

EMERGENCY SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)

Location of disaster	Ukrainian Crisis, Poland	Date	12 th April 2022
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1. Situation overview:

Months of escalating hostility towards Ukraine resulted in over 7.1 million people to be internally displaced, in addition to almost 4.6 million people who have left Ukraine and crossed into neighboring countries. From among them, 2,645,877 people have been displaced to Poland¹. According to IOM, there are almost 100,000 Third Country Nationals (TCNs), who arrived in Poland from Ukraine.

As the recipient of large number of refugees in the span of one and a half month, Poland has acted quickly to respond. On March 12th, Polish government passed a law that allows any Ukrainian fleeing the war who crossed the border from Ukraine to Poland starting February 24th onwards to stay legally in Poland for a period of 18 months, register and receive a Polish ID number (called PESEL). The PESEL enables them to access benefits and social assistance available to Polish citizens. This includes a one-time 300 PLN (approx. 70 USD) payment, as well as additional financial benefits if they qualify, such as the child allowance "Family 500+" (a monthly payment of 500 PLN per dependent under the age of 18), and the Family Care Capital (RKO), which provides 500 PLN/month for the second and subsequent children aged from 12 to 35 months². Besides, Ukrainian refugees are also able to access the job market, education for children, childcare and public healthcare without PESEL.

2. Population data:

	Total	Source of information
Number of people fled from Ukraine to Romania (As of 11th April)	2,645,877	UNHCR

REACH, in partnership with UNHCR, has conducted a survey by interviewing **1,666 refugees** in early April³. %96 of the people interviewed is female and %4 is male. According to the survey, all the people interviewed were holding valid passports.

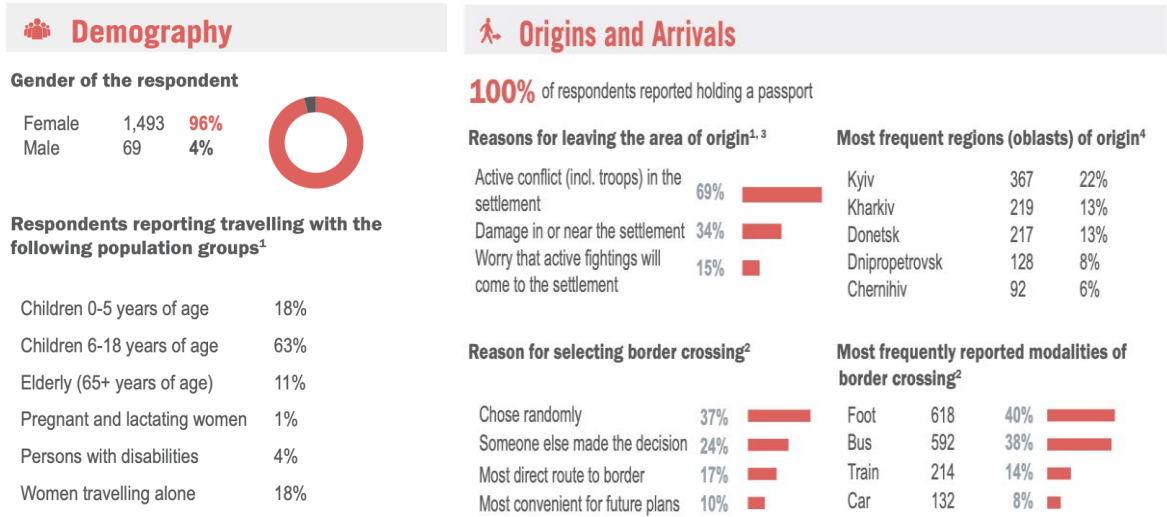
%29 of the respondents plan to stay in Poland, whereas %23 intends to go to Germany eventually. %67 of respondents intending to stay in Poland plan to stay in the country as long as conflict in Ukraine continues, whereas the rest of respondents intending to stay in Poland don't know how long they will stay in the country.

¹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

² www.krakow.pl/aktualnosci/258278,26,komunikat,wypлата_swiadczen_dla_polakow_goszczacych_uchodzcow___co_trzeba_wiedziec.html?_ga=2.190181871.575654667.1647250899-408666617.1645692290

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/refugee-arrivals-ukraine-poland-update-06042022>

Some other information in regard to demographic information, countries of origin, arrivals and intentions can be seen below:



Intentions

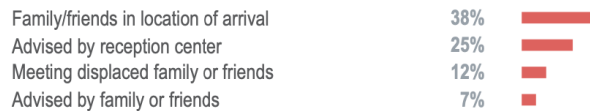
Top 3 intended destination countries of respondents



67% of respondents intending to stay in Poland plan to stay in the country as long as conflict in Ukraine continues

25% of respondents intending to stay in Poland don't know how long they will stay in the country

Reported drivers for selection of destination country by respondents^{1, 2}



Reported accommodation type in destination country by respondents



3. Humanitarian needs, response, and gaps by sector

3.1. Transportation and Shelter

The vast majority of people crossed into Poland are staying living in Warsaw, Krakow, and main urban centers. Many have been welcomed by the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland, many more are being hosted by Polish families, and the rest reside in recently established shelters and reception centers. So far, the assistance provided across the municipalities has succeeded in keeping millions of people from Ukraine sheltered. The Polish citizens and business communities in large cities around the country have stepped in to support. Local businesses have donated buildings and office complexes to be retrofitted into shelters. The support provided can be observed in train stations, shelters and other service points around the country. Furthermore, the national government has also passed legislation that allows for Polish citizens and other entities to access 40

PLN/night/person that they host, either in private homes or shelters. However, the longest the allowance can be claimed is 60 days.

According to Rapid Needs Assessment conducted by IRC⁴ on 11-24 March in Warsaw, Krakow, Wroclaw, and Lublin; for those not living with host families, shelter was the second most prioritized need (for those being hosted, it was third). Out of 495 respondents, 32% stay in some form of shelter (reception center, longer-term shelter, or community shelter), 21% were hosted, 12% stayed with a friend or family, 12% stayed in a hotel (2/3s of which were offered for free), 12% stayed in rented accommodation, and 4% stayed in a public space or on the street. The remaining 8% noted 'other' most of whom were travelling on a bus/train". While this represented a vast diversity of accommodation, and relatively few had to sleep in public places, the reality that very few Ukrainians, even those living with hosts see their current shelter as a sustainable solution.

According to the assessment findings, some households who are hosting displaced families are already overwhelmed and are seeking support to help these families move to alternative accommodation. Shelter directors also remain unclear about how long their shelter will be open, or if/when it will return to its original usage, since many are office buildings, sports complexes, train stations, etc. Meanwhile, key informants in Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw noted that the housing market is already full. Even though most of the reception centers/shelters are 'make-shift' and only began to operate as shelters within the last four weeks, it was reported that basic needs of their guests are being met.

Since 26 February, Ukrainian citizens can travel in Poland free of charge on trains operated, including transfers within the Polish borders.

3.2. Protection

Many children, their families, and women arriving from Ukraine require systematic protection services including to address gender-based violence, violence against children, separation from family and distress. UNHCR and UNICEF has activated "Blue Dot" mechanism - support centers for children and families where professional, trained case workers, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and legal aid providers should be available to support identification of urgent social service and protection needs, and ensure that those needs are addressed. Where needed, such services should also provide support or referrals to others with specific needs, such as survivors of gender-based violence, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Blue Dots are mainly established along anticipated routes of major refugee flows - often done in conjunction with local municipalities in strategic urban areas or transport hubs (bus or train stations). They can also be embedded into refugee registration sites, in reception facilities, or at cash distribution points. The Blue Dots aim to be an extension of the government's national protection system; therefore, the Blue Dots need to be linked to the national and local referral pathways and services.

Based on observation of the team, blue dots have been established, child friendly spaces are also available however UNHCR and UNICEF are currently having difficulties to provide sufficient number of staff members, since they are at the stage of expanding their teams in the country. UNICEF had no operational presence in the country prior to the crises.

Przemysl train station is the main transit point for evacuation of children in institutional care in Ukraine to Poland, with smaller transfers occurring at border crossing points. The main reception points for these children

⁴ <https://www.rescue.org/report/irc-assessment-humanitarian-needs-refugees-fleeing-ukraine-poland>

is Stolowa Wola facility, run by the Polish government, staffed with a Ukrainian social workers deployed by the ministry.

3.2. Food Aid, NFI, WASH

Rapid assessments show that immediate needs in the temporary shelters/reception centers are being met with food supplies, hygiene and sanitary products, heaters, blankets and other bedding items.

According to the assessment report of IRC, the third most commonly-noted need was for money, presumably to spend on shelter, food, basic needs, and to send back to Ukraine. Most prefers a card loaded with cash (69%) or Polish currency provided in cash (29%). There was no preference noted for mobile money or other cash transfer mechanisms. %70 of respondents noted that everything they needed to purchase was available in the markets, while 26% said they did not know what was available, likely this is because they are residing in shelters, where all basic items are provided. 74% of the survey respondents are currently able to access their bank account in Ukraine however some noted that many displaced people withdrew most or all of the money they had in the bank when they fled from Ukraine. Now, they find themselves with large amounts of cash, which they cannot store safely in shelters, and which holds minimal value due to poor exchange rates at money exchange offices in Poland. 36% of respondents have taken out a loan since the crisis began.

On 21 March, UNHCR and partners began the roll-out of the unrestricted multipurpose cash assistance programme in Warsaw. This programme is currently planned to reach some 350,000 people, whereas the Cash Working group partners will target total of 780,000 people. Total value based on household (HH) size planned is 700 PLN for the first HH member per month (head of the HH) and 600 PLN per month for each additional member for emergency relief to cover basic needs, aligned with Poland's basic subsistence amount adjusted from data for inflation. There are INGOs and NGOs also preparing for multi-purpose cash support using the assistance rates and eligibility criteria set by the Cash Working Group for Poland.

3.3. Health

Ukrainians who have fled to Poland have been granted with access to the Polish public healthcare system however it may be difficult to navigate due to language barrier. In the reception centers, medical staff are present. Mental health and psychosocial services need to be scaled up to help those that have witnessed the horrors of war as well as the frontline workers who are supporting them.

3.4. Education

UNICEF reported that as of 5th April, approximately 50% of the refugees from Ukraine are children with 30% school-aged (6-18 years old), totaling around 700,000 children, and 19% (around 450,000), are 0-6 years old. Ukrainian refugee children have been granted with the access to education with the March 12th law. According to Deputy minister of Education, over 170,000 children have already enrolled in Polish schools and kindergartens with 10,000 enrolling each day, whereas many children prefer attending distance learning program in Ukraine, which makes laptop and internet access critical needs. Local municipalities are reporting challenges in integrating children due to insufficient numbers of trained teachers, lack of MHPSS services for children affected by conflict, and addressing children's learning losses due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, and now displacement.

The Ministry of Education has recently updated its national directive allowing Ukrainian teachers in Poland as refugees to be recruited and support the provision of education services and for Ukrainian refugee children to complete the current academic year based on the Ukrainian curriculum. New directives also suggest support to refugee children can include continued remote learning.

The Center for Citizenship *Education* (CCE) – a Polish NGO and UNICEF are heading the education sector. UNICEF did not have a program Office in Poland prior to the crises and trying to establish its presence at the moment.

3.5. Livelihoods

Polish government has announced that Ukrainian refugees are allowed to legally work in the country. Employers need to notify the government within 14 days of hiring. According to the local authorities discussed, some of the refugees have already started working. It seems that labor market has a potential to absorb the new comers at working age. Considering that refugees do not speak Polish, type of the jobs that they could access is limited. Livelihood working group has not been formed yet in Poland.

5. Coordination:

Humanitarian partners have worked in close partnership with the government to develop an inter-agency Refugee Response Plan (RRP), and it is now published for period March-August 2022. The plan has been laid out to support government-led efforts through a multi-sectoral approach focusing on protection, reception/shelter and material, as well as cash assistance for the most vulnerable groups and individuals with specific needs.

Central and local governments have been responsive and active since the beginning, setting up reception centers, mobilizing their resources to basic needs of refugees, organizing free transportation and closely coordinating with UN and civil society actors on the ground.

