



Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Georgia
Republic of Moldova
Russian Federation
Turkey
Ukraine



Eastern Europe

| Working environment |

UNHCR works in a diverse range of situations in Eastern Europe, involving asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and stateless people.

Though national asylum systems are being established in the subregion, UNHCR plays a close monitoring role and intervenes where protection mechanisms fall short of international norms. With the exception of Turkey, where nearly 13,000 people sought protection in 2008 and more than 4,200 did so in the first half of 2009, the number of people seeking asylum in Eastern European countries remains low; in 2008, it stood at 8,250.

Many asylum-seekers in countries just outside EU borders aim to seek international protection in the European Union. When unable to move on, some apply for asylum but later continue their journey to seek protection further west. Although onward movements can be partially explained by poor local integration prospects in the subregion, this phenomenon complicates advocacy efforts for the creation of fair and effective asylum systems.

Turkey maintains a geographic reservation to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. UNHCR remains engaged in protecting and seeking resettlement opportunities for those identified as refugees in Turkey.

Statelessness, particularly as a result of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, remains an issue of concern throughout the subregion. The precise number of people who are stateless in Eastern Europe is not known—but may be as high as 120,000—as UNHCR is only beginning to quantify the problem.

Eastern Europe continues to be characterized by large-scale internal displacement, with nearly a million IDPs spread principally across Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation. In countries where UNHCR has been invited by the host authorities to protect and assist IDPs, it does so in accordance with the UN *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. However, durable solutions, notably sustainable return, can only be found if there is a peaceful resolution of the situations that led to the displacement.

Internally displaced families from Abkhazia living in collective centres in Georgia.

UNHCR / L. FOSTER

| Strategy |

UNHCR pursues three main objectives in this subregion. First, it strives to strengthen national asylum systems and safeguard asylum in the broader migration context. Second, it works to prevent and reduce the incidence of statelessness, and to promote more accessions to the Statelessness Conventions. Third, it aims to meet the needs of IDPs and to find sustainable solutions for them, including return and local integration.

In pursuit of its primary objective of strengthening national asylum systems, UNHCR cooperates with the concerned governments and forges partnerships with others, including the European Commission, States which support asylum capacity building, and NGOs. In this context, UNHCR seeks to identify and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable asylum-seekers and to find durable solutions for them. The Office's 10-Point Plan of Action for refugee protection and mixed migration provides the basis for this work in countries bordering EU Member States.

| Constraints |

While the control of irregular migration is high on the political agenda of many Eastern European countries, asylum is often seen as a lesser priority. Some States perceive a fully functioning asylum system as a hindrance to the implementation of their migration policies. Moreover, countries in the subregion have found it difficult to formulate and put into place sound strategies for the integration of people in need of international protection. Acts of violence against foreigners continue in several countries. Such manifestations of racism and xenophobia affect the everyday lives of asylum-seekers and damage prospects for refugee integration.

Durable solutions for the nearly one million IDPs often cannot be implemented as the root causes of the situations which generated the displacement remain unresolved. IDPs can only make free and informed choices about their future if the environment is conducive to return and if genuine opportunities exist for those who wish to integrate locally.

In some parts of the region, humanitarian space has been narrowing and security concerns limit UNHCR's scope of action.

| Operations |

Operations in **Georgia, the Russian Federation and Turkey** are described in separate chapters.

In **Armenia**, UNHCR will continue its efforts to build the Government's capacity to implement fair and effective asylum procedures, in particular in the context of the new asylum law. With regard to Iraqi refugees in Armenia, UNHCR will



mobilize support for the Government's programmes on behalf of this population and implement targeted activities for the most vulnerable among them.

UNHCR will address the gaps and obstacles to local integration and facilitate the legal and socio-economic integration of refugees, in addition to advocating for the extension of support for housing and social protection. This will include promoting the integration of former refugees who have become naturalized citizens of Armenia but who remain extremely vulnerable, and in particular those residing in difficult conditions in remote rural areas as well as in urban communal centres.

In **Azerbaijan**, the Government State Migration Service began in 2008 implementing new refugee legislation including refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. UNHCR will assist the authorities in their work, in areas such as reception conditions and decisions on asylum. The protection of certain groups not yet covered by Government procedures will continue to be addressed by UNHCR. The most vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees will benefit from basic assistance while UNHCR pursues durable solutions for them, primarily local integration.

The **Regional Office** in Kyiv, which covers **Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine**, will focus its work on four priorities: (i) enhancing compliance with international protection standards; (ii) aiding the local integration of recognized refugees; (iii) promoting accession to the Statelessness Conventions; and (iv) supporting persons of concern who are not cared for by government systems.

In these efforts, partnerships with civil society, other international organizations and neighbouring countries, including through the Söderköping Process, will be important. Outreach to persons of concern will be broadened by seeking better access for NGOs to border areas and a strengthened NGO role in protection monitoring.

UNHCR will help governments meet the needs of diverse populations with regard to local integration. Counteracting xenophobia and racism will be a key part of this effort. Legislative changes, better implementation of existing laws and an increase in financial resources will be required to give refugees a better chance of integration.

Building on the recent analysis regarding the extent to which national legislation in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova is

already in compliance with the Statelessness Conventions, UNHCR will continue to promote the accession of these countries to these international instruments.

Finally, UNHCR will continue to provide legal, social and material counselling and support, primarily through partners, to persons of concern whose needs are not met by national systems.

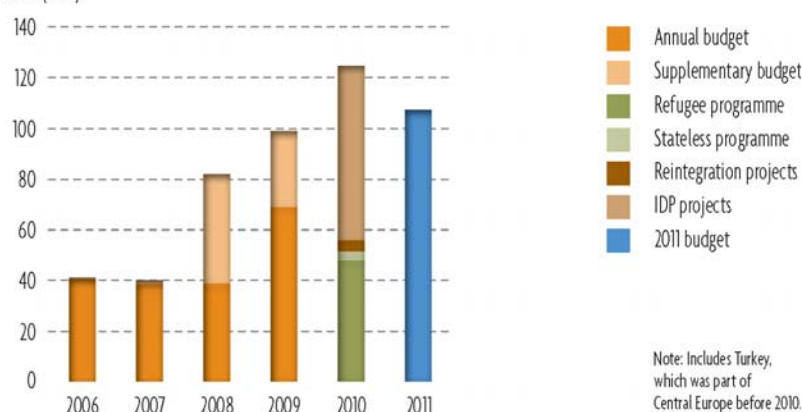
Financial information

The comprehensive budget represents a substantial increase in relation to earlier years, 38 per cent of the budget is allocated for refugees, 3 per cent for stateless people, 55 per cent for the internally displaced and 4 per cent for reintegration.

The increased budget reflects the Office's substantial programme in Georgia, in the aftermath of the 2008 conflict, as well as concerted efforts to address the needs which have been identified in consultation with governmental and non-governmental partners. The requirements also put greater emphasis on the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

UNHCR's budget in Eastern Europe 2006 - 2011

Millions (USD)



UNHCR budget for Eastern Europe (USD)

COUNTRY	2009 REVISED BUDGET ¹	2010					TOTAL	2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL		
Armenia	1,942,188	2,470,244	0	1,352,569	0	3,822,813	3,822,800	
Azerbaijan	3,812,083	4,458,130	327,922	0	1,451,489	6,237,541	8,954,200	
Belarus	1,737,659	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Georgia	62,448,546	5,577,707	1,463,365	0	55,018,653	62,059,725	29,863,600	
Rep. of Moldova	1,428,092	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Russian Federation	13,635,690	8,415,288	960,988	3,120,076	12,503,647	25,000,000	28,116,700	
Turkey	8,747,210	15,945,156	66,438	86,766	19,104	16,117,464	23,349,600	
Ukraine ²	4,200,012	10,960,861	587,205	0	0	11,548,066	13,100,000	
Regional activities	861,263	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	98,812,743	47,827,387	3,405,918	4,559,411	68,992,893	124,785,609	107,206,900	

¹ Includes supplementary programme requirements of USD 29,959,025.

² Ukraine Regional Office includes activities in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova.