Slovenia

February 2022

Slovenia is a gateway to northern and western European countries, with considerable transit of persons seeking protection and migrants crossing its territory.

In 2021, 5,301 asylum applications were registered, a 49% increase compared to 2020. 3,396 of asylum-seekers absconded before the procedure could be finalised. 704 of the 782 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who arrived in 2020 absconded. They face high risks as they are exposed to smugglers and traffickers.

**POPULATION OF CONCERN***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum-seekers</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally displaced</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stateless people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population of concern</td>
<td>1,168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Asylum-seekers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data source: UNHCR 2021 Mid-Year Statistical Report and UNHCR data finder platform

**COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

**Advocacy:** The national COVID-19 vaccination plan includes refugees and asylum-seekers on par with citizens.

**Inclusion:** Refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons are included in the national health response plan, and they can access all COVID-19 health services, with the exception of rapid antigen tests which are available only to Slovenian Health Insurance Card holders. Refugees are part of the socio-economic response plan and eligible for the same financial support as citizens of Slovenia.

**Communication with Communities:** UNHCR’s partners Institute Emma has been providing psycho-social counselling to refugees and asylum-seekers, including those who experience anxiety and depression as a result of pandemics.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**1,159** persons of concern were assisted by UNHCR partners in 2021. Asylum-seekers and refugees had access to legal assistance and psycho-social counseling.

**10** protection monitoring visits were conducted to border police stations, as well as detention centres and accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers in 2021.

**111** advocacy and coordination meetings were facilitated or attended by UNHCR with national authorities and NGOs. We advocated for improved access to territory and asylum procedure, and to ensure improved protection mechanisms for children of concern and vulnerable persons in 2021.

**IRANIAN ASYLUM-SEEKER FINDS HIS CALLING IN CARING FOR THE ELDERLY**

Reza feels that fate has brought him to Slovenia, and to a job where he can make a difference.
Key Priorities

- **Access to territory:** 10,067 individuals were intercepted by the border authorities when entering the country irregularly. While this number is 31% lower than in 2020, substantially more of these people applied for asylum than before (+41%), resulting in an overall increase of registered asylum applications (+49%). In comparison to the previous year there has been a 60% decrease in readmissions to neighbouring countries. UNHCR regularly monitors the situation of people in need of international protection seeking access to the territory and the asylum procedure.

- **Legal assistance:** The provision of quality legal assistance from the start of their application helps asylum-seekers navigate the complex asylum procedure. To ensure that asylum-seekers in Slovenia have access to information, counselling services and legal representation at the first instance, UNHCR supported the Legal Information Centre PIC.

- **Quality of asylum procedure:** UNHCR supported the asylum authorities with quality assurance, and in 2021 undertook a quality review study of the asylum procedure at the first instance with the Peace Institute.

- **Vulnerability in asylum:** Once identified as vulnerable, asylum-seekers are entitled to specific rights and safeguards in the asylum procedure. Because identification is key, UNHCR advocated for the improvement of identification and referral mechanisms at borders and within the asylum procedure.

- **Family reunification:** UNHCR has continued to promote and facilitate family reunification in Slovenia throughout 2021 and is assisting the Slovenian authorities with seven family reunification cases.

- **Education:** Teachers, children, and parents face challenges during the process of integrating refugee children in schools. UNHCR has developed the learning programme “Teaching About Refugees” to foster a more inclusive learning environment in schools, and to tackle misinformation about refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. As soon as the COVID-19 situation will allow, the programme will be rolled-out at schools in Slovenia.

**Working with Partners**

- UNHCR supports the **Legal Information Centre PIC**, an NGO providing information, counselling, and legal representation to asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR supports **Institute EMMA**, an NGO providing psycho-social counselling and support to asylum-seekers and refugees with vulnerabilities.
- UNHCR works with **governmental partners**, primarily with the Migration Directorate, the Office for the Support to and Integration of Migrants, as well as the Border Police Division of the General Police Directorate.
- UNHCR co-facilitated and offered capacity building to the **working group** providing support to survivors of gender-based violence and vulnerable persons.
- UNHCR supported the development of a handbook for legal guardians of unaccompanied children. The handbook is in use since January 2022.

**Statelessness**

- Slovenia succeeded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless persons in 1992, but is not party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- Slovenia has no statelessness determination procedure in place. UNHCR promotes and advocates for the establishment of such a procedure.

**UNHCR Presence in Slovenia**

**Staff:** 1 Liaison Staff  
**Offices:** 0 Offices

**Financial information** *(February 2022)*

Information relates to the Representation for Central Europe, which covers the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia, Slovenia

**Financial requirements**  
USD 6.3 M

- **Funding gap:** 95%  
  5.99 M  
- **Funded:** 5%  
  0.31 M

UNHCR is grateful to the donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the 2022 global programmes. Donors of USD 10 million or more are:

- Sweden  
- Netherlands  
- Denmark  
- Germany  
- Switzerland  
- Belgium  
- Ireland