



**Bulgaria**  
**Czech Republic**  
**Hungary**  
**Poland**  
**Romania**  
**Slovakia**  
**Slovenia**




# Central Europe

## | Working environment |

The Regional Representation in Budapest leads UNHCR's work in the seven countries that make up the Central European subregion. UNHCR maintains a presence in each of these countries except Slovenia. With the exception of the Czech Republic, all share borders with non-European Union (EU) countries, and are therefore important entry points for asylum-seekers and other migrants. These countries are also among the newer Member States, having joined the European Union either in 2004 or, in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, in 2007.

In 2008, more than 16,000 applications for asylum were submitted in these seven countries, or 6.7 per cent of the total lodged in the European Union. During the first half of 2009, these countries received over 7,700 applications. Annual arrivals are expected to remain at a similar level in 2010.

Protection-sensitive border policies and procedures are indispensable in a mixed migration context, where people seeking international protection travel alongside those who are on the move for other reasons. Joint monitoring of practices at the EU's external borders enables UNHCR to

A photograph of a fenced-in area, likely a transit center, with a person visible in the distance. The foreground is filled with dry, yellowed grass. The background shows a clear sky and some trees.

A Sudanese refugee awaits resettlement at the Evacuation Transit Center in Romania.



work with governments towards protection-sensitive border controls.

UNHCR views the quality and consistency of asylum legislation and practices in the subregion as a priority. To this end, it is working closely with the authorities to review asylum procedures, identify good practices and introduce improvements. It is also seeking to improve reception conditions for asylum-seekers. Although the European Union has established a legal framework that sets out minimum standards in this regard, shortcomings persist in some Central European countries.

The local integration of people of concern to UNHCR has become more challenging in light of the current economic crisis. The Office will pay continuous attention to this issue in 2010-2011.

## Strategy

In 2010, UNHCR will work with governmental and non-governmental partners to achieve the following: (i) access to territory and asylum procedures for persons seeking protection; (ii) appropriate reception conditions for asylum-seekers; (iii) fair and efficient asylum procedures; and (iv) durable solutions, including local integration and resettlement in the subregion. This strategy will be implemented through direct monitoring, training, research and public advocacy.

## Constraints

Prejudice against asylum-seekers and minorities, particularly the Roma, hinders the integration of these groups. This, coupled with a developing, but not yet fully functioning Common

European Asylum System, results in an onward movement to other EU Member States. Worsening economic conditions, increasing unemployment and austerity budgeting by governments risk to reduce resources available for asylum procedures, reception services and the support for durable solutions.

## Operations

With respect to **access to territory and procedures**, UNHCR has agreements with four countries which cover border-monitoring activities with partners. Similar agreements with other countries are being explored.

UNHCR will train border officials on protection issues and increase the production of information leaflets and their dissemination at entry points. Interventions will be made in cases of potential *refoulement*, including in the context of extradition proceedings. The Office will also observe and comment on the implementation of the Dublin II Regulation, which identifies the Member State responsible for reviewing an asylum claim.

To **promote appropriate conditions of reception**, UNHCR will utilize the monitoring tools which it is developing. Staff will make regular visits to reception and detention centres and pay particular attention to separated and unaccompanied children, and other vulnerable individuals. Standard operating procedures for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence will be implemented, and the 2009 age, gender and diversity mainstreaming exercise will be followed up in 2010.

In order to **promote and support fair and efficient asylum procedures**, UNHCR will comment on relevant draft legislation



expected to be adopted in the subregion. In 2008–2009, UNHCR, supported by the European Refugee Fund (ERF), implemented a Quality Initiative Project on refugee status determination in eight countries in Central Europe. First and second instance decisions on asylum applications were audited and recommendations for improvements made.

UNHCR will embark on a follow-up project in 2010. This will build on the positive results of the first phase and seek to ensure that the quality assurance mechanisms put in place are sustainable.

With regard to **durable solutions**, integration of refugees remains a challenging proposition in many countries. Newly developed systems often do not include the needed services and support at the community level. UNHCR will continue to advocate for effective integration policies and will implement an evaluation methodology to help governments measure the effectiveness of their refugee integration programmes.

UNHCR will continue to advocate for the development of **resettlement** policies. It will monitor the process for refugees who have been resettled in the subregion (for instance in the **Czech Republic** and Romania) and support further resettlement in 2010. Furthermore, UNHCR will operate the Emergency Transit Centre in **Romania**, which provides a safe haven for refugees pending resettlement. An ad hoc emergency transit arrangement in **Slovakia** will continue to function into early 2010.

In support of these objectives, UNHCR will continue its public information strategy. A regional website with multilingual country-specific information will be maintained. Video clips and TV spots will be produced, and advocacy documents in six languages will be distributed. Regular press releases and statements are also a part of this strategy.

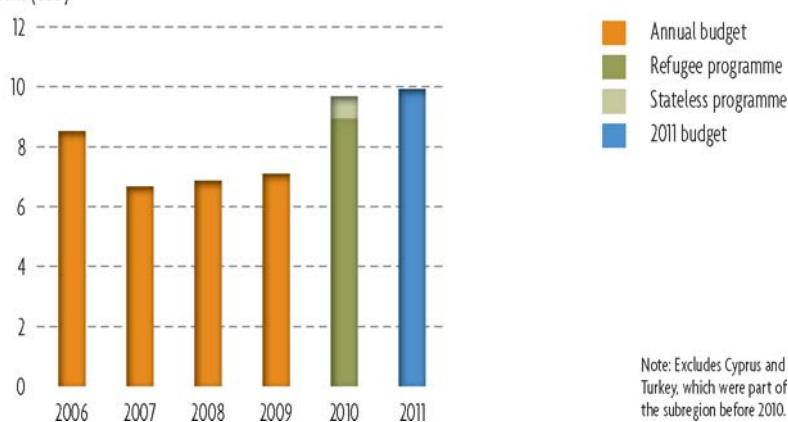
UNHCR will **strengthen its partnerships** with governmental and non-governmental actors to secure support for its mandate and financial resources. UNHCR offices will work closely with partners to raise awareness of displacement issues within the region and globally.

## Financial information

92 percent of UNHCR budget is for refugee activities and the remaining amount for those with stateless people. The budget reflects increased efforts with respect to advocacy and capacity building in all the operational priorities, but particularly in the area of durable solutions.

## UNHCR's budget in Central Europe 2006 - 2011

Millions (USD)



## UNHCR budget for Central Europe (USD)

COUNTRY	2009 REVISED BUDGET	2010			2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	TOTAL	
Bulgaria	818,628	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	455,914	0	0	0	0
Hungary Regional Office <sup>1</sup>	2,967,785	8,938,441	749,329	9,687,769	9,936,100
Poland	819,522	0	0	0	0
Romania	1,029,099	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	732,678	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	170,000	0	0	0	0
Regional activities	100,000	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,093,626</b>	<b>8,938,441</b>	<b>749,329</b>	<b>9,687,769</b>	<b>9,936,100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Hungary Regional Office includes activities in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.