



# HUMANITARIAN AID ACTION FOR UKRAINIAN PEOPLE

Briefing Note

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24/03/2022

## BACKGROUND

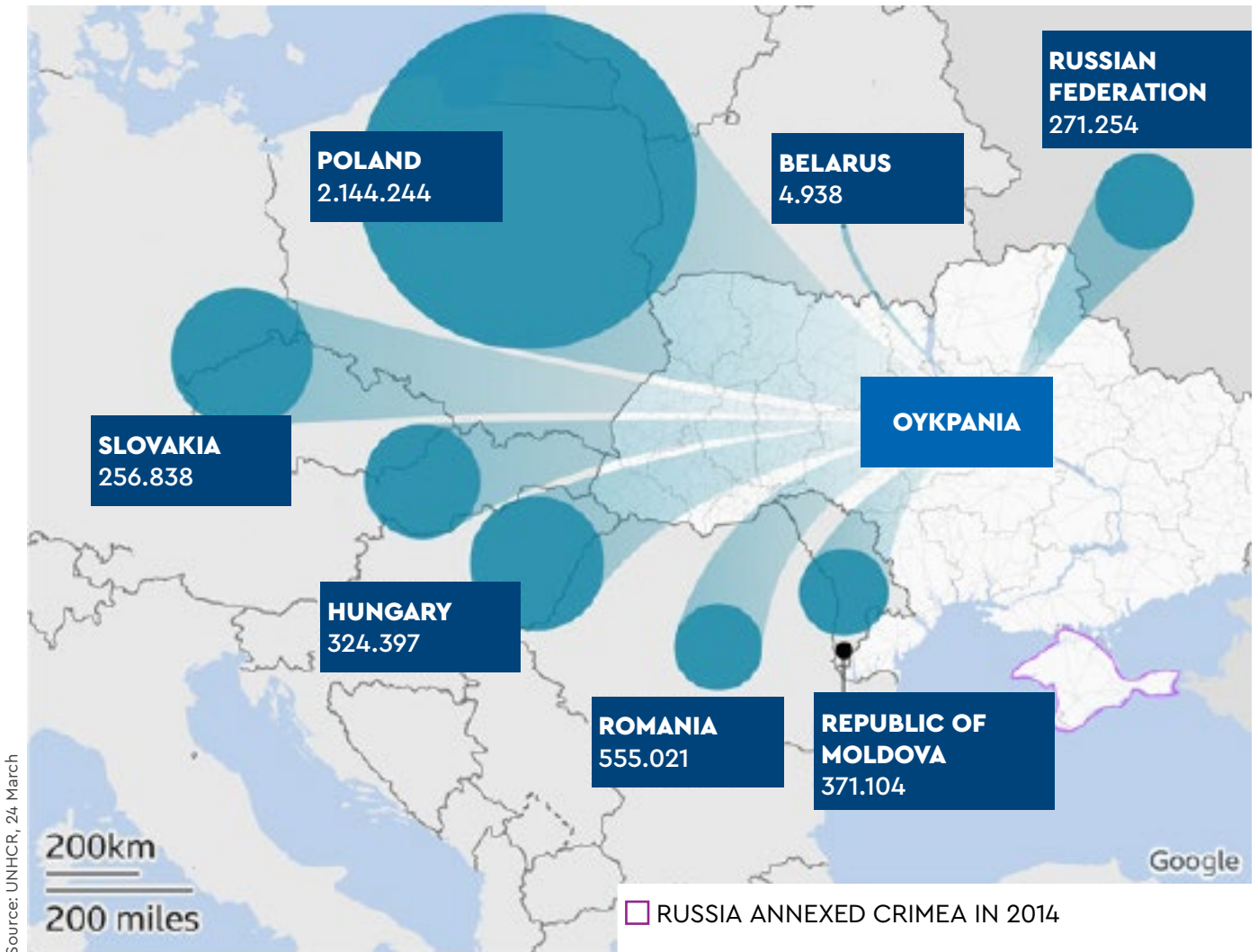
The Russian Federation launched a military offensive against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. In total, prior to the invasion by the Russian military forces, the number of registered internally displaced persons was more than 1.46 million<sup>1</sup>.

An estimated 12.65 million people have been affected in the areas hardest hit by the war within Ukraine. The escalation of conflict has triggered an immediate and steep rise in humanitarian needs, both within the country as well as in the neighboring countries receiving refugees. Many people remain trapped in areas of escalating conflict and, with essential services disrupted, are unable to meet their basic needs including food, water and medicines<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ACAPS, Ukraine (Source: <https://www.acaps.org/country/ukraine/crisis/conflict>)

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, Ukraine Situation Flash Update #3 (Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-situation-flash-update-3-15-march-2022>)

WHICH COUNTRIES ARE UKRAINIANS FLEEING TO?



RECEPTION COUNTRIES

As of March 16th 2022 more than 3 million refugees have fled Ukraine with the vast majority seeking protection in the neighboring EU countries: Poland (1,857,045), Romania (467,703), Hungary (272,943) and Slovakia (220,977), while a significant number of refugees has moved to the Republic of Moldova (344,454) to Russia Federation (155,841) and to Belarus (1,816), while an additional 1.85 million people have been displaced internally within the country<sup>3</sup>.

The majority of Ukrainians fleeing their country are vulnerable cases such as elderly people, mothers traveling with their children, people with disabilities, since the Ukrainian parliament declared martial law, prohibiting men aged 18 to 60 from leaving the country.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation (Source: [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#\\_ga=2.177471717.1925686798.1647518123-384959352.1632983098](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.177471717.1925686798.1647518123-384959352.1632983098))



At this stage the majority of the population stays for a few hours or a few days in the appropriate places for refugees and then moves to Bucharest or other major cities where they stay with friends, relatives, hostels or hotel rooms while a significant number of Ukrainians go to the airport in Suceava or Iasi to catch a flight to Italy, Israel or the USA.

## INSIGHTS FROM ROMANIA

The Romanian government announced at the end of February that it was ready and able to welcome more than 500,000 Ukrainian citizens. At the end of the third week of March the actual number of flows had already exceeded the capacity that had been announced by the Romanian government.





The refugees who have arrived in Romania do not come solely from neighbouring towns near the border, but from all over Ukraine, with some travelling two to three days to reach the southern Ukrainian border. According to recent data from the Romanian Ministry of Interior, the Civil Protection (Inspectoratul pentru Situații de Urgență – SMURD) has activated more than 300 firefighters working to support field teams in the 8 regions bordering Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova and to manage the situation created by the current development.

Having already set up temporary refugee camps, the Romanian authorities said in early March that they had been able to provide shelter and food for 201 people per camp, in a total of 39 pre-selected locations.

Each of these sites is equipped with tents, folding beds, air conditioning and lighting, sleeping bags, water, personal hygiene facilities and an open kitchen. In parallel, construction companies are renovating spaces to house services and staff at the entry points in readiness for the second wave of refugees.

## INSIGHTS FROM SIRET

In Siret in northern Romania – the busiest border crossing between the two countries since the beginning of the crisis – long convoys of more than 9–12 km continue daily, while many people spend the night in the fields, waiting to cross to the other side.

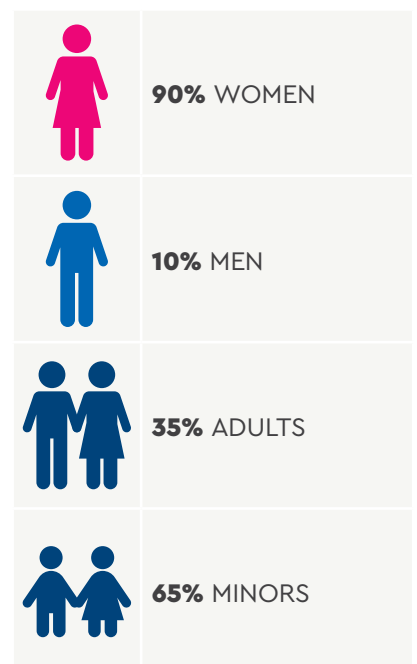
### Queues to enter Romania can last from 2 to 20 hours.

In the 3rd week of March, an average of around 4000 people cross the border of Siret daily, mostly in private cars. On Friday 18 March a convoy was bombed, resulting in 2 cars being completely hit and the families on board losing their lives, marking a temporary halt in the number of flows in the days following the bombing event. Siret, however, remains the entry point of Romania that receives the most flows compared to the other points of the eastern border (Iasi, Husi, Galati, Braila).

Priority-based needs among refugees include subsequent transportation, transit accommodation, first aid and the provision of personal protective equipment. These needs are currently being met by humanitarian actors present at the borders and in the temporary transit centres.

The pedestrian population on the move consists mainly of women with children and to a lesser extent of elderly people. The elderly, people with chronic illnesses and pregnant women are often in need of first aid. They stay for a very short time on site and then board buses to provincial towns, villages for overnight stays or directly to nearby airports and then on to their final destination.

With regard to mental health first aid and psychosocial support needs: There is a gap that needs to be filled, as emergency incidents such as panic attacks and anxiety attacks are observed among the mobile population. People who visited the Médecins du Monde mobile medical unit





report that there are very large shortages of medicines, injections and insulin, mainly in the north of Ukraine (from Kiev onwards) but also in the south as well.

As the days go by, the psychological problems become more acute. Some psychologists go around the site speaking in different languages. There have also been cases in which mild antidepressants were administered by the medical team of Doctors of the World, following clinical assessment and cooperation with emergency psychologists for immediate psychological treatment.

Up to now, the situation at the border is still very well organised and the area is functioning as a crossing point. People are very quickly provided with clothes, food, medical supplies on the move and board buses for the interior (either in dedicated reception areas or at hotels/intermediate stops to continue the next day to their final destination).





During the coordination meeting of the Romanian authorities it was decided that no tolls would apply for humanitarian missions and the transport of humanitarian material.

So far no unaccompanied minors have been observed, but the coordination team and the authorities recommend particular attention and vigilance to identify possible unaccompanied minors.

In any case, the administrative region of Suceava has in any case shortcomings in the health sector, as the regions in the north of Romania are generally poor, even before the crisis.





# MDM-GREECE'S RESPONSE

## IN ROMANIA

The voluntary-based mission of Médecins du Monde-Greece at the border of Siret in Northeastern Romania started on Thursday 10 March. The first mission delivered the first medical and pharmaceutical supplies to the local NGO #HELPUKRAINE.

On 24/03/2022 Médecins du Monde – Greece delivered 25 tons of humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian people after their coordination with the Lviv Region and HELPUKRAINE. The humanitarian aid included health material, medicines, essentials and food items. The Municipality of Katerini also participated in the mission by reinforcing the load of Médecins du Monde with an additional 5 tons of supplies.

At the same time, a Mobile Health Unit (MHU) is providing services on the field, near the border. During the first 15 days of operation of the MHU, the medical team of Médecins du Monde – Greece has offered treatment to 420 passing vulnerable people in need of urgent medical care, while doctors are making visits to the temporary reception facilities providing assistance to refugees with medical needs.

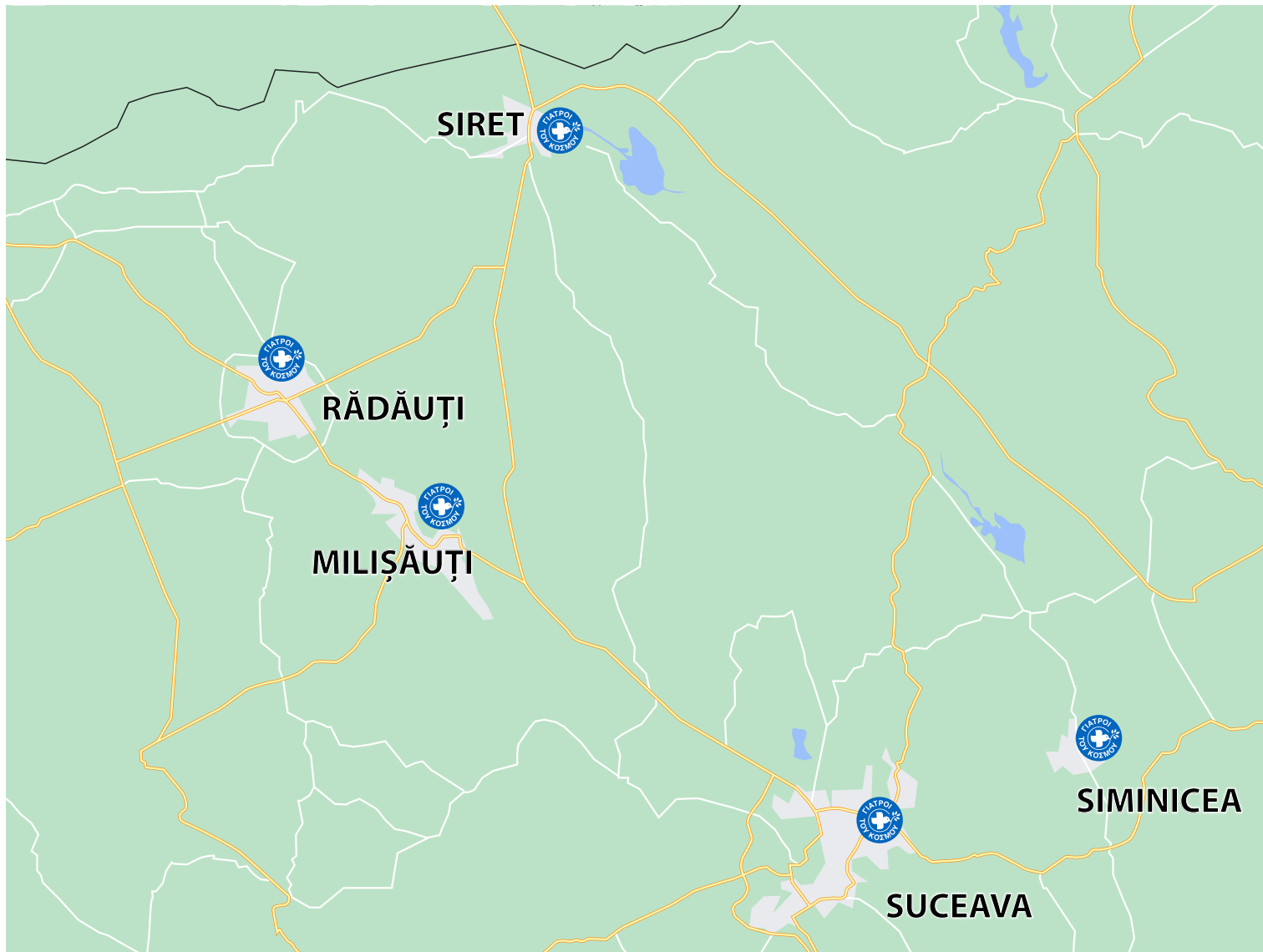
To date, a total of 12 health volunteers in teams of 4 members have taken turns to support the operation of the unit.

The voluntary health teams are staffed with a general practitioner, a paediatrician, a gynaecologist, a nurse and midwife, a social worker and a field coordinator assists the team and represents the organisation in the local working group and coordination meetings.

Through the MHU, Médecins du Monde – Greece has provided the necessary personal protective equipment to people in need in order to reduce the risk of infection from Covid-19.







The Médecins du Monde – Greece field team carrying out visits to reception and shelter sites in North-Eastern Romania, during which the following was observed in terms of capacity and occupancy:

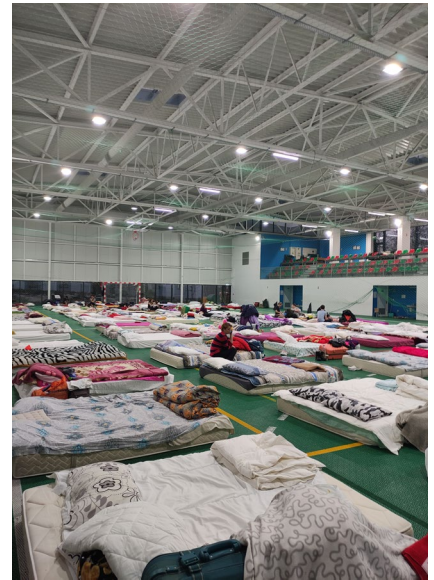
There are two separate places for hosting Ukrainian refugees near the border with Siret, two more in Radauti, an indoor stadium in Milisauti and another one in Dumbraveni and finally, a school in Suceava region (as shown in the table below):

LOCATION	CAPACITY	OCCUPANCY (as of 14/03/2022)	OCCUPANCY (as of 23/03/2022)
Tabara Siret	402	55	8
Scoala Siret	140	10	15
Radauti Corturi	162	0	0
Radauti Sala de Sport	230	30	21
Milisauti Sala de Sport	593	8	0
Dumbraveni Sala de sport	250	18	107
Scoala Suceava	200	10	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.977</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>155</b>



Regarding the health needs of the above mentioned places of residence, it was found that all of them are closed and safe places (mainly schools and sports facilities) and are geographically located near small and medium sized towns in the Romanian province. In these places there are available doctors and pharmacies inside, but the presence of doctors is not daily. According to current information, local ambulances remain on general standby to transport emergencies to nearby hospitals.

Médecins du Monde – Greece will remain at the Siret border in April, following the approach of continuous needs assessment in the field in view of the potential for an immediate escalation of refugee flows in the region and possible multi-day stays in the temporary reception structures.





## IN GREECE


Médecins du Monde – Greece has disposed its Open Polyclinics, its housing programs and its Mobile Health Units in Athens, Thessaloniki and Kavala for the care and protection of refugees arriving in Greece from Ukraine.

The health and psychosocial support teams have already welcomed and provided assistance to the first wave of Ukrainian citizens arriving in Greece. To better connect refugees, posters with information and a map in Ukrainian have been displayed in a prominent place at the Embassy of Ukraine, the Counselling Office in Thessaloniki, the bus stations at Karaiskaki Square in Athens and Monastiriou Street in Thessaloniki respectively, so that those interested can contact Doctors of the World directly for assistance.

In the same context, Médecins du Monde – Greece are working to prevent and protect the population from Covid-19 by providing immediate personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, antiseptics), scheduling Covid-19 vaccinations for those who are interested and conducting rapid tests for those interested.

Providing material assistance to Ukrainian families who have already arrived in Greece is one of the priorities of Médecins du Monde – Greece, in order to meet the people's basic needs, while at the same time the Open Accommodation Centre "A Step Forward" is preparing to accommodate vulnerable women and mothers with children fleeing from Ukraine to Greece.

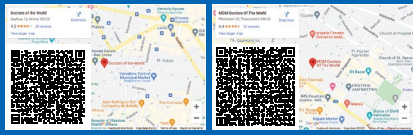
Médecins du Monde – Greece have initiated the operation of a Helpdesk, staffed with experienced social workers, that provides the appropriate social and administrative support to Ukrainian citizens who have fled to Greece to date, providing their services on a daily basis in Athens and Thessaloniki, while facilitating their orientation in Greek society.



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Médecins du Monde – Greece aims to continue its activities for Ukrainian citizens who continue to be displaced on a daily basis, seeking safety and protection in the European Union. So far, 350 people are currently receiving the necessary services. At the same time, Médecins du Monde - Greece continues to collect medical and paramedical supplies to support and relieve the people of Ukraine.

As of 23/03/2022, approximately 14,000 Ukrainian citizens have arrived in Greece, most of whom are hosted by the local Ukrainian community, relatives and friends.



**Olga is a refugee from Mariupol.** She came to our Open Polyclinic in Athens after reading information on an online platform, seeking the services of a pediatrician and a child psychologist for the care of her two underage children. Olga was forced to leave her homeland in the second week of hostilities, seeking safety for her children's lives. Her husband did not follow them as he stayed in #Ukraine due to the imposition of martial law. The family is temporarily hosted by a relative who has no financial means to help them. We provided Olga and her two young children with the services they needed as well as the necessary food and medical assistance, which we will continue to provide for as long as needed. The Social Workers of Mdm's Help Desk provide appropriate social and administrative support for Olga's family and for the hundreds of cases of Ukrainian citizens who have taken refuge in Greece to date, providing their services on a daily basis in Athens and Thessaloniki, while facilitating their orientation in Greek society.





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