

Austria

February 2023

UNHCR focus in Austria continues to be on supporting a quality asylum system, improving protection and reception conditions as well as raising awareness on refugee issues.

Austria continues to be an **important host country**, with some **269,300 displaced and stateless people** in mid-2022. In the second half of 2022, the country saw a spike in arrivals, compared to the first half of the year.

Preliminary statistics for 2022 indicate some **109,000 applications for asylum**, mostly from Syrians and Afghans, however a considerable number of people is moving on.

UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS AS OF MID-2022*

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Refugees | 233,524 |
| Asylum-seekers | 34,457 |
| Stateless persons | 3,219 |

Top three countries of origin*

| Refugees | | Asylum-seekers | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Ukraine | 74,689 | Syrian Arab Rep. | 11,589 |
| Syrian Arab Rep. | 67,588 | Afghanistan | 5,499 |
| Afghanistan | 43,725 | Pakistan | 2,599 |

*UNHCR 2022 Mid-Year Trends and UNHCR [data finder](#)

UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

As of mid-February 2023, **93,171 refugees from Ukraine** were present in Austria.

UNHCR issued recommendations for stakeholders on how to better protect and include refugees from Ukraine, including protection, social and labour market inclusion, education, mobility, etc.

Protection: UNHCR maintains monitoring and presence at border points, train stations, arrival centres and reception facilities.

Advocacy is ongoing to grant temporary protection holders similar social rights as refugees and include them into the regular social aid scheme.

Supporting the most vulnerable: UNHCR supports the transfer programme from Moldova for vulnerable refugees from Ukraine, in coordination with authorities and IOM.

Inclusion: UNHCR has been advocating for granting unhindered access to the labour market. In January 2023, the Ministry for Labour announced that the Austrian Employment Act will be amended, which will allow refugees from Ukraine unrestricted access to the labor market. Currently, a work permit is still required.

HIGHLIGHTS

Austria – an important donor to UNHCR

In 2022, Austria contributed over **USD 20 million** to UNHCR, for the second year in a row. To further strengthen the partnership with Austria, UNHCR and the authorities discussed joint strategies and further cooperation during the first-ever **bilateral consultations** in November.

Quality assurance project “Bridge” concluded

Through the **AMIF-funded project “Bridge”**, for 2020-2022, nearly 2,500 stakeholders of the asylum system were trained and in total over 300 participants attended the annual “Asylum Day” during the duration of the project.

Refugee Team

The **UNHCR Refugee Team** served its first term with 10 members, and strives to foster dialogue with refugee communities. The forum gives room to discuss challenges and solutions. New team members are being recruited.



LONG DAY OF FLIGHT

The 11th edition of the UNHCR “**Long Day of Flight**” took place on 30 September featuring over 100 events for school children, and the general public, ranging from sports events to workshops, guided tours, lectures, exhibitions, etc.

Key Priorities

- **Advocacy:** UNHCR has been calling on all stakeholders on the federal and provincial level to urgently arrange more reception places for asylum-seekers to prevent homelessness and improve reception. UNHCR also advocates for more inclusive rights for subsidiary protection holders and refugees from Ukraine as well as more funding for UNHCR.
- **Reception condition monitoring:** Amid insufficient reception capacity, UNHCR visits reception facilities, with a focus on identifying special needs, preventing gender-based violence, child-friendly reception arrangements of both unaccompanied and accompanied children, ensuring complaint mechanisms and access to information. UNHCR follows up with the Ministry of Interior and Provinces to improve reception conditions, protection and care for unaccompanied children.
- **Protection:** UNHCR monitors relevant developments, with a special focus on quality of the asylum procedure and reception system.
- **Project “Bridge”:** The 3-year quality assurance project “Bridge”, co-funded by the Austrian Ministry of Interior and the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, was implemented between 2020-2022. The project supported asylum decision makers through training activities, events, evaluation of asylum decisions, etc. Within the project’s framework, UNHCR carried out visits to reception and detention centres with a focus on vulnerable asylum-seekers, unaccompanied and separated children as well as refugees from Ukraine.
- **Access to territory:** UNHCR is monitoring relevant developments and is advocating against several legislative externalisation proposals.

- **Integration:** UNHCR is regularly meeting with the local UNHCR Refugee Team to better institutionalize exchange with communities.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR cooperates with Ministries, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, judges of relevant courts, the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services, Members of Parliament, and senior officials in the Provinces, among others.
- UNHCR NGO interlocutors include main organizations active in the field of asylum and Asylum Lawyers’ Network, which engages in litigation. Journalists, academia, actors in the field of education as well as IOM and UNICEF are also important partners.
- **External engagement:** UNHCR cooperated with the human rights film festival “this human world” and co-organized a film competition for pupils.

Statelessness

- Austria acceded to both Statelessness Conventions but lacks a statelessness determination procedure.
- UNHCR advocates for the establishment of a stateless determination procedure and a residence permit for stateless persons as well as the right to nationality at birth for children born stateless.

UNHCR Presence in Austria

Staff:

9 National Staff
1 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Vienna

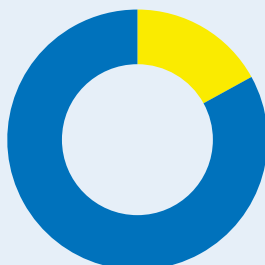
Financial information* (February 2023)

*Information relates to the Representation in Austria and to the European Institutions in Strasbourg, the Office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the Liaison Office in Vienna and the presence in Portugal

Financial requirements

USD 5.4 M

Funding gap
83%
4.5 M



Funded
17%
0.9 M

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Belgium | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

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