ('gyermekorvos')!



Special Thanks to Donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2023

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Links

For further information, please visit the [Ukraine Situation Operational Data Portal](#)

[UNHCR Central Europe](#) • [UNHCR Hungary](#) • [UNHCR Hungary Country Website](#) • [UNHCR Ukraine Emergency Appeal](#)

Sign up for the [UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe mailing list](#) to receive regular updates on the Ukraine Situation.