

**REP
ORT**

**ROMANIA'S RESPONSE
TO THE UKRAINIAN
REFUGEE CRISIS**

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CANCELARIA PRIM-MINISTRULUI
CONSILIER DE STAT MARIA MĂDĂLINA TURZA



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FOREWORD BY STATE COUNSELLOR MADALINA TURZA

I clearly remember the night when Putin's decision to invade Ukraine became reality and subsequently brought war to our borders. Romania was emerging from a challenging COVID-19 crisis that pushed our economic and social limits. Nevertheless, after receiving the mandate from the Prime Minister of Romania to oversee and lead the humanitarian response to this unfolding crisis, I deeply understood the responsibility placed on my shoulders, and strongly believed that, despite all the challenges, we would deliver an outstanding whole of society response. Now, after one year of leadership and continuous efforts, we take the opportunity to pause and speak honestly about our results and lessons learnt.

Over 3 million Ukrainians have crossed our borders, and have not only been wholeheartedly welcomed in Romania, but also provided with a comprehensive array of support services. Over 106 million euros have been invested from public funds for accommodation and food, an additional 12 million euros for transportation, and an estimated 26 million dollars in cash assistance by the UN Agencies and INGOs.

Beyond meeting immediate emergency needs, there are two other major focuses of our response: medium and long term inclusion and safety measures. In a large collaborative effort between public entities, international organizations, UN Agencies, and civil society, we designed and adopted a National Plan of Measures for the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees, a first of its kind in the EU. 200 million euros were allocated from the state budget for its annual implementation. Second, we designed and adopted targeted measures to prevent and combat various security risks such as trafficking in persons, and sexual violence and abuse. A working group was created at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister which is implementing a detailed action plan to address these risks. We also organized the first European Forum and presented a vision to facilitate political dialogue and cooperation on refugee integration that goes beyond the emergency response.

These are only a few highlights of our effort so far. It has been possible only because the Government, local authorities, private sector, civil society, and international organizations and institutions have worked together in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. This reflects the essence and strength of the free world: to stand united in our core values of humanity and democracy. We will continue to face challenges, but I strongly believe in our teamwork, and in our ability to make a difference within this complex environment. For this, I am deeply grateful and thankful. Please, dear partners and friends, receive my highest appreciation for your efforts and I hope the pages to follow will give you a glimpse of our work together in 2022.

Yours respectfully,

Madalina Turza

CHAPTER 1: Situation Overview

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, launching the biggest unprovoked military offensive in Europe since World War II. 7.87 million Ukrainians have become refugees. A total of 14.8 million people — 1 in 4 Ukrainians — have left their homes, including those who are now internally displaced. As of 26 December, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 17,831 civilian casualties in Ukraine. This includes 6,884 killed including 429 children and 10,947 injured. OHCHR notes that the actual figures are likely considerably higher.

Almost a year into the conflict, deadly shelling and missile attacks continue, causing destruction, civilian injuries, and deaths. Russia's targeting of critical infrastructure across the country has left people unable to meet their basic needs including food, water, and medical supplies, and most recently access to heating and electricity as winter sets in. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has led to devastating impacts for those displaced, and has also caused new and unanticipated challenges for Romania and its neighbouring countries, given the proximity to the conflict zone and as an entry point to the European Union. While there has been overwhelming support for Ukrainians and global condemnation of Russia's invasion, the economic pressures, security concerns, and energy crisis pose an additional burden on neighbouring countries and necessitate robust strategies for refugee integration and inclusion. Romania is currently experiencing an increase in Ukrainian refugees in the country, largely due to the attacks on energy infrastructure and deteriorating weather conditions in Ukraine.

IN ROMANIA:

AS OF 5 JAN 2023



3.242.209

Ukrainian arrivals at the border



107.241

Ukrainian refugees in-country



47.851

Ukrainian children in-country



103.773

Ukrainian refugees with
Temporary Protection



4.397

Ukrainian Asylum Seekers

6

Sector Working Groups

including labour, housing, education, health, children and youth, and vulnerable persons.

20+

Pieces of legislation passed

to support the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees.

150+

Types of activities provided*

by government institutions, civil society, NGOs, UN agencies, and the private sector.

300+

NGOs who have operated in the response*

2.45M

Beneficiaries reached*

with services ranging from temporary housing to formal education to medical treatments.

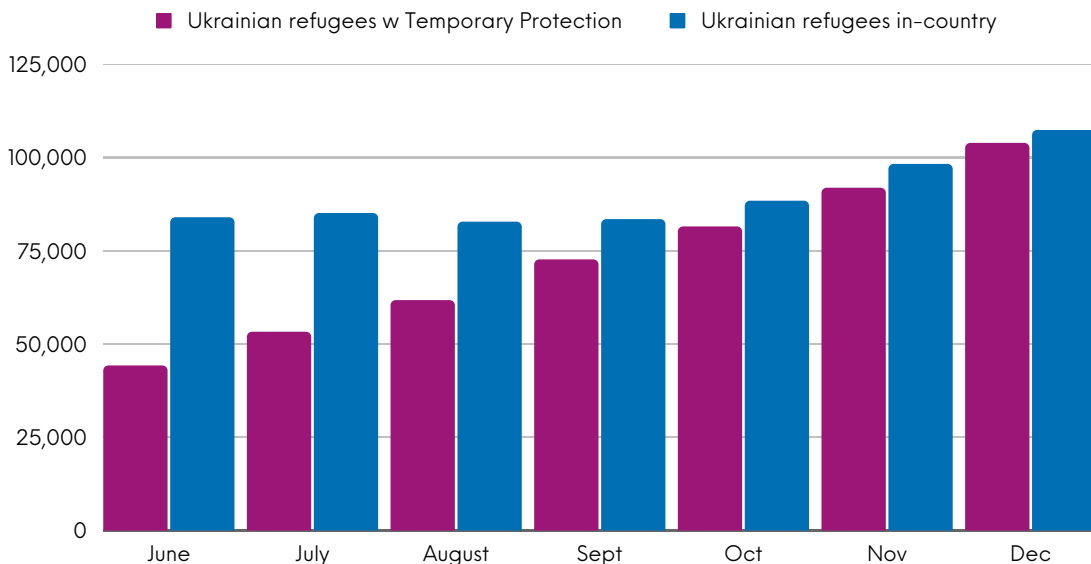
€565M

Amount budgeted*

for Romania's response, inclusive of all activities by the Government and its partners

***Estimated based on reported figures**

UKRAINIANS IN ROMANIA OVER TIME



CHAPTER 2: Romania's Response

From day one of the conflict the Government of Romania established a high-level decision-making Task-Force, coordinated by the Prime Minister. In addition, the Humanitarian Assistance Strategic Coordination Group was established at the level of the Prime Minister's Chancellery, led by a Counselor of State to ensure the strategic framework of humanitarian response and to facilitate the inter-agency cooperation among national, European, and international partners.

Romania's response to the refugee crisis is structured on two layers of intervention: a first phase emergency response and a second phase response centered on the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees.

The emergency response is led by the Department for Emergency Situations (DES) and refers to the support ensured by Romania to all refugees crossing the borders from Ukraine, and involves the deployment of resources and services at the main border crossing points, humanitarian transports, and the provision of emergency shelter, food, and basic medical assistance. The efforts have been complemented by intensive legislative and administrative efforts by various ministries of the Romanian Government and with local authorities. The public effort was vigorously supported by the national civil society, international non-governmental organizations, UN Agencies, and private actors.

The second phase protection and inclusion response refers to the medium and longer-term measures put in place for the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees who choose to live in Romania. This involves the establishment of more predictable protection and assistance structures in close cooperation with national services and social protection systems, and the improvement of information-sharing across needs and gaps. This is articulated in the country's three-year National Plan of Measures for the inclusion and protection of Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

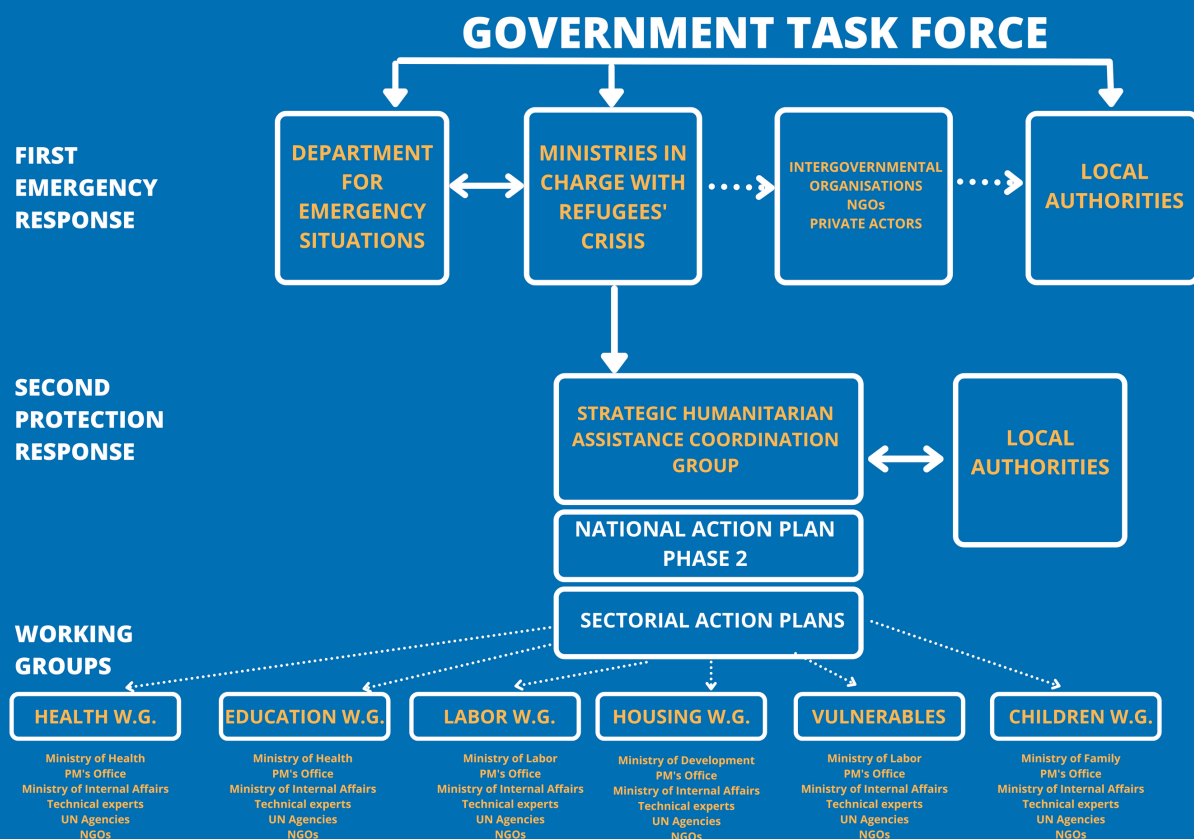


2.1: Coordination & Leadership

Establishing a comprehensive strategic approach to the humanitarian refugee response was the first step of a complex process to address the Ukrainian refugee crisis. This included taking an inventory of the wide array of institutional, non-governmental, and private actors able and ready to participate in the process. This presented a challenge given the specificities of the unfolding crisis within an EU context.

An important next step in the process was to understand and acknowledge that an effective humanitarian response goes far beyond humanitarian aid and emergency intervention, and that it has ramifications on crime prevention, risks of exploitation, trafficking in persons, complex matters related to inclusion, protection and various types of safeguards. This recognition raised the standards of designing a strategic approach of Romania’s response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

With this in mind, the Humanitarian Assistance Strategic Coordinator presented the strategic vision of the response to the Prime Minister of Romania, which had been approved by the Government Task Force. Romania established a clear decision-making and coordination structure to enable agencies with different responsibilities at all levels of Government to effectively plan, coordinate, and interact at the policy level and on the ground, in response to the humanitarian crisis.



2.2: Policy Design & Legislation

In response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, the Government of Romania has issued over 20 pieces of legislation to meet the needs of Ukrainian refugees. Some of the legal acts have established direct intervention and support measures, while others introduced specific provisions to allow for new ways of operating. The following are notable examples of these measures:

- **Government Emergency Ordinance No. 15/2022** regarding the mechanisms of support and humanitarian assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, coming from Ukraine.
- **Government Decision No. 367/2022** establishes the conditions under which the temporary protection of all persons who were forced to leave Ukraine due to the armed conflict is ensured, as well as the source of financing the necessary expenses.
- **Government Decision no. 337/2022** on the granting of gratuities and facilities for the transport of foreign nationals or stateless persons in special situations from the area of armed conflict in Ukraine.
- **Government Decision no. 336/2022** for establishing the mechanism by which natural persons, who host Ukrainian refugees, benefit from the reimbursement of food expenses.
- **Government Ordinance No. 20/2022** regarding the support and humanitarian assistance to children, adults, people with disabilities, and all Ukrainians who come to Romania. The approved Emergency Ordinance also includes measures to facilitate and encourages continued donations for the benefit of Ukrainian refugees, and for international organizations to have a simpler mechanism for cooperation.
- **Government Decision No. 315/2022** for the accommodation of Ukrainian citizens and for providing the necessary funds to support them during their stay on the national territory.
- **Government Emergency Ordinance for the amendment and completion of Law no. 21/2020** on the Air Code so that flights by military aircraft registered in other NATO countries are exempted from the payment of certain categories of air navigation tariffs.
- **Ministry of Education Order no. 3325/2022** by which the student or PhD Candidate who cannot prove the studies completed by documents issued by the higher education institution he/she previously attended in Ukraine, the Romanian higher education institution decides on the recognition and award of transferable study credits.
- **Government Emergency Ordinance no. 100** from June 29, 2022 regarding the approval and implementation of the National Plan of Measures regarding the protection and inclusion of displaced persons from Ukraine, beneficiaries of temporary protection in Romania.

SUMMARY OF COORDINATION AND POLICY DECISIONS

FEB 22

Vladimir Putin signed the invasion decree



FEB 23 - LATE EVENING

Meeting with the Prime Minister on the necessity to develop a strategic coordination mechanism with IGO, UN, civil society for a whole society approach

FEB 24 - MORNING

Prime Minister established the Government Taskforce



FEB 24 - AFTERNOON

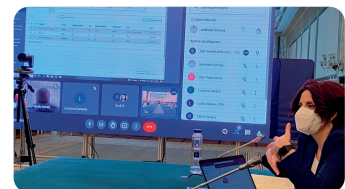
- Designation of the strategic coordinator of the humanitarian response
- Organization of the first coordination meeting with the State Secretaries, Head of the DES, and the civil society
- Head of DES established the activation of the National Centre for Command and Intervention (CNCCI)

FEB 25

The strategic humanitarian assistance group established under the leadership of Counsellor of State Madalina Turza (CSMT)

FEB 26

Creation of the first temporary resources platform & hub of private donations (CSMT + DES)



FEB 27

112 + 119 phone numbers available in Ukrainian language

FEB 28

Fact-checking and dismantling fake-news on RO emergency preparedness



MAR 1

Operational info session on the process for:

- Unofficial UA support requests
- Evacuations
- Use of the donation platform



MAR 2

Launch of the Blue Dot system in RO (UNICEF & ANPDCA)

**MAR 3**

RO refugee response strategic approach designed

MAR 4

Strategic coordination meeting with civil society

MAR 7

Coordination meeting with the private sector

**MAR 9**

First direct victim identification and referral mechanism for potential victims of trafficking designed and implemented at the border entry points

MAR 10

Coordination with the EU civil protection mechanism

MAR 11

Online donation platform active

**MAR 14**

Coordination meeting with the Prime Minister and civil society

MAR 15

Negotiation of the framework cooperation agreement with the UN Agencies

**MAR 19**

Preparations for the Second Phase of the RO Response to the refugee crisis begin

MAR 21

Ministerial working groups established

**MAR 22-24**

Call for enrolment opens for the civil society to take part in the working group for the National Plan for Refugee Integration

APR 4-7

International and European delegation field visits

APR 14

First country report on RO Response to the Refugee Crisis

APR 18

Coordination mechanism with UN Agencies launched

**MAY 7**

Official meeting with the First Lady of the USA, Dr. Jill Biden, on RO Refugee Response

**MAY 17**

Official meeting with the UN Special Representative on combating violence against children

MAY 18

Cooperation mechanism with the National Bar Association for refugee legal assistance established

MAY 19

Coordination with WHO on health services for Ukrainian refugees

**MAY 26**

Strategic coordination meetings with the UN Agencies and International Non-governmental Organizations on cash assistance for Ukrainian refugees

MAY 31

International Conference on inclusive education for refugee children – Plan International

**JUN 2**

First reading of the National Plan of Measures for refugees at a Government meeting

JUN 3

protectieucraina.gov.ro online platform is live

JUN 26

National Plan of Measures for the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees is adopted

**SEPT 10**

Bucharest Forum is held, the first European platform of dialogue on Refugee Integration at the political level

2.3: European Coordination for Medium & Long-Term Response

Given the nature of the complex circumstance of the war in Ukraine and the resulting challenges of the massive refugee influx, the European Union Member States acknowledged the need for cooperation and coordination to create the necessary tailored response and supportive measures that enable effective protection, integration, and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees, across our borders. This includes a medium and longer-term response beyond emergency measures initially taken by the frontline countries and their international partners and civil society.

To this end, in September 2022, State Counsellor Madalina Turza, organized the first forum of dialogue and cooperation at a political level with European counterparts on refugee inclusion. The event was titled the **Bucharest Forum: Towards a Common European Platform for Refugee Inclusion**, and was organized by the Government of Romania.

Delegations of 23 Member States, including the UK, Norway, Republic of Moldova, and DG Reform, DG Home, OECD, and UN Agencies participated in the Bucharest Forum. The event was chaired by Ms. Madalina Turza, Counsellor of state to the PM Chancellery and the strategic coordinator of the humanitarian response in Romania. Messages by the President of Romania and the Prime Minister of Romania were conveyed by the Counsellor of State (Presidential Administration) Catalina Galer and by the Chief Chancellor in the Romanian Government, Mircea Abrudean. Mr. Mario Nava (DG Reform General Director), Mr. Pablo Zapata (UNHCR Representative RO), Mircea Mocanu (Head of IOM Mission RO), Mr. Jean-Cristophe Dumond (OECD Head of International Migration Division), Mr. Raed Arafat (State Secretary, Department for Emergency Situations RO MIA) and Mr. Alexander Wolffhardt (Migration Policy Group) attended the event with special interventions within the Bucharest Forum.



All Member State delegations had interventions focusing on the best practices implemented in their respective countries, as well the challenges they have been facing since the beginning of the war in Ukraine with regard to refugee reception, humanitarian assistance, and integration. The Chair of the Forum proposed the creation of the “Bucharest Platform” – a European Platform of Dialogue on Refugee Inclusion which will inform and drive political decision and commitment at a national level, shape a common vision on major areas of concern to avoid duplication of efforts and push/pull factors, and to complement existing successful cooperation mechanisms.

Twenty of the delegations expressed their support in favor of the European Platform of Dialogue and 3 delegations (HU, CZ, SE) did not have a specific mandate or expressed reservations about the proposal. Austria, Malta, Greece, and OECD expressed their availability to organize the next session of the Platform.

2.4: Partnerships

The coordination of Romania's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis hinges on its partnerships across the Government, humanitarian sector, civil society, and private entities. The second phase of this response brings together two plans into a cohesive effort: the National Plan of Measures and the Refugee Response Plan (RRP). The “two plans; one response” approach brings together stakeholders in the country to ensure a harmonized response. UNHCR supports the national response in coordinating humanitarian actors under the framework of the RRP and through the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) and sector working groups, aligned with the governmental National Plan of Measures.

Ministries throughout the Government of Romania are leading the working groups implementing the Nation Plan of Measures, and the Department for Emergency Situations (DES), as part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, leads the emergency response operations. There are currently 55 NGOs operating in Romania in close coordination with UN Agencies, national civil society, and private actors.



CHAPTER 3: The Emergency Response

Romania's emergency response phase to the Ukrainian refugee crisis meets the immediate, short-term needs of those fleeing the conflict. Once in Romania, Ukrainian refugees have immediate access to territory, measures to ensure their protection, and goods and services to cover basic needs such as transportation, health, and food. Significant coordination mechanisms have been established to ensure these measures are accessible, timely, and responsive to the needs of those displaced from Ukraine.

ACCESS TO TERRITORY, ASYLUM, AND PROTECTION

Each refugee who enters Romania directly from Ukraine or through the Republic of Moldova is granted access. The asylum procedure in Romania is implemented by the General Inspectorate for Immigration (GII) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). GII manages the reception and registration of refugees through 6 Regional Centers and through personnel at 4 key border entry points: Sighet, Siret, Husi, and Isaccea. Border control is managed by the General Inspectorate of the Border Police.

After the passage of an Emergency Ordinance on 4 March 2022, the Temporary Protection procedure was initiated and granted to Ukrainian refugees for up to one year with the possibility of extension. Temporary Protection status grants Ukrainian refugees free access to health care, social services, housing and transportation.

- **3.242.209 Ukrainian refugees** have **crossed the border** into Romania
- **103.773 Ukrainian refugees** currently have **Temporary Protection** status in Romania
- **2.219.066 Ukrainian refugees** received **information and counselling**

SAFETY MEASURES

MIA officers ensure the safety, surveillance, and control of the border crossing. They have been trained to prevent, detect, and act on any type of crime, such as human trafficking or risks to unaccompanied children or children travelling without their parents. In addition, 31 FRONTEX workers are also involved in support activities.

3.654 MIA staff deployed at the border:

- 1.577 border guards
- 1.599 police officers
- 177 gendarmes
- 230 emergency situations officers
- 71 GII officers

CIVIL PROTECTION

The Department for Emergency Situations (DES) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for the civil protection mechanism and is the lead of the emergency response to the refugee crisis in Romania. DES has established a National Centre for Command and Intervention for response coordination that operates in close collaboration with the local authorities, national NGOs, and international organizations present in Romania. 15 temporary Transit Centres for refugees were established along the border with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

- **18.956 Ukrainian refugees accommodated** in transit centres since Feb 2022
- **2.191 capacity at transit centres**, 134 occupied
- **55.004 accommodation slots** in 1.537 operational refugee camps/centers with 7.173 occupied

TRANSPORTATION

The Government of Romania, together with its partners, has facilitated the humanitarian transportation of Ukrainian refugees from border crossing points to other areas of Romania. For those who chose not to stay in Romania, green corridors were established through which Ukrainian refugees could travel on to another country at no cost. 687.820 transiting Ukrainian refugees were provided with no cost travel by the Ministry of Transportation (MoT):

- 574.440 individuals by train
- 89.712 individuals by boat
- 23.668 individuals by plane

- **720.660 Ukrainian refugees received humanitarian transport provided by Ministry of Transportation and DES**
- **32.840 Ukrainian refugees received humanitarian transport provided by IOM**
- **12.441.452 euros spent** on transportation by MoT



PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Child Protection

Strict measures and procedures are in place to identify any unaccompanied children, and detect any potential risks to their protection. A joint order of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration defines these steps to be taken for the registration, transit, residence, and protection of minors. In partnership with UNICEF and UNHCR, 8 Blue Dot Centres have been established nationally and serve as information hubs on services available to Ukrainian refugees.

Measures against human trafficking

Ministry of Internal Affairs officers continue to conduct safety checks to prevent and combat incidents involving Ukrainian refugees. These include traffic checkpoints, car registrations, and visits to places of accommodation. In a given day, almost 7.500 Ukrainians are checked at 1.133 locations of accommodation, there are 380 traffic checkpoints operating, and over 35.600 vehicles registered in Ukraine have been inspected. Prevention measures include awareness campaigns, a dedicated helpline, and a referral mechanism that have been put in place by the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons and civil society. Identification indicators and direct referral procedures have been provided to border police and asylum reception centres. The Government and partners have not received any reports of trafficked victims, but are aware that there could be unreported cases.

Gender-Based Violence

Information on gender-based violence, PSEA, and trafficking protection services continue to be widely disseminated to populations at risk. 236 individuals were trained specifically on gender-based violence and response. Several vulnerability assessments, including rapid gender analysis, were conducted by partners from the onset of the crisis to inform the response and ensure it reached the most vulnerable.

- **700 individuals** from local authorities, partners, and volunteers have been **trained** on the core concept of refugee protection
- Overall, **104.000 Ukrainian refugees** were **supported** in accessing protection and documentation
- **103.869 Ukrainian refugees received legal assistance** support
- **13.782 Ukrainian children identified and referred to specialized services**, including health and social welfare
- **32.025 Ukrainian refugees received information** on available protection services related to GBV, sexual exploitation, and abuse
- **4.993 children registered** with the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC)
- **287 individuals** with specific needs were **provided with protection assistance**
- **199 children** are currently in the special protection system

HEALTH

Access to medical services has been expanded to Ukrainian refugees benefitting from Temporary Protection status. WHO, in partnership with the Government and other partners, identified 24 family medicine clinics as refugee-inclusive clinics. Those clinics are being supported with language interpretation, registration, referral, and financial support to register refugees and provide services. Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) has been identified as a key priority and reproductive health kits, including contraception, have been procured for people in need.

- Procurement of life-saving medical items and supplies based on needs and priorities
- **12.400 health services provided** to over 4.400 individuals with 4.890 referrals to specialized care
- **1.500 consultations** for family medicine, MHPSS, and SRH services provided at Romexpo

EMERGENCY RELIEF ITEMS

Eight humanitarian partners have been providing emergency relief items to Ukrainian refugees at border crossing points, reception and transit centres, and temporary shelters. A total of 138.000 individuals have received in-kind assistance to meet their basic needs. Five humanitarian providers have been providing cash assistance to support individuals through all centres in Bucharest, Brasov, Galati, Iasi, and Suceava.

Individuals were reached with the following items:

- **42.798** with **water**
- **78.857** with **hygiene kits**
- **70.020** with **food assistance**
- **16.493** with temporary **shelter** capacity & conditions
- **186.000** with **cash assistance**



INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS & AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

An official internet platform with all information on the rights and services available for Ukrainian refugees, including information specifically directed to children, has been launched and is continuously updated.

Fliers have been distributed at border crossing points containing information on registering for Temporary Protection, available services, and the numbers for three dedicated helplines for emergencies, child protection concerns, human trafficking, and domestic violence.

The existing 119 national helpline for children's emergencies has Ukrainian language support for refugees, as well as the dedicated helpline managed by the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (ANES) to report situations of gender-based violence or gender discrimination.

- **200.000 informational fliers** distributed at border crossing points
- Official **online platform launched**
- **3 dedicated helplines** with Ukrainian language support
- **57.050 individuals provided with information** on how to access health services

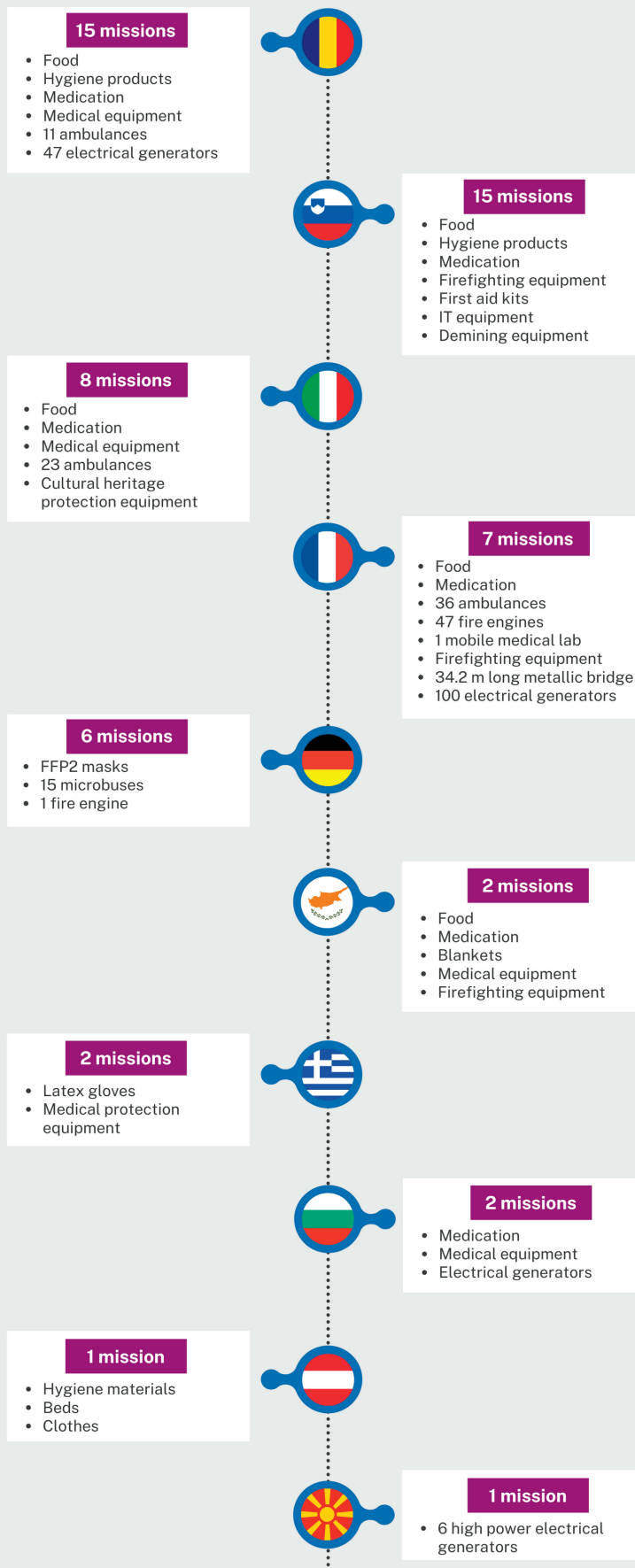
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TRANSITS THROUGH SUCEAVA HUB

The logistical storage and distribution centre in Suceava, known as Suceava HUB, is one point through which humanitarian assistance has been supplied to Ukraine. In cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities, Romania has facilitated the transfer of humanitarian aid through the HUB, which extends the capacity of European Union Member States to provide assistance to Ukraine. 25 soldiers from the Romanian military support the reception, storage, handling, redistribution of the aid which operates under the Civil Protection Mechanism (UPCM). Since the HUB's logistics activity started in March, 62 shipments, including 321 trucks, of international assistance bound for Ukraine have been received so far.



INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE: SUCEAVA HUB

62 INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS AS OF 5 JAN 2023



BLUE DOT CENTRES SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Ukrainian children who fled the war and took refuge in neighboring countries, including Romania, are at risk of violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. They urgently need safety, stability and child protection services, especially those who are unaccompanied or have been separated from their families.

Blue Dot Centers, developed by UNICEF and UNHCR in collaboration with Romanian authorities and partners, are safe centers installed at border crossing points that provide children and families with essential information and services on a range of issues including education, psychosocial support, referrals to health care, and legal support. They are available to all Ukrainian refugees, including people with disabilities, unaccompanied and separated children, and other vulnerable groups.

Blue Dot Centers provide essential services including:

- Information and counseling on available services
- Child-friendly spaces where children can rest and play
- Family reunification services
- Counseling and psychological support services for children and adults
- Special services for refugees that require specialized assistance
- Safe sleeping areas
- Essential products for vulnerable women and children

For children, Blue Dot centers provide a safe and welcoming space to rest, play, and simply enjoy childhood when their world has been turned upside down by fear and panic, and from being exposed to the trauma of leaving behind their family, friends and everything they know.

The Blue Dot Centre in Sighetu Marmăției provides assistance to Ukrainian refugees.

Photo credit: UNICEF



CHAPTER 4: Protection & Inclusion

The second phase of Romania's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis focuses on the medium to longer-term protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania. On 29 June 2022, the Government of Romania approved a National Plan of Measures for the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian Refugees by a Government Ordinance. In broad terms, the plan sets out ambitious and comprehensive measures to facilitate access to Temporary Protection and the prevention of risks of abuse and exploitation. The plan provides an integrated package of measures in the areas of health, education, employment, housing, vulnerable people, and children and youth. In addition, the plan sets out cross-cutting measures for improved access to official information on the rights, obligations, and facilities available for Ukrainian refugees.

The UN Regional Response Plan (RRP) is complementary to The National Plan of Measures, hence several measures and activities are being implemented in coordination and together with the RRP partners. Coordinated by UNHCR, the RRP brings together humanitarian actors through six sector working groups that are aligned with the national response: basic needs, cash, health, information management, livelihoods, and protection.

CROSS-CUTTING MEASURES

Access to official and reliable information

- A **help-line for Ukrainian refugees with key information** on health, education, employment, housing, vulnerable groups and children will be operational in the coming months. The technical infrastructure is in place, standard voice messages developed, and specialists and translators have been hired.
- An official government **website is published (protectieucraina.gov.ro)** and provides Ukrainian refugees with detailed information on resources and services available

Preventing abuse and exploitation risks

- **200.000 informational fliers distributed** at border points that include the helplines for emergencies, child protection concerns, human trafficking, and domestic violence.
- Work group for the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse (PSEA) and the risks associated with human trafficking established and action plan is in progress.

LABOUR

The Government of Romania together with its partners, continues to facilitate access to the labour market for Ukrainian refugees with temporary protection. This involves providing information to Ukrainian refugees on accessing the Romanian labour market, as well as strengthening the administrative capacity of the public employment service to support this integration. Over 2.000 information materials have been disseminated towards this effort.

- **5.007 Ukrainians** are currently **working** and registered in REVISAL in Romania
- **1.300 Ukrainians mentored** during the socio-occupational integration process
- 5 job fairs organized; over **700 beneficiaries**

EDUCATION

The Government of Romania together with its partners, continues to take measures to ensure the continuation of studies and to support learning for Ukrainian refugees. To facilitate the enrolment of Ukrainian children into the Romanian educational system, additional human resources are provided by employing more Romanian and Ukrainian teachers, as well as providing the necessary material resources and allowances for food, school supplies, and clothing.

Teachers are trained to give intensive preparatory Romanian language courses for Ukrainian children. Trainings are also provided on inclusive education, psycho-social support, and communication with Ukrainian parents to facilitate integration and to provide psycho-pedagogical assistance and counselling.

Ukrainian refugees receive information on accessing the education system in Romania, as well as the online education platform established by Ukrainian authorities. Children and families are provided with basic learning materials and recreational kits. Temporary Learning Spaces are available to support children with education and extracurricular activities.

- **3,087 children registered** as listeners (1,092 preschoolers and 1,995 students)
- **882 children enrolled in schools** in Romania (288 preschoolers and 594 students)
- **4,060 children and youth** participating in bridge courses/remedial/catch up classes and **extracurricular activities** including language courses
- **6,516 children and youth** have **received** recreational and basic **learning materials and recreational kits**
- **262 educators trained** on quality, safe, and inclusive education and MPHSS

HOUSING

In order to provide safe and accessible housing, the Government of Romania together with its partners, is making use of unallocated housing units owned by local and central public authorities or available private rental units. Unused units have been identified and will be renovated and made available for the accommodation of Ukrainian refugees.

In order to facilitate accommodation of Ukrainian refugees staying in Romania, the Government established a program to reimburse citizens hosting Ukrainian refugees. Under the state program approved by Emergency Ordinance No. 15 of Feb 27, 2022, persons hosting citizens arriving from the armed conflict zone in Ukraine receive monthly cash payments for:

- Housing: 50 lei per person per day
- Food: 20 lei per person per day

The program to reimburse hosts of Ukrainian refugees has provided the following across all counties to date:

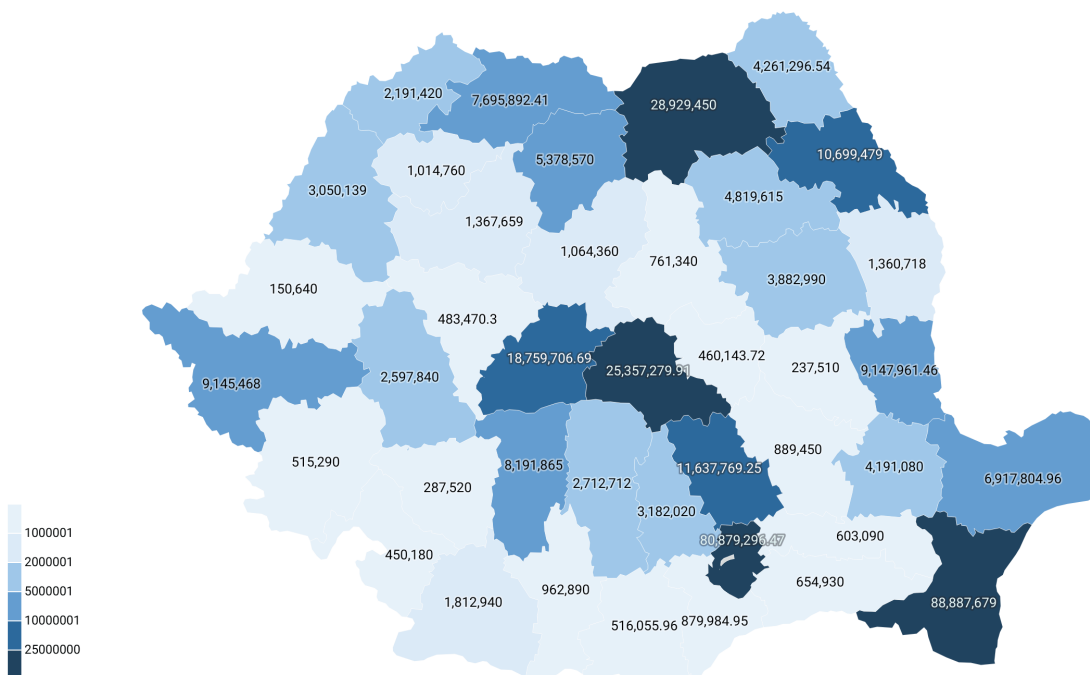
- **373.941.992 lei** (€76.004.469) for **housing**
- **152.063.544 lei** (€30.907.224) for **food**
- An **average 1.735.991 lei** (€352.846) **spent per day** on the program

In partnership with AirBnB:

- **1.545 individuals were accommodated** for 13.800 nights

Amount Spent on Accommodation and Food by County 50/20 Program Mar-Dec 2022

The map shows the total amount spent (lei) on accommodation and food through the state program established by emergency ordinance No 15. The counties with the most beneficiaries are Constanta, Bucharest-Ilfov, Suceava, and Brasov.



PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

With the goal to reduce vulnerabilities and provide safety and protection, all children from Ukraine are beneficiaries of temporary protection and have access to support and essential child protection services, including family reunification services.

The Government of Romania together with its partners, has strengthened the procedure for the identification, reporting, and resolution of cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any other form of violence against unaccompanied children, foreign citizens or stateless persons, including those seeking asylum or benefiting from international protection in Romania. The National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption (ANPDCA) in partnership with UNICEF, SERA, and other organizations has launched the use of CPIMS+/PRIMERO, an open-source software platform that facilitates case management, incident monitoring, and family tracing and reunification.

A coordination mechanism between Ukrainian and Romanian authorities to identify missing children reported by Ukrainian authorities on Romanian territory has been established to repatriate unaccompanied children from Ukraine and to identify solutions for family reunification in order to respect the best interests of the child.

Skill development of professionals in the child protection system continues to be provided, including the development of tools and guidelines. Activities in youth centres have expanded and the national network of Youth Centres, including mobile centres, continues to be strengthened.

Through the national social service system and partners, mental health and psychosocial support and services (MHPSS), individual protection assistance, information and referrals, translation, and guidance is provided as needed.

- **15.480 Ukrainian children** have been **registered in Primero** in 41 Romanian counties and the 6 sectors of Bucharest
- **Social workers** from 41 county-level child protection authorities are **trained in Primero**
- **317 tablets purchased** and distributed to volunteer teams for Primero registration activities
- **6 regional training sessions** held for specialists working with Ukrainian children
- **710 service providers**, including government stakeholders, NGOs, INGOs, and volunteers have been **trained** on child protection
- **597 staff/volunteers/authorities trained** on protection and the provision of PSS activities

HEALTH

Ukrainian refugees with temporary protection in Romania are included in national public health programmes aimed at the prevention, surveillance, and control of communicable diseases in situations of epidemiological risk.

The Government of Romania together with its partners, provides medical services, medical supplies, medicines, and medical devices under the social health insurance system and ensures full integration of Ukrainian refugees into the health system.

Additional activities of this effort include assessments of refugees' health needs and barriers to accessing care; service mapping of family doctors able to provide care to refugees; and sharing of information on medical services available.

- **19.594 Ukrainians** received **emergency medical services**
- **3.170 Ukrainians** were **hospitalized**
- **4.590 Ukrainians** were **transported** to the hospital by ambulance
- **27.109 children, youth, and caregivers** at risk received PSS support
- **1.842 individuals** benefited from MHPSS sessions
- **462 Ukrainian children** vaccinated against poliomyelitis
- **444 Ukrainian children** vaccinated against Measles-containing-vaccine first-dose (MCV1)

VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Government of Romania, together with its partners, has conducted comprehensive needs assessments to ensure the identification of the needs of vulnerable displaced persons from Ukraine, and make sure their protection rights and specific needs are met.

Legal processes have been adapted to facilitate easy and appropriate access to social services and social assistance benefits and through information campaigns and efforts, vulnerable Ukrainian refugees will be informed of their social assistance rights and benefits. Local authorities and existing service providers continue to strengthen their operating procedures and tools to meet the need of vulnerable groups.

- **1.038 elderly Ukrainian refugees** have **requested social services** since the beginning of the crisis.

PRIMERO FACILITATES ACCESS TO PROTECTION SERVICES

Primero was launched in Romania on 25 July 2022 by the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (ANPDCA), in partnership with UNICEF Romania and Sera Romania. Since then, almost 15,500 Ukrainian children who fled the war have been successfully registered.

Primero is coordinated by ANPDCA and used by the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) to quickly identify, register, and monitor children arriving from Ukraine, who are either in transit or temporarily staying in Romania. It is also used for the early identification of potential situations of abuse, neglect or trafficking, as well as for the implementation of all necessary measures to ensure and protect children's rights. In the first 140 days of Primero in Romania, about 50% of the registrations were made in five counties - Bucharest (17%), Constanta (12%), Vaslui (9%), Iași (7%) and Maramureș (7%).

UNICEF Romania works closely with the Government of Romania and ANPDCA to ensure that every child, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, ability or family situation, has adequate protection and access to necessary services. The introduction of Primero is an essential step towards this effort.

Primero is currently used by 317 trained social workers and psychologists who are responsible for identifying and registering children, and are coordinated by 47 county coordinators. Identification and registration only occurs after consent is granted. The Primero platform registers data on parents, adults accompanying children, their temporary or permanent residence in Romania, and their needs, including access to health, education or social protection services. The initial assessment involves establishing a risk level, from which children are referred to specific authorities and services according to their needs, such as county directorates for child protection, social assistance directorates, or immigration authorities.

A representative of DGASPC Ilfov uses Primero to update information about the situation of this Ukrainian refugee family.

Photo credit: UNICEF



CHAPTER 5: Preparedness & Winterization

As the winter season has begun, the Government of Romania together with its partners, is prepared to support Ukrainian refugees through targeted activities including improved shelter infrastructure and the distribution of winter-related items such as blankets and warm clothing. Given the evolving and unpredictable nature of the situation in Ukraine, preparedness plans are also underway should the need arise to accommodate a large number of Ukrainian refugees crossing into Romania.

The Department for Emergency Situations (DES), in partnership with the European Commission, has procured equipment and all necessary facilities, including 54 electrical generators, to quickly build a temporary accommodation complex should it be needed. This complex, named Project RO Shelter, is comprised of 500 containers and 3.500 tents and an accommodation capacity for 16.000 people.

Through inter-agency consultations led by UNHCR, humanitarian partners have identified six interventions to meet the specific winter needs of Ukrainian refugees:

Provision of cash assistance for vulnerable families for winter needs

Existing cash programs implemented by humanitarian partners will be utilized to provide one-off top-ups of multipurpose cash support to cover winter-related costs. 50.000 Ukrainian refugees are targeted to receive this support.

Provision of winter-related core relief items (CRIs)

Items such as blankets, sleeping bags, winter kits, winter clothes and shoes, and hygiene kits will be provided to Ukrainian refugees across Romania. The provision of these CRIs will target over 10.000 households, as well as children aged 0-14 years for the distribution of 30.000 sets of winter clothes in Bucharest.

A container has replaced a tent at the Sighet Border Crossing Point for service provision.

Photo credit: UNHCR



Winterization of shelters, transit centres, and Blue Dots

Containers have been provided at Sighetul Marmatiei, Siret, and Isaccea border crossing points to replace tents for service provision, including the distribution of winter kits and heaters. At Romexpo in Bucharest, a rub-hall was installed to provide shelter from winter conditions for refugees in the waiting area of the complex. Infrastructure upgrades continue at the Blue Dot centres established by UNICEF and UNHCR in preparation for winter.

Provision of food, particularly of hot meals at border points and transit centres

Food support is provided through "social shops" and supermarkets where refugees can access groceries to meet their needs. These shops include the Nicolina Centre at Romexpo, as well as at IFRC/Romanian Red Cross-managed concept stores in five locations.

Strengthening of healthcare service delivery, including disease prevention

Seasonal disease outbreaks are continuously monitored at a national level by the Ministry of Health in partnership with WHO. Humanitarian partners continue to work on information campaigns and awareness raising for vaccinations at transit centres. They also plan to launch mobile health teams for psycho-social support interventions at border crossing points.

Prevention & case management of gender-based violence and trafficking incidents

Due to increased living costs during winter, refugees are more at risk of negative coping mechanisms. Therefore, cross-cutting preventative measures against gender-based violence, sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA), and trafficking will be scaled-up during the winter season. These interventions will be integrated into other winterization activities, such as dissemination of information materials during CRI distribution or registration for cash assistance.



A winterized tent has been installed in the waiting area at Romexpo.

Photo credit: UNHCR

CHAPTER 6: The Way Forward

Almost a year has passed since the war in Ukraine started and there are not yet signs of an imminent end. The unpredictability of this conflict has deep consequences both on the behavior of Ukrainian refugees and on Romania's response to it.

While we've entered the second phase of the response which is focused on protection and inclusion, challenges remain that hamper these efforts. Tens of thousands of refugees hold on to hope that the war will soon end and life can resume back home in Ukraine. While we all wish for this to be true, this assumption is one of the main challenges to implementing an effective integration process for Ukrainians in Romania. Effective integration requires emotional availability, willingness to access the labor market, to enroll children in Romanian schools, and to fully immerse oneself into the societal fabric of the host community.

Together with institutional partners, UN Agencies, and civil society we continue to work in a coordinated and complementary way to ensure the implementation of the National Plan of Measures for the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in all six areas of intervention: education, health, labor, housing, children and youth, and vulnerable persons.

Winterization measures have been implemented by the Department of Emergency Situations, in close partnership with the UN Agencies and local authorities, and several contingency plans have been put in place to respond to challenging scenarios.

Challenges & Lessons Learnt

It should be noted that winter has come with unique direct challenges. The cold weather and the disruption of energy services in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova has led to an increase in the number border crossing entries into Romania. This has resulted in increased pressure for winterization preparedness measures at reception and transit centers. The provision of warm food at border entry points and in accommodation centers has been identified as a specific need this winter season. Food provision remains a challenge for RRP partners offering food assistance at the borders and in the transit centers.

Other challenges have emerged that shed light on the complexity of the integration process in a country bordering an unpredictable war. These challenges include:

- **School enrolment of Ukrainian children.** This is in part due to the lack of recognition of the studies in Romania by Ukrainian authorities, and the language barrier despite substantial investments to help alleviate this in Romanian schools and through the support of international partners. The official approach of the Government is to discourage further development of "educational hubs", where no formal education services and curriculum are provided.
- **Support services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities.** The identification process of vulnerable persons is not yet robust enough and the services are not yet sufficiently developed within our national protection system.
- **Accessing the labor market.** The propensity to join the labor market by Ukrainian refugees is generally low for many reasons, including lack of acceptance that the conflict may be prolonged, low uptake of available Romanian language and entrepreneurship courses, and limited community outreach to promote job opportunities.
- **Short-Term Accommodation.** A significant number of refugees continue to live in short-term accommodation "centers" which prevents their integration into the community, despite the available accommodation and food program made possible by Government Ordinance.

As this crisis continues, we must continue to address the challenge of preserving social cohesion and ensure that the refugee response is balanced with support for host communities, especially our most vulnerable. We are working together with all partners to specifically address these challenges. Mitigation strategies have been developed, both in terms of amending the legislation and policies, as well as by developing targeted action plans.

In addition to the protection, inclusion, and social cohesion measures, we will continue our efforts to address the risks of trafficking in persons and other forms of violence and abuse that may arise. The action plan on preventing exploitation, sexual abuse and risks associated with human trafficking for the Ukrainian refugees adopted in December focuses specifically on the areas identified as vulnerabilities and provides solutions for prevention, victim assistance, and cooperation with external partners, like the Republic of Moldova.

Romania will continue to support the Ukrainian refugee population and to proudly stand in solidarity with the international community against the unjustified and illegal war in Ukraine, by ensuring a safe and dignified return of Ukrainians to their home country when the time comes.

THANK YOU



Without all these partners, Romania's Response to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis would not be possible.

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