

Bulgaria

September 2022

UNHCR supports the authorities in further developing the **asylum system** in line with the European Union and international standards, which also allowed them to rapidly register Ukrainians for Temporary Protection.

During 2022 there has been increasing numbers of asylum applications from non-Ukrainians, despite **challenges related to access to territory at the southern border**.

UNHCR supports the authorities through **capacity-building** activities and provides **legal assistance** to ensure that persons in need of international protection have access to the territory and asylum procedures.

POPULATION OF CONCERN as of 30 June 2022*

Refugees	144,921
Asylum-seekers	10,132
Stateless persons	1,129

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees	Asylum-seekers
Ukraine 119,450	Afghanistan 6,244
Syrian Arab Rep. 22,226	Syrian Arab Rep. 2,451
Iraq 1,102	Morocco 544

*Source: UNHCR provisional mid-year 2022 data

UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

As of 30 September, **56,734** refugees from Ukraine are currently present in Bulgaria.

136,160 refugees from Ukraine are registered for temporary protection in Bulgaria.

Coordination: UNHCR is coordinating the joint Inter-Agency winterisation response, within the framework of the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) recalibration.

Safe Space, Protection and Support Hubs: UNHCR, UNICEF and partners have established 6 Blue Dot Hubs, providing a safe space, support, and referrals for health care, legal, educational, and psychosocial support for **20 726** refugees...

Support to the most vulnerable: UNHCR, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Red Cross, are rolling out a Cash for Protection programme (CfP) to the most vulnerable Ukrainian households **aiming to assist 10,000** refugees.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cooperation with Border Police

As part of the implementation of the 2010 Tripartite MoU, in 2022 UNHCR has provided trainings and capacity-building for more than 230 professionals from the Border Police and the Academy of the Ministry of Interior.

Engaging the business community

UNHCR and partners developed a network of companies interested in employing refugees or include them in Corporate Social Responsibility policies. 9,167 refugees have received employment through similar programs.

Provision of language courses

With the help of local partners, UNHCR supports the provision of Bulgarian language courses. Over 250 people have enrolled so far.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT REFUGEES WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS



Watch the **story of Masha** and her family, who fled Ukraine in February 2022 to seek asylum in Bulgaria.

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory and procedure:** UNHCR monitors borders and immigration detention centres to ensure that people in need of international protection have access to territory and asylum procedures and supports the provision of information and legal assistance. In 2022, 9,972 asylum-seekers at the borders and in detention were assisted in accessing the asylum procedures.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR is engaged in regular joint audits of the quality of asylum procedures and in capacity-building for authorities to address identified challenges. UNHCR also provides guidance and materials on European and national asylum case law to administrative and judicial authorities.
- **Integration:** UNHCR advocates for the establishment of a State-led integration programme for refugees. UNHCR leads a consultative process to develop an Integration Manifest that lays out the coordination and funding of such a programme. The Office works closely with employers, social partners, and refugees to help with employment, including start-up initiatives and financial inclusion.
- **Child Protection:** UNHCR supports the authorities to ensure asylum-seeking and refugee children, including unaccompanied and separated children, are identified and have access to reception, care, and services within the national child protection system by providing guidance and training stakeholders.
- **GBV:** UNHCR works with the government, humanitarian actors and community members to raise awareness and enhance capacity to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV.

Border, detention, and reception monitoring:

UNHCR monitors border, detention and reception centre conditions for refugees and asylum-seekers in Bulgaria and advocates with the government for

improved conditions through legislative and policy changes. It also supports the authorities with relevant and sustainable capacity-building to address identified gaps in legislation, policy, and practice.

- **Advocacy:** UNHCR works within national political, economic, and social structures and with local authorities to bring policies, practices and laws in compliance with international standards.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works on policies and legislation at the inter-ministerial level and relevant National Assembly committees, and has established good working relations with the judiciary, academia, civil society, regional authorities, and media.
- UNHCR works with five partner NGOs providing legal assistance, social support, cultural mediation, language classes and integration advocacy.

Statelessness

- Bulgaria acceded to both Statelessness Conventions in 2012 and has a statelessness determination procedure (SDP) since 2017. Following UNHCR advocacy, in 2020, Bulgaria lifted one of its reservations to the 1954 Convention, pledging to review the relevance of the remaining ones. The remaining challenges relate to identifying stateless persons, ensuring adequate access to rights, and improving the quality of the SDP in line with a pledge made during the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness. Bulgaria has granted status to 175 stateless persons as of September 2022.

UNHCR Presence in Bulgaria

Staff:

20 Local Staff
14 International Staff

Offices:

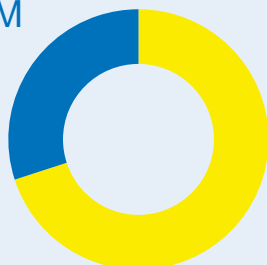
1 Branch Office in Sofia
38 UNVs

Financial information (September 2022)

Financial requirements

USD 20.2 M

Funding gap
24%
6 M



Funded
76%
15.3 M

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