



Czech Republic

July - October 2022

As of 31 October 2022, the Czech Republic has granted Temporary Protection to 453,725 refugees fleeing from Ukraine. The country continues to register new arrivals, but the flow has considerably reduced since March 2022. 47% of refugees entering the Czech Republic are women and 33% children.

The Czech Republic is both a transit and a destination country with the third highest number of registered Ukrainian refugees in the region, after Poland and Germany, and the highest number of refugees from Ukraine per capita globally. The large Ukrainian diaspora present in Czech Republic before the war, the dynamic economy with the lowest unemployment rate in the EU and the significant solidarity with refugees have led to large numbers of Ukrainians choosing to seek safety in the Czech Republic. While movements within the Schengen area and back to Ukraine are complex to monitor, nearly 60,000 children have been enrolled in Czech schools for the 2022-23 school year, which indicates many Ukrainian families remain in the Czech Republic as refugees.

KEY FIGURES (as of 31 October)¹

7.8 M	57,366	453,725	47%	33%
Individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe	Refugees from Ukraine enrolled in Czech schools	Refugees who have received temporary protection status	Percentage of refugees who are women	Percentage of refugees who are children

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

USD 1.85 B	USD 1.31 B	71 %	USD 42.6 M	4
Overall financial requirements	Funding received	Percent funded	Financial requirements for the Czech Republic	Number of RRP partners

Operational context

The Ukraine refugee population continues growing and requires timely and sustained support to ensure basic protection, assistance and inclusion/adaptation needs are met in the immediate to mid-term.

The Lex Ukraine law, approved in March 2022 and amended in June, is a package of Government bills that outlines implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive and provides the national legal framework to assist refugees from Ukraine, including access to health care, employment, social services, education, and childcare, among others. These laws allowed the rapid registration and inclusion of refugees in Czech Republic.

Refugee Response Plan (RRP) partners have centred the response on supporting national measures and systems of the Government and civil society to deliver assistance and protection. Partners are

¹ See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) 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.

working closely with line ministries, municipal officials, and regional governments to improve capacity for service provision to refugees - particularly in the city of Prague, where more than one-third of refugees are residing. Alongside provision of support to expand capacity in the sectors of education, health, and social protection, partners are also seeking to provide targeted assistance to vulnerable refugees, including to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), survivors of exploitation and trafficking, ethnic minorities, older persons, persons with a disability and other groups with specific needs.

The Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) co-chaired by UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior is in place in the Czech Republic, to facilitate coordination between the Government, UN agencies and their partners, alongside several Working Groups and Task Forces on key areas such as Protection, and Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS). In March 2022, as part of a regional approach led by UNHCR, UN agencies in the Czech Republic developed a [Refugee Response Plan](#) to support government-efforts and harmonize through one coherent, multisector and interagency strategy the humanitarian efforts as part of the response to the refugee crisis. In August 2022, a [recalibration process](#) was launched in the region within the national RCF, to adjust the strategy developed in March to new developments and emergency needs, linked to the beginning of the new school year and access to education and winter-related needs.

Main interventions of UN agencies



PROTECTION

Sectoral operational background

The protection response to the refugee crisis in the Czech Republic has been based on existing mechanisms, systems and services provided by state institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Both the state institutions and NGOs have increased their protection interventions taking on a considerable additional workload since the start of the Ukraine crisis. Numerous Czech NGOs specializing in social work were also able to broaden the scope of their interventions because of additional state and municipal funding.²

UN agencies are relying on the existing response capacity and on upscaling their interventions implemented prior to the crisis to support the protection response. At the same time, UN agencies have identified together with the Czech Government and NGOs areas where the response and the existing systems can be strengthened.

Progress updates

- **Protection monitoring and response to vulnerable refugees.** Either directly by UN protection staff or in collaboration with NGOs such as Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU) and Romodrom, protection monitoring is carried out in accommodation centers, entry points and in communities. In addition, based on identified needs, an individual/family response in terms of counselling, legal and administrative support, identification of needs and protection cases, and referrals, is provided. UNHCR's partner OPU provides integration and legal aid to refugees in need, for example arranging for subsidiary protection or other protection status, finding housing, employment, accessing schools and health care. Between July and September, OPU provided legal assistance and mental health and psycho-social support to 149 Ukrainian refugees (68 children).
- **Responding to the protection needs of the Roma refugee population.** In partnership with UNHCR, Romodrom has provided mental health and psycho-social support to 864 individuals including the most vulnerable (boys, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities). In September and October, UNHCR partnered with the Office of the Ombudsman and Spirited

² 2022 Strategic Priorities of the Government of the Czech Republic to Cope with Ukrainian Refugees
https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/czech-republic-determination-strategic-priorities-government-czech-republic-deal_en

Courses to provide a two-day training for over 100 social workers. The first day of the training was on the legal framework, social benefits, employment, child protection and UASCs, health insurance, accommodation, and discrimination, whilst the second day was an interactive crisis intervention workshop.

- **Communication to refugees.** UNHCR Help Site provides information on temporary protection and asylum, and links to key government and NGOs services, including legal advice and counselling. IOM provides updated information through its infoline which operates 5 days a week between 9 and 17hs in Ukrainian, Czech, English, and Russian; throughout the reporting period, IOM provided information to 1127 refugees (until 12th October). In addition, IOM has added specific sections on Temporary Protection and Humanitarian Subsidies to its website to respond to the many enquiries about the legal aspects of refugees' stay, reaching over 3,500 people with online and social media information posts.
- **Protection profiling.** In August, UNHCR with the Czech research company Sociofactor completed the second round of protection profiling with the interview of 588 refugees. 42% stated that they were not planning to permanently return to Ukraine in the upcoming 3 months, whilst 41% were undecided and 16% stated that they would return permanently to Ukraine in the next three months. The three top reasons for choosing the Czech Republic as a destination country were having family members or friends already living in the country (36%), followed by access to temporary protection/asylum (33%), and work opportunities (24%).
- **Child protection system strengthening.** Since July 2022, UNICEF has been working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) on strengthening the existing social and child protection systems to reach refugee children and families in need of specialized support and child protection.
- **Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).** With the NGO OPU, UNICEF is supporting vulnerable UASCs, ensuring they are identified, their protection needs are assessed, and they are provided with necessary support through direct service provision or referral to specialised services. So far, 84 UASC have been identified. Of these, 59 (21 girls, 38 boys) benefitted from individualised case management, including legal information, social support and MHPSS and 30 (6 girls, 24 boys) have also been supported with accommodation.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Identification of UASC:** The registration and referral process for separated children has improved in the last few months with child protection authorities either being present at registration points, or on call for referrals. However, due to the large number of arrivals between March to June, there is still a need for more dedicated assistance and support to the estimated 32,000 separated children who arrived during this period.
- **Capacity of state and municipal authorities to provide efficient services for the most vulnerable refugee children:** There is a need to strengthen and expand the capacity of the national child protection system to respond timely to the specific needs and risks of the vulnerable refugee children and families.
- **Ensuring better protection data collection and reporting.** Protection monitoring and a real-time evaluation of the protection response ensure both an appropriate individual response and allow the systematic collection of data on the protection environment to support decision-making. UNHCR will be commencing expanded protection monitoring activities during November and December 2022.



Sectoral operational background

Anti-trafficking is a priority in this refugee crisis, as the profile of the population fleeing Ukraine is mainly comprised of women and children. To address this situation, the Department of Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Interior (Mol) is developing an amended National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The current Strategy approved for the period 2020-2023 is the sixth document aimed at eliminating this crime. Anti-trafficking, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) is also prioritized by agencies.

Agencies progress updates

- **Identification and case management.** Between June and September, UNHCR partner NGO La Strada provided outreach services to 3,102 individuals (both in person and online) by providing basic and professional social counselling as well as the distribution of leaflets and other preventative materials in Ukrainian, Russian and in other languages as needed. Online outreach activities include support, information and resources regarding offers of work and accommodation, including identifying suspicious or inappropriate offers and providing advice when engaging with potential employers. La Strada also had 449 contacts via their SOS line which function as the main entry and access point to their anti-trafficking services and one of the main channels of identification of trafficked and exploited persons.
- **Capacity building.** IOM is focused on expanding counter-trafficking prevention activities including training and capacity building for the Ukrainian diaspora and for municipalities in different regions. Mapping of the needs for anti-trafficking capacity building is currently underway in three regions of the Czech Republic. Short videos on counter-trafficking have been produced targeting Ukrainian refugee women.
- **Shelter and long-term services.** In cooperation with UNHCR, La Strada opened a third safe shelter for families, particularly women and children, with the capacity to house 3 families (3 women with up to 6 children). Apart from safe accommodation, specialized services also include professional social counselling and emergency support, such as material and financial assistance, psycho-social counselling, arrangement of comprehensive or necessary medical and psychological support, employment and legal counselling.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Challenges in data collection.** Due to the sensitive nature of the incidents and stigma, the number of reported GBV and trafficking cases is very low and does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the situation. Lack of reliable data on the cases is one of the biggest challenges in designing an appropriate response.



EDUCATION

Sectoral operational background

Refugee children from Ukraine have the right to education under conditions similar to Czech citizens, and enrolment in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary grades (up to the age of 15) is mandatory. According to the latest data from Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), as of September 2022, a total of 57,366 Ukrainian children are attending Czech public schools across the country,

including pre-primary (9,276), primary (43,826), secondary (4,144) and conservatory (120) schools. The MoEYS data indicates that close to 20% of total Ukrainian refugee students are enrolled in Prague (11,038). However, one in every four refugee children enrolled in the 2021-2022 academic year stopped attending or dropped out of schools. The data from MoEYS and information from several NGO partners indicate that a substantive number of children, especially adolescents in secondary-school age, continue to access the Ukrainian e-learning curriculum instead of attending formal education in the Czech Republic.

Data on access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services for refugee children under three is not available. Given the low enrolment rates (6.3%) of the Czech population aged 0 to 3 in ECEC services and the limited number of available ECEC services in the country, it can be assumed that refugee children under the age of three currently have very limited access to ECEC.

Progress updates

- **Education system strengthening.** In September, implementation of the activities started under the workplan between UNICEF and the MoEYS with capacity building of 5 governmental and non-governmental partners. The MoEYS launched a Helpline on 22 September with 6 Ukrainian-speaking operators to support the refugee families and students through which a total of 444 requests and inquiries were made by Ukrainian refugees (341 phone calls and 103 emails) in the first week. The launch attracted great interest and response, with the two most frequently raised issues being: (i) not being able to enroll their children in Czech schools due to lack capacities in the schools; and (ii) parents not wanting to enroll their children in the Czech public education system (which is compulsory) with the hope to return to Ukraine soon.
- **Back to school campaign.** The Back-to-School campaign in partnership with the NGO META was launched through a newly developed website "together in school" reaching a total of 5,444 unique users. The website has been complemented by a leaflet. To inform the next steps of the campaign, META organized focus groups with teenagers and parents, while reaching out to current and potential Ukrainian teaching assistants too.
- **Support to early learning.** A guidance was developed and approved by the MoLSA to provide financial support to early childhood development and early learning service providers for Ukrainian children aged 0-6 years as well as their families. The first call for applications has been announced for the NGOs.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Capacity of schools and teaching staff.** It has been reported that the majority of schools in Prague have reached their full capacity due to the concentration of refugees in the municipal area and this poses challenges for the Ukrainian refugee families to enroll their children. There is a need for more facilities, equipment and materials and coordination of available seats at the municipality level.
- **Capacity of school staff and other specialists.** Both Czech teachers and Ukrainian teaching assistants need more training on inclusive education, individualized learning support, and effective management of classrooms with students with different backgrounds, experiences and abilities (incl. language) etc. Pedagogical staff and school managers also need to be supported through peer-groups and specialists to mitigate pressures due to increased workloads and various challenges emerging from the current refugee crisis.
- **Alternative and flexible learning pathways.** A substantial number of children, especially adolescents of secondary-school age, are out of the Czech public school system, despite the efforts by the government and civil society to support the smooth integration of children through 'preparatory/zero' classes. Diversified and flexible approaches are required to reach out-of-school

refugee children, through non-formal and alternative learning pathways, while extra measures are needed to address low motivation of refugee children in schools and support effective learning and skills development at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels.



HEALTH

Sectoral operational background

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has continued operation of 24 UA (Ukrainian Assistance) points, located at outpatient clinics and university hospitals, mainly in Prague (summary of contacts available at <https://uapoint.mzcr.cz/>). The purpose is to ensure easy access for Ukrainian refugees and increase capacities of health care provision in locations where the network of primary care providers was overloaded. All Ukrainian refugees can receive medical assistance including emergency medical care, and the points also provide interpreter services.

In the long-term, the capacity of the health care system could be overloaded in specific areas such as pediatric services, mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS), expensive treatments for chronic non-communicable diseases (NCD), tuberculosis or HIV. The epidemiological situation in Ukraine also brings concerns regarding tuberculosis and measles. In Ukraine, the incidence of HIV infection is 16 times higher than in the Czech Republic and the incidence of hepatitis (B and C) virus infection is also higher. Compared with the Czech Republic, vaccination coverage in Ukraine is low.

Progress updates

- **Primary health care.** To increase access to primary health care services for Ukrainian refugee children and their caregivers, under the framework of the joint workplan between the UNICEF and the Ministry of Health (MoH), UNICEF has established 6 outpatient (pediatric and adult) centres in three University Hospitals (Prague, Ostrava, Olomouc).
- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).** WHO has been hosting the weekly MHPSS Working Group attended by the MoH, National Institute of Mental Health (NUDZ), NGO Consortium, UNICEF and UNHCR to discuss provision of psychosocial support to Ukrainian refugees and volunteer workers and identify gaps and needs.

[Mapping of psychosocial services for Ukrainians in Czechia](#) was completed in cooperation with the NUDZ.

UNICEF is supporting capacity building for general practitioners and other healthcare professionals for provision of MHPSS, including intercultural context aspects during the provision of medical and social services for children and adolescents.

UNHCR is partnering with AMIGA on community mental health resilience activities through targeted training and capacity building, as well as providing in-person, needs-based psychological support to vulnerable refugees, including mothers with children living in collective accommodation centres, and a specific focus on teenagers and adolescents.

- **Strengthening capacities of Ukrainian healthcare providers.** UNICEF is working with two educational institutions: Institute for Postgraduate Medical Education in Prague and National Centre of Nursing and Other Health Professions in Brno to strengthen the capacities of Ukrainian physicians, non-medical healthcare professionals/nurses and other healthcare providers. These institutions strengthen capacities in terms of understanding of the Czech health system, Czech language skills and competences to provide essential health services for the Ukrainian refugees and host community under supervision of Czech health professionals and prepare them for the qualification exam in the country.

- **Information campaigns.** An information campaign in three languages including Czech, English and Ukrainian on patient safety and medication safety was developed by the WHO in collaboration with the MoH, NIPH, Czech Pharmacist Association, State Institute for Drug Control and the Czech Chamber of Pharmaceutical Assistants. A series of information posters, banners and videos was cross-shared on social media starting on September 12th.

Through UNICEF support, MoH is implementing a national communication campaign addressing vaccine hesitancy among both host community and Ukrainian refugees and all Ukrainian speaking communities across the country.

A monkeypox information and awareness campaign is underway supported by WHO. Posters and leaflets in Czech, Ukrainian and Russian languages are being distributed all over the country with many materials distributed in Prague as part of Prague Pride Festival.

- **Support to refugees with HIV from Ukraine.** From July 1, 2022, Česká společnost AIDS pomoc, supported by WHO, has been providing and coordinating medical, psychosocial and other support to Ukrainian refugees living with HIV in the Czech Republic. A special effort has been paid to removing barriers to access antiretroviral treatment for the patients.
- **Support to UA Point outpatient clinics.** WHO has worked with the MoH to identify the needs to support capacity and maintain high quality of care at the university hospitals which co-locate UA points (outpatient clinics) and HIV clinics. The first project with Bulovka University clinic is to be launched in October.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Lack of pediatricians.** Given the high proportion of children among Ukrainian refugees, the lack of pediatricians has become one of the major challenges. This also impedes efforts for vaccinating Ukrainian refugee children.
- **Access to public health insurance.** Some Ukrainian refugees face difficulties accessing public health insurance after the first 150 days of temporary protection. This is also true for people with a disability whose disability status is not recognized in the country. In addition, refugees who procure private insurance on their own, cannot receive care for rare diseases and some chronic diseases (HIV, for example).



ACCOMMODATION

Sectoral operational background

Since the onset of the Ukraine refugee crisis, the Czech Government has been providing housing in various forms – mainly through solidarity housing, and accommodation facilities such as hotels, hostels, adapted dormitories and similar. The survey done by MoLSA in summer has confirmed that those in collective accommodation facilities face particularly dire financial situations. This was confirmed by a survey conducted by PAQ Research which showed that families who arrived early or live with Czech households are likely to integrate better and acquire more advanced Czech language skills compared to those living in non-residential housing. Unstable housing and more frequent moving between accommodations are associated with lower probability of enrolment in primary schools and

kindergartens. Refugee families cite high housing costs, availability of spaces in schools and kindergartens and availability of work as critical considerations associated with housing.³

Progress updates

- **Support to accommodation.** In addition to providing 25,000 field cots, blankets and sleeping mats, 500 RHUs (Refugee Housing Units) and 5,000 hygiene kits to the Government, UNHCR is providing equipment for 100 apartments for hosting refugees in the Moravian-Silesian Region (Karvina, Havírov) in partnership with Heimstaden.

IOM is assisting the most vulnerable refugees from Ukraine by providing short term as well as mid-term accommodation and mapping suitable accommodation facilities. Items connected to winterization and those covering special needs are being distributed, and 900 people were assisted with shelter during the reporting period.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Additional support for Roma.** The Roma population has often been unable to access state-supported housing, which results in higher probability to be accommodated in collective accommodation.
- **Accommodation for people with disabilities.** Flats accessible to persons with disabilities are insufficiently available on the market; there is a need for additional support to refurbish underutilized housing stock for this particular purpose.



INCLUSION AND OTHER LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Sectoral operational background

PAQ Research (in partnership with Czech Radio) published a report on Czech attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees which showed that 65% of respondents were willing to accept Ukrainian refugees in the short-term, which has decreased from 80% in March 2022.⁴ The survey also found individuals who spent more than 40% of their income on housing were less willing to accept Ukrainian refugees (only 34%).

In September, the MoLSA and the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, established the Permanent Commission for Adaptation and Integration of Ukrainian Refugees and Strengthening Social Cohesion. The membership of this group includes Government Ministries, NGOs, regional and municipal authorities as well as UNICEF and UNHCR, and is a forum to discuss any issue relating to the integration of Ukrainian refugees including payment of humanitarian benefits, accommodation, the 2023 Government Strategy, and further amendments to Lex Ukraine.

Progress updates

- **Communication to the Czech population.** UNHCR has supported the NGO Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations to implement a Communication Strategy developed with a Czech communication agency. The Strategy is using reactive and proactive communication tools with the objective to support the integration of refugees while maintaining public solidarity and support. [The campaign was launched in early October.](#)

³ *Voice of Ukrainians: Experiences of refugees with housing in the Czech Republic and future outlook*, PAQ Research.

⁴ https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/zivot-k-nezplacaceni-integrace-uprchliku-davky-bydleni_2210210645_afo

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- **Dependency on government humanitarian benefit.** There are discussions on possible amendments to the Lex Ukraine and the social benefits for refugees in 2023. UNHCR Intentions Survey found that the predominant income sources of households were social protection programs or benefits (61%), followed by salary for employment (40%), and savings (23%). Despite taking into account the humanitarian benefit and the value of housing support, over 35% of Ukrainian refugees live in income poverty (compared to 9-10% among the Czechs).⁵ Refugees are currently protected from falling into total poverty through the social benefit scheme (approximately 80% of them receive it) and free housing (65% of refugees receive at least partial support). Without this support, over 80% of refugees risk compromising their financial resources, exacerbating already existing protection risks.⁶

Working in partnership

An Inter-Agency Refugee Coordination Forum has been created and meets twice a month with the participation of the MoI, the NGO Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations (representing more than 15 Czech NGOs) and UN agency representatives. The objective of this forum is to systematize the cooperation to ensure agile UN support to the Government.

Chaired by UNHCR, the Protection Working Group (WG) is a key entry point to identify common challenges while ensuring a harmonized response within existing government structures and among Inter-Agency partners.

ALIANCE CENTRE DUSEVNIHO ZDRAVI | AMIGA | ASOCIACE TRIGON, O.P.S., OSTRAVA |
ČESKÁ SPOLEČNOST AIDS POMOC, Z.S. | CZE GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS |
CONSORTIUM OF MIGRANTS ASSISTING ORGANIZATIONS | EDUZMENA | IOM | LA STRADA |
META | ORGANIZACE PRO POMOC UPRCHLÍKŮM | PAQ RESEARCH | ROMODROM | SÍŤ PRO
RODINU | SOCIO.FACTOR | UNHCR | UNIC | UNICEF | WHO

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LINKS: [REGIONAL DATA PORTAL](#) – [UKRAINE SITUATION RRP](#) – [REFUGEE FUNDING TRACKER](#)

⁵ *Voice of Ukrainians: Poverty and material deprivation*, PAQ Research.

⁶ *Voice of Ukrainians: Poverty and material deprivation*, PAQ Research.