



**ZRC SAZU**



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# **MULTI-SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT SLOVENIA 2023**

## **Final report**

prepared by SMI ZRC SAZU

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## Contributions

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## Access the Data

The MSNA data for this study are available on the [UNHCR Microdata Library](#).

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CC	Collective centre
EUR	Euro
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GOSIM	Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants
HH	Household
IP	International Protection
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psycho-social Support
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
SMI	Slovenian Migration Institute
TCN	Third-Country National
TP	Temporary protection
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ZRC SAZU	Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

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## KEY FINDINGS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since February 2022, more than 6.4 million refugees have reportedly left Ukraine, with more than 10,308 seeking temporary protection in Slovenia. In 2023 alone, there were 60,587 irregular crossings on Slovenian border noted by Slovenian police, of which 7,216 resulted in asylum applications and 129 were granted an international protection status.

At the time of the initial discussion for the implementation of a Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) in Slovenia, limited information was available to response actors regarding their demographic profile, household composition, humanitarian needs, movement intentions, or coping capacities. This survey was commissioned by the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and carried out by Slovenian Migration Institute of the Science and Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts (SMI ZRC SAZU) with the help of cultural mediators.

The frame of the survey and questions were drafted and finalised by SMI ZRC SAZU, with the input of the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe in November 2023. The data collection took place from 4 to 31 December 2023. In this time, 202 households (HH) with 434 household members that live in private/shared accommodations and collective shelters were reached, 193 of whom had obtained temporary and 9 with international protection. Primary data was collected through a structured survey, both on an individual and household level.

This report serves to evaluate the needs of Ukrainian refugees, including those with international and temporary protection statuses within Slovenia. The findings of this survey will be used to ensure evidence-based humanitarian interventions across Slovenia, which will respond to the needs of Ukrainian refugees. The analysis of this assessment comprises multiple sectors, including general demographics, protection, education, socio-economic inclusion, health, accommodation for the affected population.

The key findings from the MSCA include, but are not limited to, the following:

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic composition of refugees in Slovenia shows a significant representation of women and children. Females constitute a substantial portion of the population (64%), whereas males constitute (35%), with 1% choosing not to answer the question. The average household is comprised of 2.15 persons, with an average of 1.4

children per household. Children (0-17 years) represent 39%, adults (18-64 years) comprise 55%, and older persons (65+ years) make up 6% of the household population.

## **PROTECTION**

The majority of households (94%) have been granted temporary protection in Slovenia, 55% of which have already applied for an extension scheme. Only 5% of households reported beneficiaries of international protection or holders of permanent residence permits through family reunification with those under international protection.

A significant majority of respondents (71%) reported feeling safe in Slovenia, with an additional 21% feeling relatively safe. 6% expressed feeling somewhat unsafe, while 1% felt very unsafe, primarily citing concerns related to inadequate public lighting and a lack of people in their surroundings.

Notably, safety concerns were particularly pronounced for women and children within households. Hostile behaviour from the host community was reported by almost 1 in 5 respondents (19%) since their arrival. Reasons cited for such behaviour included various factors, such as having a refugee status, cultural disparities, competition for employment or business opportunities, ethnic differences, resource competition (such as housing and food), as well as gender and sexual orientation-related biases.

## **LIVELIHOOD AND EMPLOYMENT**

Employment or livelihood support emerged as the most commonly reported priority need, cited by 35% of respondents. Other critical necessities included healthcare services, Slovene language courses, medicines, accommodation, and adult education/training. Legal assistance, transportation support, access to service information, education for minors, child-care support, and debt repayment were also mentioned as important needs, although 30% of respondents did not identify immediate needs.

Before arriving in Slovenia, 81% of respondents were employed, primarily in sectors such as information and communication, transportation, education, secondary industries, public administration, trade, and administrative support. 55% of working-age adults interviewed were actively seeking employment. Reasons inhibiting employment opportunities included lack of local language knowledge (30%), inadequate employment opportunities aligned with their skills (19%), and various other factors such as age-related unemployability, lack of childcare services, transportation, education/skills recognition, and documentation challenges.

23% of adult respondents were employed, averaging 34 hours of work per week. Among those employed, 90% received a salary from regular employment, while others were engaged in self-employment, other business activities, or temporary work. Additionally, seven respondents mentioned working without a contract.

On average, a HH would spend 901,00 EUR for various necessary expenses per month.

## **HEALTH**

More than half of respondents (53%) reported that someone in their household required access to healthcare or had health problems in the month preceding the interview. Among them, 28% suffered from chronic illnesses. While 91% were able to access the necessary care, 9% faced barriers such as appointment scheduling difficulties, language barriers, and financial constraints. Respondents encountered challenges such as long waiting times for appointments, difficulty finding a family doctor, unaddressed health issues, lack of ongoing treatments for chronic illnesses, and limited access to primary care doctors, notably in municipalities like Ljubljana.

Regarding children's health, approximately 75% of children (between 0-5 years) covered in the survey had not received measles or polio vaccinations. Only around 16.5% of children aged 9 months to 5 years received measles-containing vaccinations, with a similar percentage (15%) receiving polio vaccines.

## **EDUCATION**

Within households, 39% of household members were children, with 82% of them attending or having attended formal education in Slovenia during the 2023-24 academic year. Of these, 70% attended primary and secondary schools, while 12% were in preschool. Most school-aged children attended regular classes, although some also participated in language support or other supplementary classes.

Out of the children attending school, 74% were in primary school (ages 6 to 14), and 26% were in secondary school (ages 14 to 18). Additionally, 51% of all children in the sample participated in distance online education, primarily focused on Ukrainian primary and secondary levels. Parents from households with temporary protection from Ukraine tended to maintain Ukrainian distance learning alongside enrolling their children in local schools.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

More than half of households (64%) reside in private accommodation, while 23% share their living space with other refugees or Slovenian families, and 10% live in collective



sites like refugee accommodation centres. Government subsidies partially cover accommodation costs for 51% of respondents, while 22% receive full coverage. Additionally, 21% receive free accommodation or are hosted by locals or families, and one respondent's employer subsidises their housing.

Numerous respondents reported issues with living conditions, including inadequate facilities, lack of privacy, cleanliness concerns, and safety issues related to cooking facilities. Regarding security of tenure, 53% of respondents stated they could remain in their current accommodation for at least six months. However, 5% have limited tenure ranging from three to six months, and almost 7% have less than a month to three months. Additionally, at least 5% are facing pressure to leave due to landlords revoking housing arrangements or planning renovations. Other factors contributing to pressure to leave include expiring contracts, plans to leave the country, rising living costs, lack of employment opportunities, and conflicts with landlords or neighbours.

## **ASSISTANCE**

The majority of respondents reported receiving humanitarian assistance since arriving in Slovenia, with 74% of households acknowledging some form of social assistance benefits. These benefits primarily included cash assistance (62%), child or family grants (10%), and unemployment grants (3%). Additionally, almost 7% stated they received social assistance benefits from other governments. Some respondents also mentioned receiving temporary or international protection support, often covering accommodation costs partially or entirely.

Of those who received aid in the three months preceding the interview, 65% expressed satisfaction, while 6% were dissatisfied, particularly with humanitarian financial aid. Reasons for dissatisfaction included poor quality services, insufficient or infrequent assistance, and challenges in accessibility. Moreover, 27% of the respondents on a HH level replied that they did not receive humanitarian aid.

## INTRODUCTION

Situated in Southeastern/Central Europe, Slovenia stands at the crossroads of two major migrant routes which have been created as a result of crises and conflicts in the nearby regions of the European Union. These include the Arab Spring, the Syrian civil war, ongoing instability in Afghanistan, conflict in Iraq, and tensions in various African states, leading to the creation of what we now know as the so called “Balkan migrant Route”. Slovenian police data on border crossings highlights the scale of the challenge, with 60,587 irregular border crossings noted in 2023, of which only 7,261 resulted in asylum applications and 129 were granted an international protection status. Due to the war in Ukraine, which has now displaced over 6 million Ukrainians, more than 10,000 have sought refuge in Slovenia. These facts all pose a challenge for the country, which underscores the need for thorough research and analysis in solving these issues effectively.

A Multi-Sector Needs Assessment has thus far been lacking, despite its necessity. Notwithstanding the availability of various statistical data and studies scattered across ministries, government offices, research institutions, non-governmental organisations, and local communities, there has been no focused research on this topic to date. Consequently, several critical questions remain unanswered, primarily concerning demography, protection, education, social and economic inclusion, health, and housing.

Slovenia is one of the smaller EU member states with a population of 2,123,103 residents. Following the economic crisis after 2009, Slovenia experienced a 24% drop in GDP in 2015, at the same time as the “long summer of migration”. The economic situation improved in the following years, only for Slovenia’s GDP to fall once again during the COVID-19 pandemic by 6.5%.

Slovenia primarily understands itself as a transit country, and its migration policies reflect this stance. It lacks sufficient infrastructure to implement its own migration strategy effectively, despite its commitments under international agreements such as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000). Currently, there is only one asylum centre on the outskirts of Ljubljana, with a maximum capacity of 250 people. Another facility is the Centre for Foreigners in Postojna, however it’s used primarily for deportation. Ad-hoc arrangements exist, such as those at Kotnikova Street in Ljubljana and Logatec, as well as Debeli Rtič, which is primarily housed by people with a temporary protection status and Dijaški Dom in Postojna which hosts unaccompanied youth, although these facilities were not originally designed for this purpose. Integration houses in Ljubljana and Maribor exist, however they are severely inadequate in terms of capacity as they

house a limited number of people, up to 45 in Maribor and up to 15 in Ljubljana. Regardless, most individuals with international or temporary protection end up in private accommodations.

Even within the integration process, numerous challenges persist. The difficulty of language acquisition emerges as a significant obstacle, alongside the complexities of certificate nostrification for educational qualifications. Negotiating through a labyrinthine bureaucratic system involving multiple offices, including those in the job market, exacerbates the integration journey. Issues such as labour market exploitation, the absence of cultural mediators, navigating accommodation requests, and securing support within the health and education systems further compound the integration process. Moreover, there's a notable lack of inclusion in the local community, as municipalities lack dedicated personnel responsible for integration efforts. Political participation remains limited, with advisory bodies lacking migrant representation. Mediating these challenges falls largely on the under-resourced Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants, as well as NGOs providing support to migrants.

On March 22, 2022, the Republic of Slovenia introduced temporary protection for persons displaced from Ukraine on or after February 24, 2022. The persons eligible for international protection are citizens of Ukraine; stateless persons and third-country nationals who are not citizens of Ukraine and who were granted international protection or other equivalent national protection in Ukraine; family members of the persons from the first two categories; stateless persons and third-country nationals who are not citizens of Ukraine and who resided in Ukraine on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit and who are unable to return to their country or region of origin in a safe and sustainable or lasting manner. In 2023, Slovenia received 7,187 applications for international protection, whereas 1,764 refugees from Ukraine applied for temporary protection. On December 31, 2023, 8,744 people in Slovenia had temporary protection status<sup>1</sup>. Since the onset of the Ukrainian war on February 24, 2022, the total number of individuals seeking temporary protection has reached 10,301.<sup>2</sup>

The research structure is organised in several parts. The introductory chapter includes an index and a list of acronyms. Following this, the results of the research are presented, divided into several sections: demographics, protection, education, integration into society and the labour market, health, and accommodation. In the demographic section, data is provided on the demographics of respondents in

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<sup>1</sup> This data was prepared by the Migration Policy and Legislation Division of the Migration Directorate, a body of the Ministry of the Interior (8. 4. 2024).

<sup>2</sup> This data was prepared by the Migration Policy and Legislation Division of the Migration Directorate, a body of the Ministry of the Interior (26. 2. 2024).

Slovenia, covering aspects such as average household size, gender distribution, and household composition by age group and vulnerability. The protection section delves into various aspects, including social protection, legal status, perceptions of safety and security, gender-based violence, child protection, access to information and feedback mechanisms, assistance received, priority needs, and movement intentions. Education refers to research on school attendance, peer violence, and bullying. Integration into society and the labour market is examined in terms of employment, access to government benefits and grants, sources of income, household expenditures, and coping strategies. Next, health-related findings encompass the health needs of households and individuals, including access to healthcare and barriers faced. Mental health services access and knowledge, as well as a detailed focus on children's health, vaccinations, and mental health, are also covered. Accommodation details types of housing options and security of tenure. Finally, the conclusion section summarises key findings and recommendations drawn from the research.

*Table 1. Main questions per key sector of humanitarian response*

<b>Demographics</b>	What are the characteristics of refugee HHs currently residing in Slovenia, and who is most in need?
<b>Priority Needs</b>	What are the needs and service gaps within the refugee community? What are the immediate and structural factors associated with these needs?
<b>Coping and resilience</b>	What behaviours and coping strategies are HHs undertaking to meet their needs, and what factors influence these behaviours?
<b>Access to information</b>	To which extent do HHs receive information about their legal status, rights and obligations in Slovenia and services available in Slovenia, including protection, humanitarian aid and social assistance benefits?
<b>Feedback on received assistance</b>	What are HHs' perspectives on aid delivery, as well as their preferences and priorities with regard to aid delivery for 2024?

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 2023 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) in Slovenia is developed through collaboration between the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe and local partner, SMI ZRC SAZU. Implemented by the local partner and subcontractors, the MSNA study aims to comprehensively evaluate the needs of refugees (people with international and temporary protection) within the country. Similar to assessments in neighbouring and CEE countries<sup>3</sup>, the MSNA study in Slovenia seeks to capture and analyse the needs of refugees, assess their access to basic services, identify service gaps, and prioritise refugee needs for future planning. Results from this assessment are done through a structured questionnaire administered on the household level.

The data for this study was collected across the Republic of Slovenia. A team of 5 enumerators, all female cultural mediators, conducted in-person or phone interviews with adult members of households (HH) in Slovenia, where at least one person is the beneficiary of international or temporary protection. Geographically, out of 12 statistical regions in Slovenia<sup>4</sup>, six were covered by the survey<sup>5</sup>. However, the majority of interviews were conducted in Maribor and Ljubljana municipalities.

The data collection pool of this survey reached 202 HH, with 434 household members that live in private/shared accommodations and collective shelters<sup>6</sup>. The survey was built on a handful of readily available smaller-scale surveys and research conducted on refugees in countries bordering Slovenia, or those that have already been conducted in Slovenia. By covering multiple areas of the humanitarian response<sup>7</sup>, this MSNA study sought to answer the following research questions:

### Development of the survey

The frame of the survey and questions were drafted and finalised by SMI ZRC SAZU, with the input of the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe, in November 2023. 50 minutes was established as the average interview length required to ensure an

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. Hungary (<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97062>), Slovakia (<https://reliefweb.int/report/slovakia/slovakia-multi-sectoral-needs-assessment-october-2022>) and Poland (<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/994199>)

<sup>4</sup> Mura, Drava, Carinthia, Savinja, Central Sava, Lower Sava, Central Slovenia, Southeast Slovenia, Upper Carniola, Littoral-Inner Carniola, Gorizia, and Coastal-Karst.

<sup>5</sup> Mura, Drava, Lower Sava, Central Slovenia, Upper Carniola and Coastal-Karst.

<sup>6</sup> For analysis, collective sites are defined as larger, pre-existing buildings (dormitories, worker hostels, civil protection accommodation shelters, others) where more than two refugee HHs are accommodated for the short, medium or long-term.

<sup>7</sup> Including: Basic Needs (e.g. Food Security, Accommodation, Non-Food Items), Protection, including Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Accountability to Affected Populations and Communication with Communities, Inclusion, Livelihood/Employment, Health and Mental Health/Psychosocial Support, Education.

acceptable data quality and quantity level. The survey questions in their original form were written in English but also translated *in situ* into Ukrainian, Russian and Arabic, to facilitate the interview process.

### Data collection

The survey roll-out was implemented by a pool of five female enumerators, who are cultural mediators and interpreters with international protection in Slovenia or work closely with refugee communities. SMI ZRC SAZU also collaborated with the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants ( to enable access to reception and integration centres in two municipalities.

The training<sup>8</sup> of enumerators was organised between 30 November and 6 December 2023, and the data collection took place from 4 to 31 December 2023. Interviews were conducted in person only with the head of the HH or any other adult members consenting to the interview and willing to respond on behalf of the HH. The initial target of 200 HHs was surpassed - the final number is 202 interviews.

Of the sample pool (202 HH), 181 HH live in private or shared accommodation, and 21 HH live in collective sites (e.g. accommodation centres for refugees). Three (3) respondents shared that their HH resides in a hostel or a hotel, one respondent replied their HH shares accommodation (room) with a Slovenian family, and one respondent did not want to share the accommodation type of their HH.

This data shows that most beneficiaries with international or temporary protection in Slovenia reside in private or shared accommodations (e.g. sharing space in a house with a private sponsor or another family). In cases when this is not (immediately) applicable, the refugees with international protection are accommodated in integration facilities, so-called integration houses<sup>9</sup>. Accommodation outside of private facilities for persons with temporary protection is organised through the accommodation establishments or facilities provided by the Government of Slovenia<sup>10</sup>. In this survey context, both types of accommodation count as a form of a collective centre<sup>11</sup>. The

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<sup>8</sup> The training focused on the questionnaire, on the KoboToolbox platform, interview modalities, ethics of interviews, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and code of conduct. The training also included instructions on how to safely identify and refer to protection cases.

<sup>9</sup> Integration houses are facilities comprising apartments for beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia. The International Protection Act states that in the first year after receiving international protection status, monetary assistance can be substituted with free accommodation in "Integration Houses" of the UOIM (Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants), e.g. facilities comprising apartments for beneficiaries.

<sup>10</sup> The information was shared by the IT and Telecommunications Office of the General Police Directorate in Slovenia.

<sup>11</sup> The collective facilities that offer accommodation for persons/HH with temporary protection can be found in 62 municipalities across Slovenia.

national statistical data for the 24th of May 2023 showed that of 5.134 persons with temporary protection from Ukraine in Slovenia, 391 stayed in such facilities.

The sample pool was purposefully selected considering geographical coverage and different accommodation types due to limitations in obtaining a statistically representative sample of the refugee population in Slovenia. Firstly, the country's total population of refugees and displaced persons is not precisely known<sup>12</sup>, making it difficult to establish a sampling frame necessary for random sampling. Secondly, the nature of displacement often results in dispersed and hard-to-reach populations, making it challenging to implement traditional random sampling methods effectively. Therefore, respondents were identified through convenience-based sampling, leveraging the outreach efforts of enumerators to ensure broad coverage across different regions and accommodation types. While this approach may not provide a statistically representative sample, it allowed for a comprehensive understanding of diverse needs and perspectives within the refugee population given the constraints of the context. Geographically, the assessment covered 6 Slovenian statistical regions, meaning half of the country. They were selected according to the reach of enumerators and the location of collective sites in Slovenia: 42% in Drava, 35% in Central Slovenia, 11.5% in Coastal-Karst, 10% in Upper Carniola, 1% in Mura and 0.5% in Lower Sava region.

Data was entered by the enumerators directly into online forms, which were submitted and stored on a secure UNHCR server for data protection purposes. Access to the data was only granted to SMI ZRC SAZU and UNHCR staff, and the SMI ZRC SAZU staff did the preliminary analysis.

### **Data cleaning**

Data was checked and cleaned by the SMI ZRC SAZU team during and at the end of the survey in line with minimum standards, including outlier checks, analysis of the categorisation of “other” responses, the identification and removal or replacement of inaccurate or incoherent records (e.g. 9999 for category “No answer” or an evident mistake when entering values), and the re-coding and standardisation of entries. All changes to the data were documented in a data cleaning log.

### **Data analysis**

A basic Data Analysis plan was drafted by the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe and reviewed by the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, outlining stratifications, additional composite indicators to construct and the basic descriptive

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<sup>12</sup> The numbers of granted international protection cases vary: Since 1996, the Slovenian government has reportedly granted an estimated 1,384 IP statuses. However, the Migration Policy and Legislation Division of the Migration Directorate reported that 1,055 people with IP status lived in Slovenia on December 31, 2023. (8. 4. 2024)

statistics to calculate each indicator. Only data from respondents who provided informed consent were collected and used for the survey.

Based on the sector characterisation of vulnerable HHs, a range of indicators was identified for which statistically significant differences in outcomes between HHs of different socioeconomic characteristics could be noted. The most notable difference was access to humanitarian aid, depending on the accommodation type (private/shared accommodation vs. collective centre). Filtering by the type of accommodation, how accommodation is paid for, and the type of protection was used to determine whether or not there was an association between accommodation and aid characteristics. Data was also analysed by criteria, such as age, education level, area of origin, language spoken, access to humanitarian aid and other social assistance benefits, language and access to health services, for selected indicators where differences in the responses were expected (e.g. priority needs, education enrolment, reasons for unemployment, type of protection).

### **Distribution of the findings**

The survey results were discussed within the SMI ZRC SAZU, with inputs from the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe and in collaboration with the enumerators. A debriefing meeting was held after data collection to evaluate the questionnaire and data collection process and to highlight the most visible protection and sectoral needs the refugee population in Slovenia might have. SMI ZRC SAZU has outlined the preliminary findings report on December 29, 2023, which included basic descriptive statistics, and MSNA and Profiling comparisons. The report was shared with the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe for preliminary evaluation. The reviewed secondary data is integrated and referenced in this final report where relevant.

### **Privacy and ethical considerations**

During the research design, necessary measures were considered to protect the privacy of the respondents. As an opening to the survey, respondents were informed of their right to participate, not to answer specific questions or to end the interview when they wished. Informed consent was sought and received at the start of each survey (included in the questionnaire); the enumerator training also included dedicated training sessions on research ethics and code of conduct, including humanitarian and protection principles, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and good interviewing practices. Privacy was sought before each interview, whether in collective sites or if the person chose to meet outside their residence.



## **CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY**

### **Sampling**

The sampling did not cover the entire refugee population in the country. Therefore, the results can only be considered representative of the population included in the sampling frame. There is a lack of comprehensive data and less reach regarding the refugee population in all collective sites and distribution centres. Weighing the results based on the total number of people in each group could potentially provide a more accurate estimation of the needs and perspectives of beneficiaries of international protection versus beneficiaries of temporary protection within the sampled population as this method aims to adjust for the unequal representation of these groups in the sample, thereby addressing the imbalance in reach between them.

Due to a smaller number of respondents that reside in collective centres, the distinction between employment rates of those who live in CC and those who live in private accommodation is not possible as well.

### **Proxy reporting and respondent bias**

Data on individuals was collected by proxy from the respondent for the HH, not directly from each HH member. Thus, results might not accurately reflect the lived experiences of individual HH members. Certain indicators may be under-reported due to the subjectivity and perceptions of respondents.

### **Relevance of the findings**

The refugee humanitarian response in Slovenia is a dynamic situation. The information and insight provided were current when the assessment was completed. Humanitarian interventions and the assistance provided might change (either be increased or reduced), as well as the regime of the TP status and the benefits available to the refugee population in Slovenia. Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, Slovenia has experienced economic challenges, such as rising utility costs and price inflation, affecting the needs of refugees in the country.

### **Sensitivity around some protection questions (legal status, GBV, bullying, income)**

The MSNA is a multisector assessment, and protection is one of the subjects targeted by the survey. It is difficult to understand the overall protection situation and safety and security risks in a quantitative survey, for example, income. Information regarding protection and safety (women and children) has been complemented with the findings

from the monitoring of enumerators in the field and the outcomes from the debriefing meeting with the enumerators and the UNHCR Representation for Central Europe staff.

# FINDINGS

## DEMOGRAPHICS

This section discusses the demographics of the respondents and refugee households in Slovenia, including average household size, gender, and HH composition by age group and vulnerability.

### Respondent and household profile

The information collected through the respondents accounts for 434 family members living in 202 HH, including adults and children. Women and children represent the majority of family members among the refugees in Slovenia, as is evident from the Migration Directorate data whereby 5,701 females, 3,043 males, among which are 2,707 children<sup>13</sup> (accompanied and unaccompanied minors) have been granted TP status.<sup>14</sup> This is also represented in the survey.

Table 2. Household gender representation according to legal status

	International protection	Temporary protection
<i>female</i>	16%	77%
<i>male</i>	0,5%	2%

Four respondents, all female, have a permanent residency permit in Slovenia, on the account of the family reunification scheme<sup>15</sup>, where one member of their HH has a recognized refugee status in Slovenia.

Three respondents, all female, preferred not to answer their protection status, and one respondent, male, claimed to have been granted a tolerated stay status.

<sup>13</sup> Information obtained from the Migration Policy and Legislation Division of the Migration Directorate on April 8, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Gender representation among IP status holders is different. According to the Directorate data, on December 31, 2024, 696 males and 359 females were IP status beneficiaries in Slovenia, among which 201 are children (accompanied and unaccompanied minors). (8. 4. 2024)

<sup>15</sup> In 2023, the Ministry of Interior decided on 65 applications for residency permits on the account of family reunification schemes with a beneficiary of international protection in Slovenia. 29 applications were granted and residence permits were issued, 22 applications were denied, 1 was rejected as inadmissible, and in 13 cases the procedure was terminated. Information obtained from the Migration Policy and Legislation Division of the Migration Directorate on April 8, 2024.

On the individual level, the survey covered 39% children (ages between 0 and 17), 55% adults (ages between 18 and 64) and 6% older persons<sup>16</sup> (ages from 65 on).

*Table 3. Gender representation on an individual level, according to age groups (children, adults, older persons)*

	<i>female</i>	<i>male</i>
Children	46%	54%
Adults <sup>17</sup>	77%	23%
Older persons	72%	28%

On the individual level, 64,5% of the sampled households identify as female, 35,3% as male, and one person preferred not to answer.

The average age of children is 10 years of age.

The average age of the family members is 30 years old.

Interviews were conducted with respondents of Ukrainian (90%), Russian (6%) and other nationalities (4%), such as Palestinian, Syrian and Brazilian.

On average, there are 1,4 children per HH.

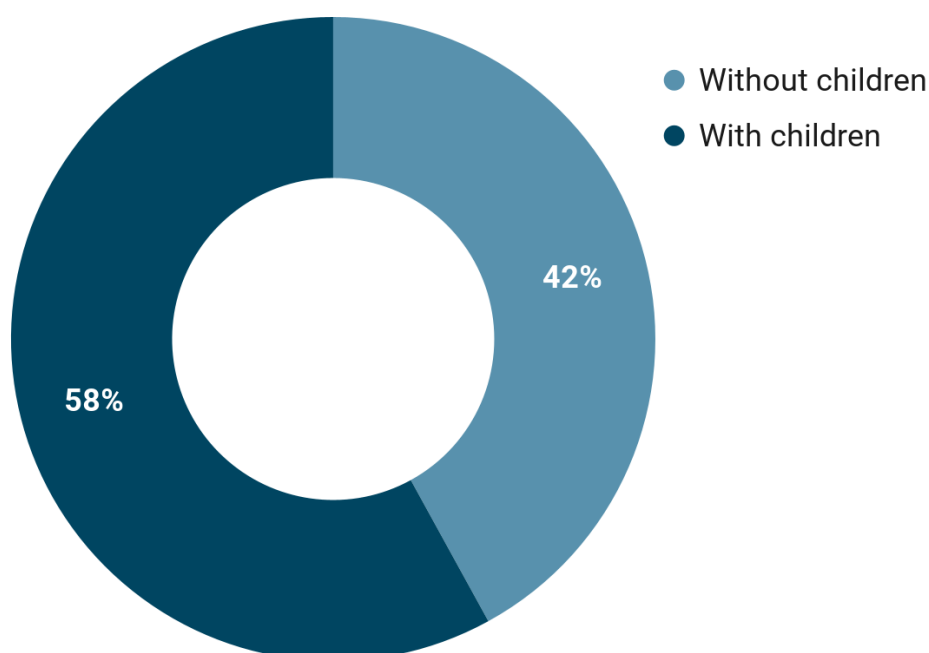
The study shows that the average HH size is 2,15 people/HH.

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<sup>16</sup> The official (statistical) definition of an older person in Slovenia starts at 65 years of age.

<sup>17</sup> One person among the adults did not wish to specify their gender.

*Figure 1. Percentage of households with and without children*



According to the data of the sample pool, only 10% of the HH live in collective centres. The majority reside in private or shared accommodations or other types of settlements. 75% of respondents shared their accommodation is located in urban areas and 23% in rural areas. Three respondents could not share this information.

### **National and ethnic background**

At the HH level, 95,5 % of the respondents proclaim having Ukrainian citizenship, 2,5 % Russian citizenship, and the other 5 % Palestinian, Syrian, or Brazilian citizenship.

When asked about their ethnic backgrounds, 90 % reported Ukrainian, and 6 % Russian, with the rest 6 % identifying as Palestinian, Syrian, Kurdi, Armenian, Armenian Ukrainian, Tatar, Brazilian British, Palestinian Syrian, 0,5 % responded they identify as Moldovan, 0,5 % as Roma and 0,5 % preferred not to answer.

On the HH level, 92 % of the respondents state they have fled Ukraine after February 24, 2022, 3 % before and 5 % state they have fled from another country.

Most HH who fled Ukraine came from Kyivska oblast (14,9%), Donetsk oblast (13,4%), Kharkiv oblast (12,4%), and Kyiv city (9%).

## Language spoken in HH

41% of the respondents indicated that their HH speaks Ukrainian and Russian equally. 32% converse in Ukrainian alone, 22% in Russian, and 3% of HH use mainly Arabic. Other reported languages used in HH are also Kurdish, Slovenian and English.

## PROTECTION

### Legal status

When overviewing the data on the types of protection status, we noted that the majority of the responses on the HH level (94%) stated they have been registered with temporary protection in Slovenia (e.g. refugees from Ukraine), of which 55% already applied for the extension scheme. Only 5% of the 202 HH pool replied they are beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia or have been granted permanent residence permits due to a family reunification scheme with a person who was granted international protection in Slovenia.

This survey did not include any persons with Ukrainian citizenship who would be beneficiaries of international protection. Even so, 212 people from Ukraine have been granted international protection in Slovenia until December 2023. Since 1996, Slovenia has granted a total of 1,384 international protection statuses<sup>18</sup>, although 1,055 people with IP status were reported living in Slovenia until December 31, 2023<sup>19,20</sup>

The current national statistics received by the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior<sup>21</sup> and the UNHCR Slovenia show that:

- In 2023, Slovenia received 7,216 applications for international protection, of which 129 were approved and 164 were denied. On December 31, 2023, 1,055 people had international protection in Slovenia, 814 of whom had refugee status and 241 had subsidiary protection.
- In 2023, Slovenia received 1,764 applications for temporary protection, of which 1,674 were approved and 31 were denied.<sup>22</sup> On December 31, 2023, 8,744 people had temporary protection in Slovenia.

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<sup>18</sup> Source: GOSIM.

<sup>19</sup> Information obtained from the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior. (8. 4. 2023)

<sup>20</sup> In 2023, the Government of Slovenia has granted 129 international protection statuses. Source: GOSIM.

<sup>21</sup> Information obtained from the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior. (26. 2. 2023)

<sup>22</sup> Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Slovenia has received 13.781 applications for international protection and 10.301 applications for temporary protection.

- Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the Slovenian Government has granted a total of 9,367 temporary protection statuses: 9,254 to Ukrainian nationals and 113 to third-country nationals.

### **Social protection**

Individuals may claim various forms of social assistance, subsidies and reduced payments through national legislation. However, it's important to note that two different legislations regulate the status and rights of those obtaining temporary and those obtaining international protection. With it, two regimes exist that regulate separate forms of assistance.

A person granted the status of temporary protection is given rights and protections under the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act (2017). This status is granted for one year, with the possibility of two six-month extensions.

The status of international protection is granted through the International Protection Act (2017), whereupon two separate statuses can be granted: for those granted refugee status, the right to permanent residence in Slovenia, and for those granted subsidiary protection, the right to temporary residence (a minimum duration of one year).

Persons who have obtained a temporary protection status in Slovenia are eligible for accommodation, including meals, in accommodation centres or financial assistance for private accommodation. This assistance includes direct financial aid, pocket money or various monetary benefits.

For individuals granted temporary protection who are not staying in accommodation centres and have no financial resources, the Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants may grant them financial support through their respective Slovenian bank accounts. Four tiers of financial support exist: First-time adult applicants may receive 100% of the basic amount of minimum income; each additional adult family member accounts for 70% of the basic amount of minimum income; and each child up to 18 years of age accounts for 30% of the basic amount of minimum income. In addition, unaccompanied minors may receive 100% of the basic amount of minimum income. For minors living with only one parent, financial assistance increases by 30% from the introductory minimum income.

Pocket money is reserved for specific individuals who are living in accommodation centres and are deprived of any income. This is done through a statement to the Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants from the applicant, noting financial deprivation through revenue and earnings and confirming that no persons living in Slovenia can support them. This pocket money is received from the first day of the

month following the month when the person is placed in an accommodation centre. It amounts to 30% of the bare minimum income.

Humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross Slovenia, Caritas Slovenia and the Slovenian Philanthropy have been involved in providing humanitarian assistance to each person seeking temporary protection, or those in transit following the conflict in Ukraine. This humanitarian assistance is broad and includes assistance such as accommodation, administrative help, direct donations as well as food aid. Aside from this, material assistance such as clothing, hygiene items and footwear has been provided, in addition to assistance when accessing health services and schooling.

Households and individuals may claim subsidies on a local level concerning enrolling a child in kindergarten or primary school. This is done through the local Centres for Work (provided by the municipality where a household resides), whereby assistance may come in the form of a partial fee reduction or a full exemption. For example, beneficiaries living in accommodation centres generally do not receive humanitarian packages (food packages and material aid, such as clothes, hygiene products) provided by the Red Cross, because their aid is provided by their accommodation provider - GOSIM.

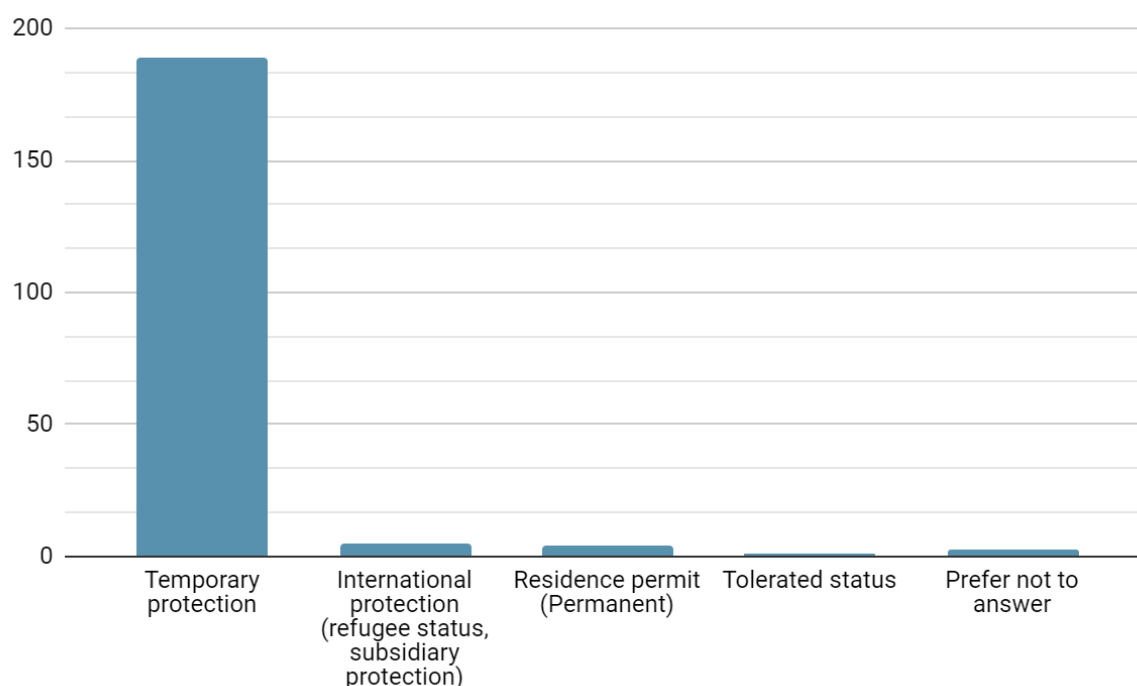
Persons with recognised international protection gain equal status to citizens of Slovenia in areas of healthcare, social security, education, employment and work. Any social assistance is then done in accordance with national legislation. Aside from this, the Integration Division of the Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants aids in the integration process. This is done through various Slovenian language courses, financial aid related to education (or recognising foreign documentation related to education), legal aid, family reunification and accommodation in either integration houses or other official accommodation facilities. Should a person granted international protection sign an Integration Agreement, they will be assigned an integration advisor who will help in various activities related to integration into Slovenian society.



*Table 4. Overview of social protection benefits by status*

	<b>International Protection</b>	<b>Temporary Protection</b>
<b>Legislation</b>	International Protection Act (2017)	Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act (2017)
<b>Duration</b>	Indefinite for refugee status; minimum one year for subsidiary protection	Granted for one year, with potential for extensions up to two six-month periods
<b>Residence status</b>	Right to permanent residence for refugees; temporary residence for subsidiary protection	Temporary residence for the duration of the temporary protection status
<b>Accommodation</b>	Accommodation in integration houses or official facilities; private accommodation	Accommodation in centres or for private accommodation
<b>Financial assistance</b>	Financial assistance equal to citizens of the Republic of Slovenia	Direct financial aid, pocket money, or monetary benefits
<b>Social welfare</b>	Equal status to citizens in areas such as healthcare, social security, education, employment and work	Equal status to citizens in areas such as healthcare, education, employment and work
<b>Integration support</b>	Integration support including language courses, legal aid, family reunification, etc. Optional agreement for additional integration support	No official integration mechanisms; NGO and personal integration support systems
<b>Humanitarian assistance</b>	Covered through social assistance benefits; additional support from NGOs may be available	Provided by humanitarian organisations such as Red Cross Slovenia and Caritas Slovenia

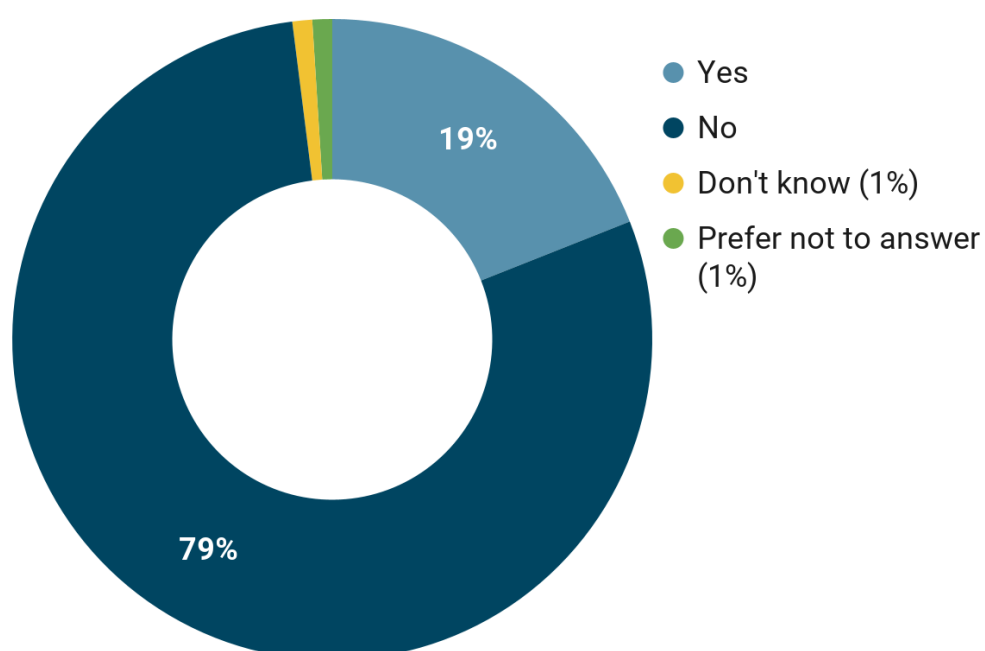
Figure 2. Legal status by household level



### Perceptions of safety and security

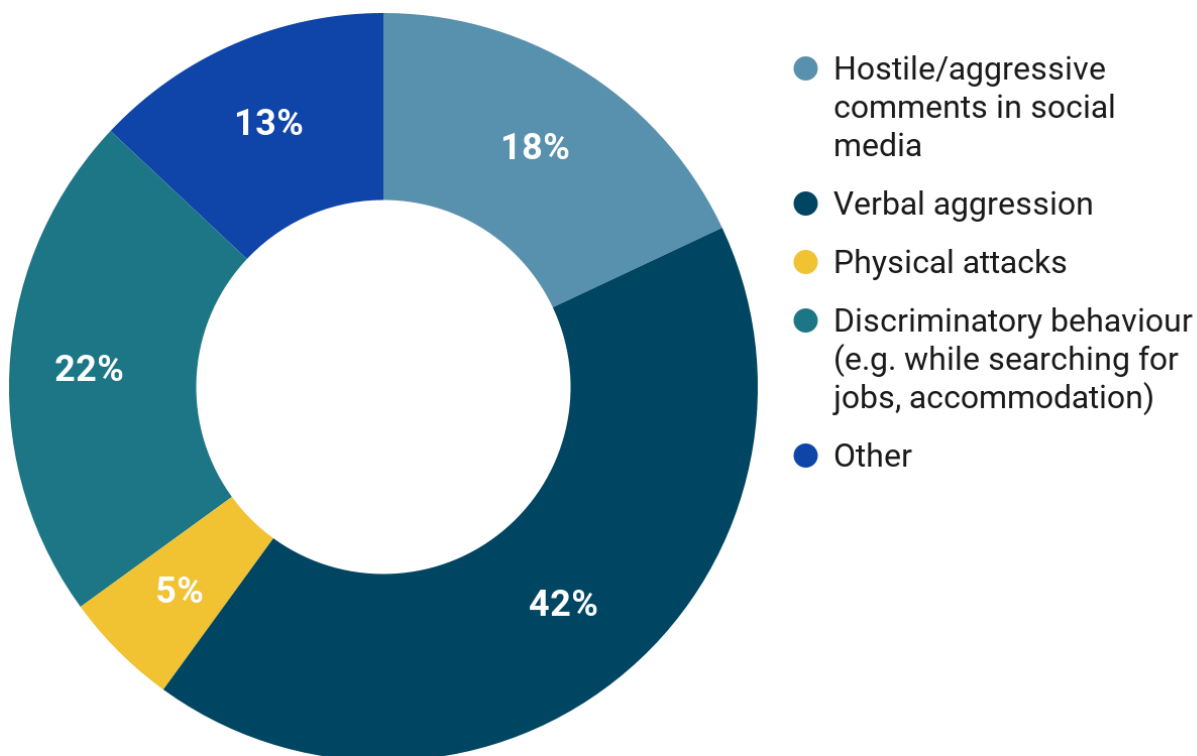
The majority of respondents feel safe (71%) or relatively safe (21%) in their area of residence, while 6% feel a bit unsafe, and 1% feel very unsafe due to poor public lighting and a lack of other people in the location. One person preferred not to answer. Of the respondents who expressed safety concerns, most expressed concerns for women and children in their HH.

Figure 3. Experiences with hostile behaviour by household level



Almost 1 in 5 respondents (19%) expressed they experienced hostile behaviour/attitude from the host community since their arrival.

*Figure 4. Types of hostile behaviour encountered*



The respondents reported reasons for the hostile behaviour as being their status as refugees, cultural differences, competition over employment or business, ethnicity, competition for resources (e.g. housing, food), gender and sexual orientation.

### **Gender-based violence**

Most respondents (67%) expressed no concerns regarding women's safety in Slovenia. The rest (10% altogether) responded that they have experienced certain safety/security issues, namely being robbed, experiencing violence in the HH, suffering from physical harassment or violence of a non-sexual nature, verbal harassment, discrimination or persecution due to their ethnicity, protection status or sexual orientation or gender identity, labour and economic exploitation and increased vulnerability to online violence.

Some respondents from Ukraine also asserted that they experience fear connected to their condition of refugee: the future of their country, being targets of GBV due to their nationality or experiencing the fear of having to return to Ukraine due to refusal of their temporary protection status in Slovenia.

Out of 61 responses, 47 (77%) of respondents found no concerns concerning safety and security for men in the areas of residence. The rest responded that they perceive safety/security issues, due to mainly labour exploitation, discrimination or persecution due to their nationality, ethnicity, status, gender or sexual orientation, being threatened with or suffering from violence (also economic), and increased vulnerability to online violence.

When asked about GBV services in their communities, 73% of respondents answered they were aware of health services, and regarding safety and security services (police, safe shelters), 71% are aware of legal assistance, 48% indicated knowledge of psycho-social services, and 36% responded they are aware of specific helplines and requesting such services.

Regarding the barriers that prevent them when accessing or using GBV services, if needed, 20% referenced language and cultural barriers, and 13% expressed a lack of awareness. In some cases, respondents also noted they lack trust in host country services (4%), they might experience stigma or shame (3%), fear of retaliation, discrimination and bias, and financial constraints.

## **Child protection**

Out of 66 HH that count girls as part of HH members, 59% reported no concerns concerning safety and security for girls in the areas of residence, when asked

The rest (41%) responded that they perceive safety/security issues due to physical, sexual and psychological violence in the community, domestic physical and psychological violence, increased vulnerability to neglect and abuse, increased vulnerability to violence online, increased risks of separation from the family and or placement into a residential facility and increased alcohol and substance use.

Out of 79 HH that count boys as part of HH members, 63% reported no concerns concerning safety and security for boys in the areas of residence. The rest (37%) responded that they perceive safety/security issues due to physical, sexual and psychological violence in the community, domestic physical, sexual and psychological violence, increased neglect, increased alcohol and substance use, as well as worsened mental health and psycho-social wellbeing.

In cases when respondents were asked to name the service to which they would report violence, neglect or exploitation to children in the community, 92% stated they would contact the police, government and NGO-led services, including helplines, or they would confer with a friend or a lawyer. Three respondents stated they were unaware of such services, and one respondent shared none such services are available in their area.

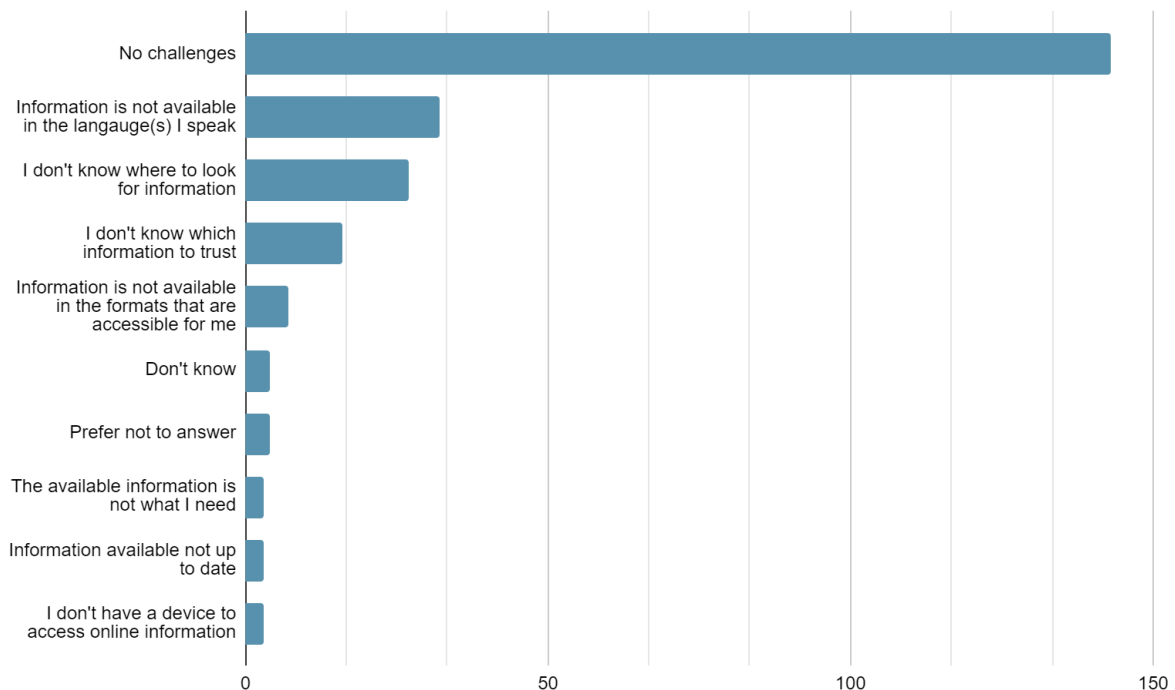
## **Access to information and feedback mechanisms**

On the HH level (202), almost all respondents (98%) answered they possess digital devices such as a smartphone or a telephone, and 78% of HH possess a computer or a laptop. Also, 35% of the respondents replied their HH owns a television, but only 11% responded their HH/accommodation has a working internet connection for personal use.

Nevertheless, almost half of the respondents at the HH level (46%) reported that they experience language and cultural barriers and other difficulties in accessing information and services, such as lack of awareness, lack of trust in host country services, stigma and shame, discrimination and bias, fear of retaliation, and geographic barriers. Some also reported a lack of trained professionals and inadequate refugee services.

On the individual level, 71% of respondents answered they have no challenges accessing needed information on protection, status, social assistance benefits or orientation. The remaining 29% respondents highlighted they have trouble accessing information because it is not available in the languages(s) they speak (16%) or they do not know where to look for information (13%). Some also responded they don't know which information to trust (8%) or that information is not available in formats that would be accessible to them (3,5%). Some respondents also replied that information

*Figure 5. Challenges in accessing information on legal status, protection and social assistance benefits*



is not up to date, they don't have devices to access online information, or that the available information is not what they need.

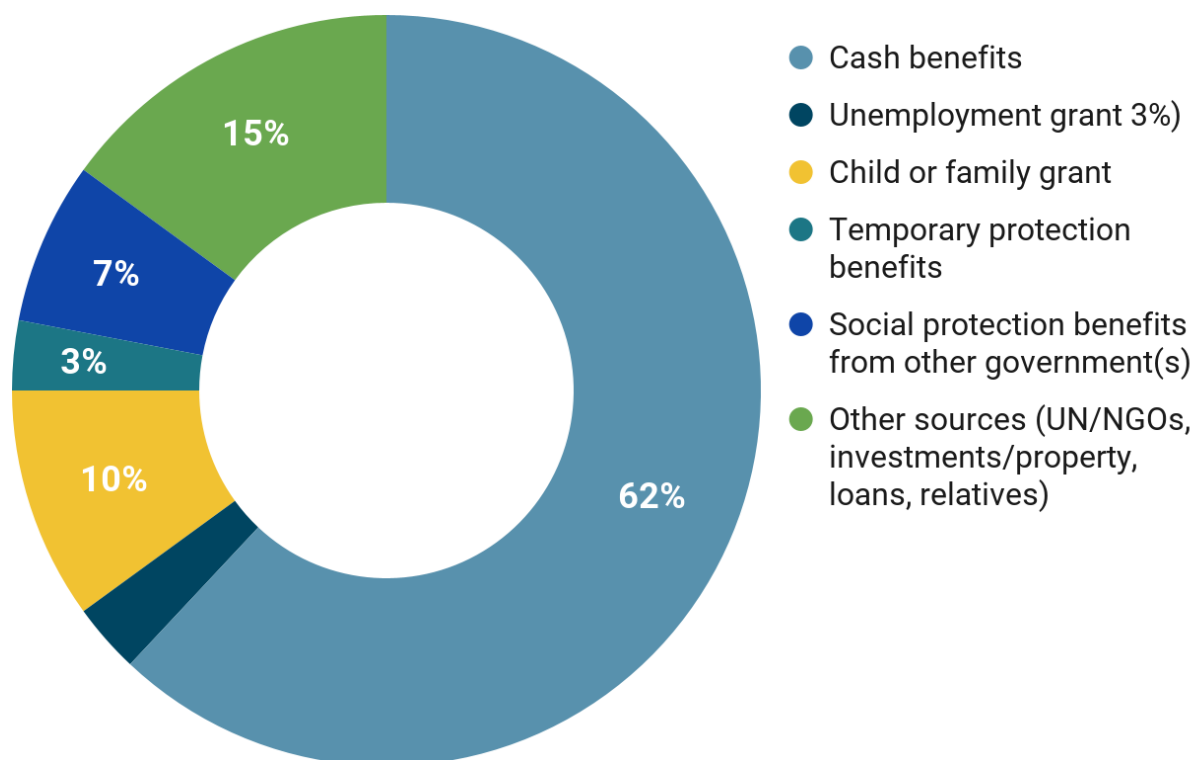
If they were to complain, respondents would mainly prefer to use Facebook (50%), Telegram (38%) or email (28%).

Most respondents would use social media to complain about sensitive issues regarding their status and humanitarian aid. In contrast, the rest would use online forms on official websites, email correspondence, via telephone or face-to-face conversation with an aid provider.

### **Feedback on assistance received**

Most respondents interviewed reported having received humanitarian assistance since arriving in Slovenia. On the HH level (202), 74% of respondents answered they receive some form of social assistance benefits, primarily cash benefits (62%), child or family grants (10%) and unemployment grants (3%). Almost 7% replied they also receive social assistance benefits from other governments. A few also replied they receive temporary or international protection support in Slovenia, which usually includes partial or total coverage of their accommodation costs.

Figure 6. Composition of financial resources other than employment



Out of those who received aid in the 3 months prior to the interview, 65% reported they were satisfied with the aid they received, while 6% of aid recipients replied they were not satisfied with it. Specifically, they expressed dissatisfaction with the humanitarian financial aid. 27% of the respondents on the HH level replied they did not receive humanitarian aid.

Reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction include: services are of poor quality, the received assistance was insufficient or infrequent, assistance was not helpful or not easily accessible (the service point was too far away). One respondent, located in an accommodation centre, highlighted that people in collective centres are not eligible to receive humanitarian aid provided by the Red Cross regional branch that is available to those who reside in private accommodation (see page 14 for clarification). The respondent also stated they are only eligible for financial aid if unemployed.

Two (2) respondents also touched on the subject of their dissatisfaction with aid workers. As for the reasons, they listed that aid providers do not speak the language of refugees and that they experienced disrespectful behaviour by humanitarian aid providers<sup>23</sup>.

### Priority needs

<sup>23</sup> Refugees can access services that are part of the national system - workers who work in this system might not be considered as aid workers by the respondents.

Of all the priorities, the most commonly reported is employment or livelihood support (70 respondents - 35%), while other important necessities are healthcare services, Slovene language courses, medicines, accommodation and adult education/training. Other priorities mentioned are legal assistance, support with transport and access to information on services, education for minors, food, child-care support and repaying debt. A few respondents disclosed they would require psychosocial support, winter clothes and cooking materials.

Although 30% of respondents did not identify any immediate needs, four respondents disclosed that their most immediate priority is acquiring information about the extension of temporary protection past March 2024. Some of these respondents would like to start the temporary residence application process in order to start their new life in Slovenia because they lost all property and assets due to war in their country of origin.

### **Movement intentions**

Of all the respondents, 77% replied they would prefer to remain in Slovenia in their current location of residence, when asked about their intentions for the coming three months. A few (6%) stated they would like to stay in Slovenia but move to another location within the country, and 1.5% expressed they would like to move to another country. 7% stated they would like to permanently return to the area of origin in the country of origin, and 8% of people did not express any inclination to move since they are still waiting to make a decision.

## **EDUCATION**

### **School attendance**

The 2023/24 school year in Slovenia started on September 1, 2023. According to Slovenian law, only primary school is mandatory for children aged 6 to 14 and is free in all public primary school institutions. While not compulsory, secondary education is accessible in all public secondary school institutions. Pre-school education is generally not free nor mandatory, however, each municipality in Slovenia offers subsidies for reduced payment. Mandatory (primary) education becomes applicable when a person with children is granted international or temporary protection in Slovenia.

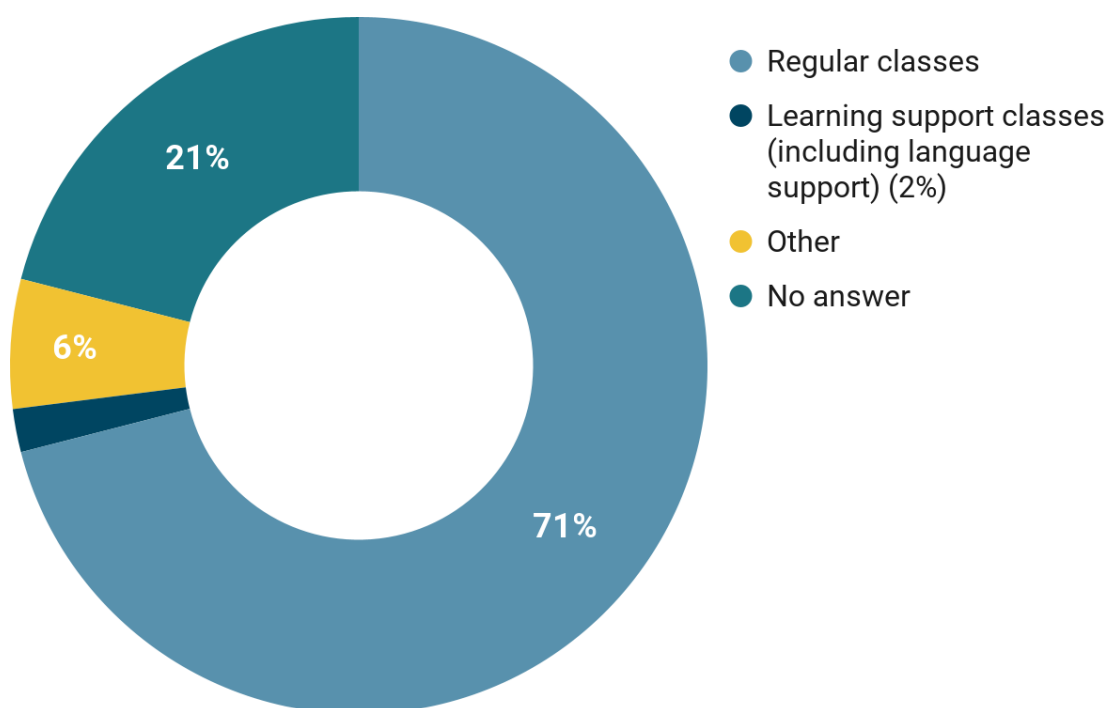
As of October 2, 2023, 1.224 children from Ukraine with TP status were enrolled in education in Slovenia. Of those 18,5% attended kindergarten (92 institutions), 71% attended primary schools (5 students attended specialised primary schools, and 4 attended schools for the education of children and adolescents with special needs), and 10,5% attended secondary schools. Children with temporary protection can attend



additional hours of Slovene language courses, and alongside their primary education, they are given various forms of support, such as additional classes, individual or group study aid, adjustments to teaching methods and forms of work, etc. They also have the option for grade adjustment during the school year. Children that attend primary education in Slovenia are entitled to free school meals, free transportation and free textbooks from the textbook fund. Children that attend secondary education are only entitled to free meals, however they may also attend a free intensive Slovene language course, and are entitled to up to 70 additional hours of Slovene language classes. In addition, they have the possibility of adjusting their school commitments by having a personal education plan.<sup>24</sup> In 2023, only one primary school in Ljubljana offered on-site informal and supplementary Ukrainian language and culture classes three hours a week in four age groups.<sup>25</sup>

In the 202 interviewed HH, 39% of household members were children (equivalent to 169 children). Of them, 82% (139) attended or still attend formal education in Slovenia in the academic year 2023-24. 70% attend primary and secondary schools, and 12% are in preschool (kindergarten or nursery). Most school-aged children attend regular classes (88%), while some attend language support or other classes as well.

*Figure 7. School attendance for children between 0-18 years of age*

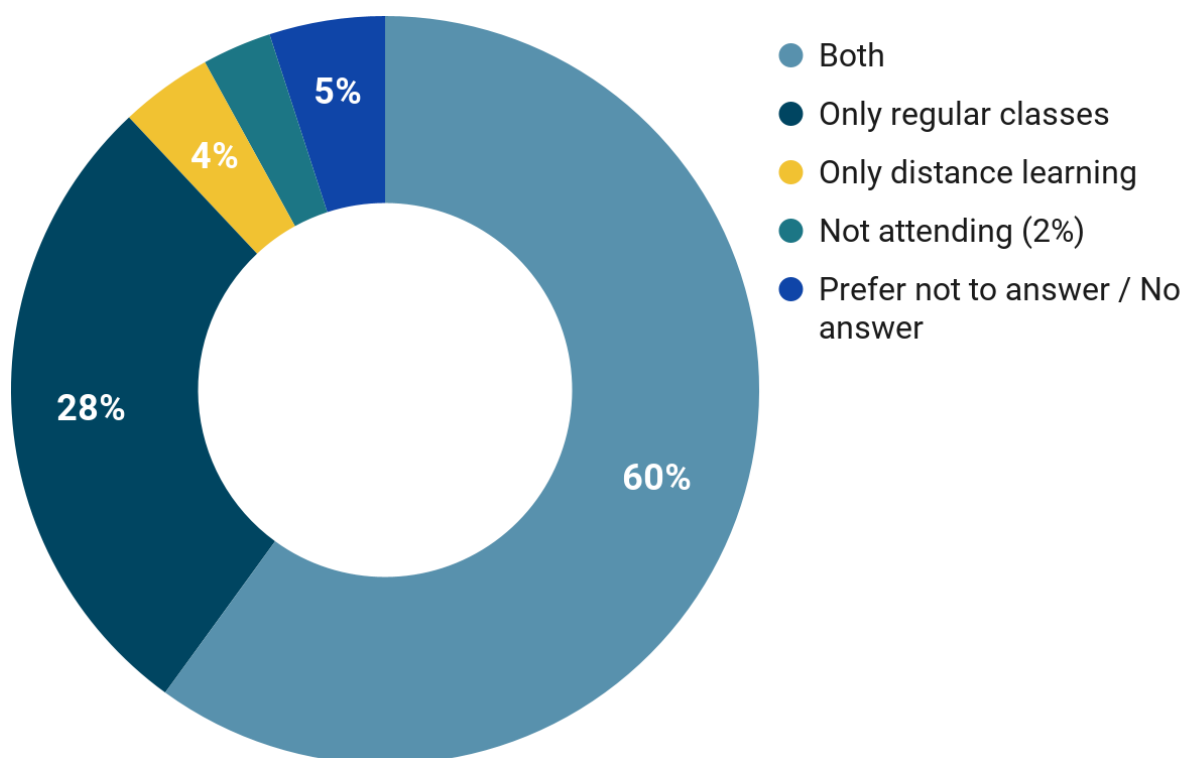


<sup>24</sup> Source: Data on the integration of Ukrainian children with temporary protection into the Slovenian education system. Ministry of Education, Slovenia

<sup>25</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/country\\_research\\_bulletin\\_3\\_slovenia\\_si.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/country_research_bulletin_3_slovenia_si.pdf)

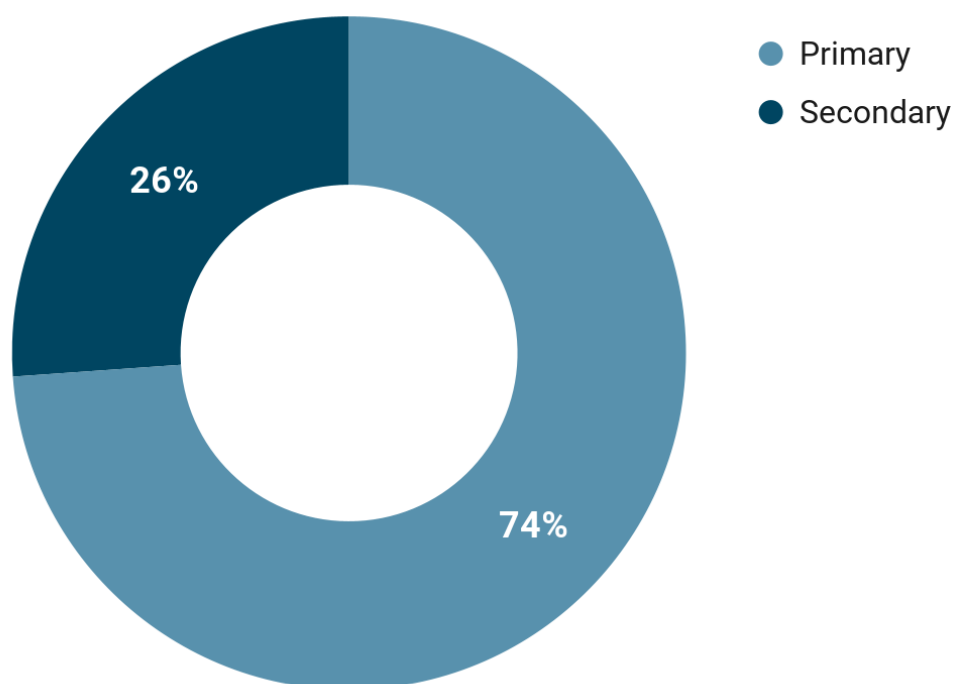
Among respondents who provided 'Other' responses regarding their children's classes, options included nursery (6 responses), school for disabled children (1 response), attendance at a Ukrainian online school (1 response), kindergarten (1 response), and university (1 response). Out of the 169 children included in the study, 134 aged between 5-17 are attending primary or secondary education. Additionally, three individuals aged 18 attend university as per the survey findings.

*Figure 8. Types of school attended by children between 0-18 years of age*



Out of 134 children attending school, 99 (74%) are attending primary school (age 6 to 14) and 35 (26%) attending secondary school (age 14 to 18).

Figure 9. Enrolment in primary and secondary education



51% of all children in the sample attended distance online education (grades 1 through 12 of the Ukrainian primary and secondary education levels). This means they were doing some distance learning activities at least 4 days per week, for at least 3 hours per day, e.g. listening to radio/TV broadcasts, textbook learning, and online learning. Respondents' intentions concerning the enrolment of school-age children in Slovenia for the academic year 2023-24 show that parents in HH with temporary protection arriving from Ukraine are more inclined to keep their children in Ukrainian distance learning alongside formally enrolling them in local schools. In contrast, HH with international protection coming from other countries than Ukraine do not have such an option and enrol their children in regular Slovenian school classes.

Only 4% of children attend solely online distance learning classes.

### Peer violence and bullying

Out of 139 cases in which respondents confirmed that their children are currently attending formal education (school/kindergarten/nursery) in Slovenia, 113 respondents answered questions regarding peer violence and bullying in schools: reports of their children experiencing fear, threats, fear of physical pain, ridicule, exclusion or being forced into doing something they don't want to do. They answered these questions on a scale between 1 (never) and 7 (almost daily), where the frequency of answers was higher when such cases happened "a couple of times" or "a few times" and much lower when cases happened "very often" or "almost daily".

When affirmative, respondents reported that in some instances, their children had faced peer violence, such as fear of their classmates (16%), threats from one peer (18%), fear of being physically hurt (23%), being ridiculed (30%), being excluded (22%) or being forced to do something they didn't want doing (10%). Most respondents claimed these instances happened only a "couple of times" or "a few times". However, four respondents (3%) reported that their child, on an almost daily basis, experienced four accounts of peer violence and bullying: being threatened, being ridiculed, experiencing fear of their classmates and exclusion.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION**

### **Employment**

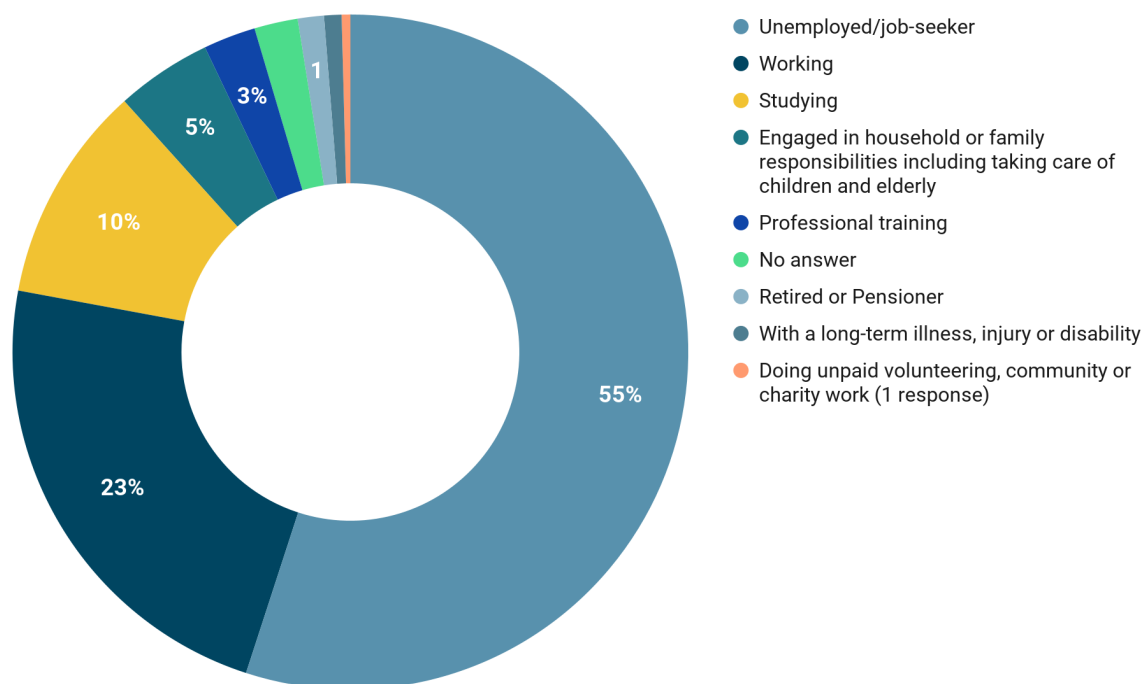
As of March 2022, 895 Ukrainian citizens with international or temporary protection status were registered in the Register of unemployed persons in Slovenia. At the end of December 2023, 675 people with IP or TP registered as unemployed persons in Slovenia, of which 524 persons have Ukrainian citizenship: 480 with temporary protection status and 44 with subsidiary protection status. Beneficiaries of international protection coming from countries other than Ukraine, who also registered as unemployed persons in Slovenia in 2023 were the following: 140 beneficiaries of refugee status and 11 beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status.<sup>26</sup>

At the time of the interview, 23% of all adult respondents (240) replied they are employed for pay, with an average of 34 hours per week. Of those who work, the majority (90%) replied they receive a salary from regular employment, and others from self-employment, other business activities, or temporary work. Seven respondents disclosed their income comes through work without a contract.

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<sup>26</sup> This information was obtained from the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia.

Figure 10. Employment status of the working-age population<sup>27</sup>



Slovenia's unemployment rate among international and temporary protection beneficiaries is relatively high, compared to the average unemployment rate in the country, which was 3,4% in the fourth quarter of 2023<sup>28</sup>. 55% of working-age adults interviewed are seeking employment. A smaller number of working-age adults who are not employed but also do not seek employment stated they are either studying (17%) or engaged in household or family responsibilities, professional training or are disabled.

The respondents also stated the predominant difficulties that inhibit their chances of finding work in Slovenia, where lack of local language knowledge is the most common one (30%), followed by lack of employment opportunities suited to their skills (19%), lack of decent employment opportunities, as well as various other reasons, such as unemployability due to age (3%), lack of access to childcare services, transport, lack of education and/or skills recognition, lack of work permit and other documentation.

Six (6) respondents also referred to discrimination due to their nationality as one of the reasons for unemployment. Individually, respondents also reported that they hadn't found any long-term job offers or were required to become self-employed, needing additional education or a higher language level (C1 knowledge in Slovenian).

<sup>27</sup> Adults between the 18-64 years old, e.g. 240 of the respondents by individual level.

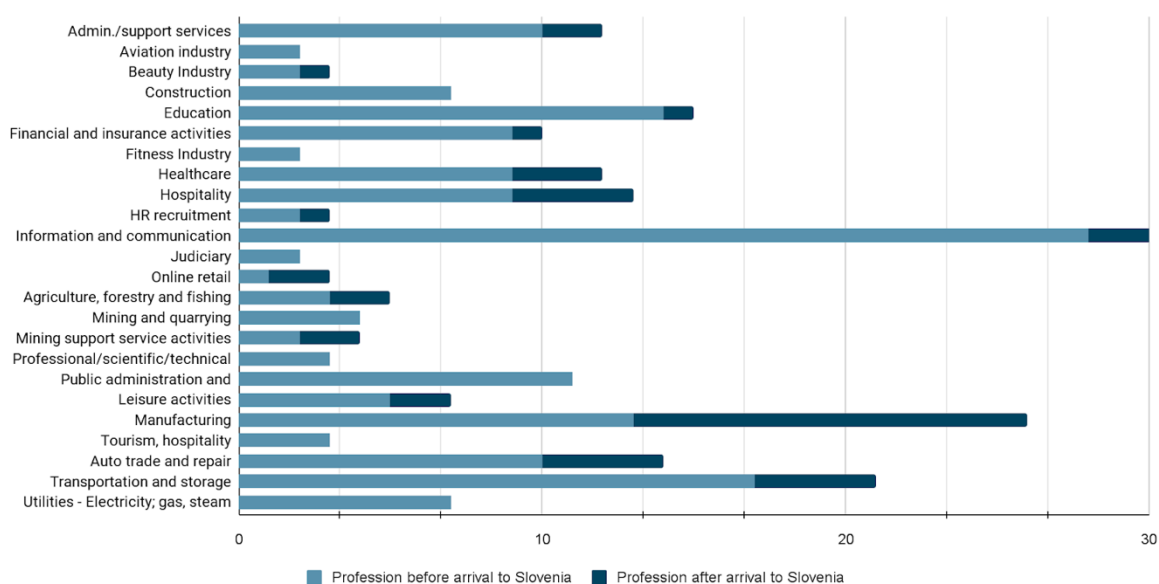
<sup>28</sup> Source in the national unemployment rate in Slovenia: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en>

## Employment pre- and post-arrival to Slovenia

The survey also shows that before arriving in Slovenia, 81% (of the working age) respondents were employed either through contractual work, running their own business or working in family businesses. The predominant sectors of employment were mainly information and communication (14%), transportation and storage (9%), education (7%), secondary industries (e.g. manufacturing) (7%), public administration (6%), trade and repair (e.g. automotive sector) (5%) and administrative support (5%).

Only 30% of those, initially employed are now still or newly employed. The predominant sectors of those employments are secondary industries (e.g. manufacturing) (22%), information and communication (14%), trade and repair (e.g. automotive sector) (9%), primary industries (e.g. agriculture, mining) (7%), hospitality (7%) and transportation (7%). 32% of these respondents have changed professions since they arrived in Slovenia, of which 22% would be deemed as underemployed.

*Figure 11. Comparison of professions before and after arriving to Slovenia*



Respondents were asked about the extent to which they agree or disagree that their current employment in Slovenia matches their educational background, given their previous employment experience and skills. Regarding agreeing or disagreeing with this statement, 44% would overall disagree that their current employment matches their educational background and previous employment, and 47% overall would agree with the statement. Furthermore, 19% expressed strong agreement with the statement,

and 19% strongly disagreed with the statement that their current employment and achieved education or skills would match.

Adult respondents achieved a relatively high educational level before they arrived in Slovenia. Most respondents have either a bachelor's (26%) or a master's (42%) degree or technical/vocational education (17%).

### Access to government benefits and grants

Out of 130 responses, the survey shows that the average amount of protection benefits from the Slovenian government is 849,00 EUR per month.

*Table 5. Overview of government benefit amounts by legal status<sup>29</sup>*

	<b>Temporary protection</b>	<b>International protection</b>	<b>Residence permit</b>	<b>Tolerated status</b>
	94%	3%	2%	0,5%
	AVERAGE AMOUNT/month in €			
Rent	310 €	716 €	733 €	500 €
Food	258 €	390 €	513 €	300 €
Healthcare	25 €	20 €	18 €	30 €
Hygiene	43 €	46 €	80 €	20 €
Communication	30 €	52 €	85 €	80 €
Utilities	95 €	230 €	263 €	100 €
Other expenses	55 €	149 €	184 €	40 €
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>859 €</b>	<b>1680 €</b>	<b>1888 €</b>	<b>1000 €</b>

<sup>29</sup> Three respondents preferred not to disclose the amounts of government benefits they receive.

Figure 12. Types of benefits received from the Slovenian government

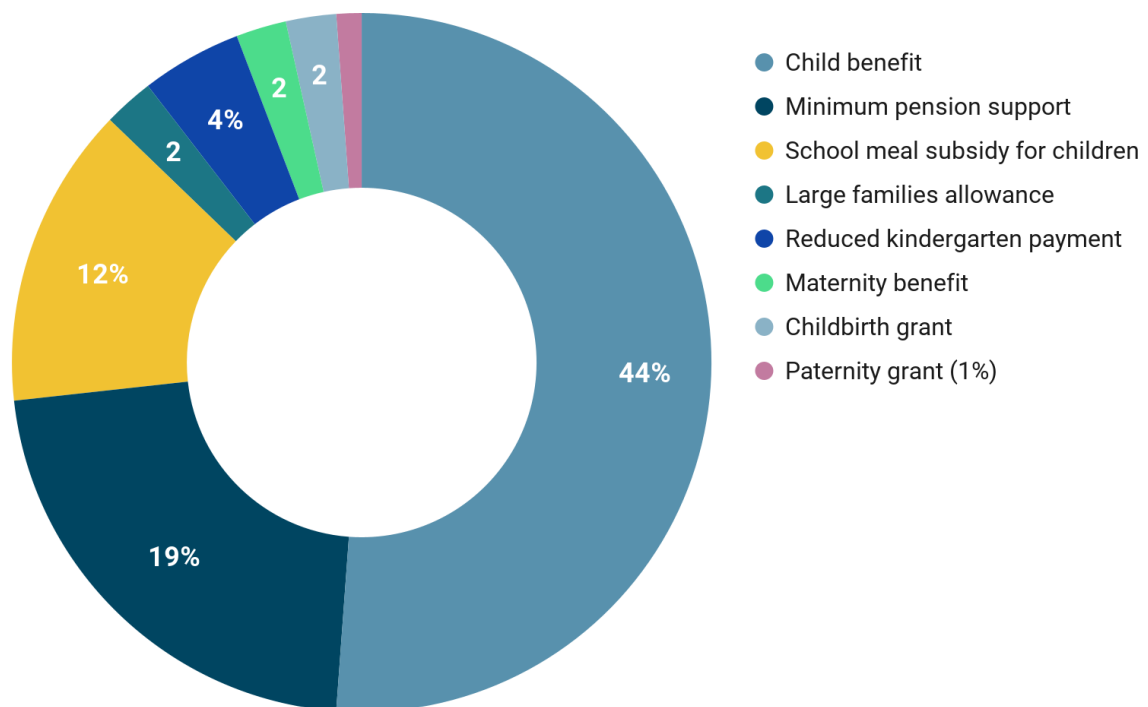
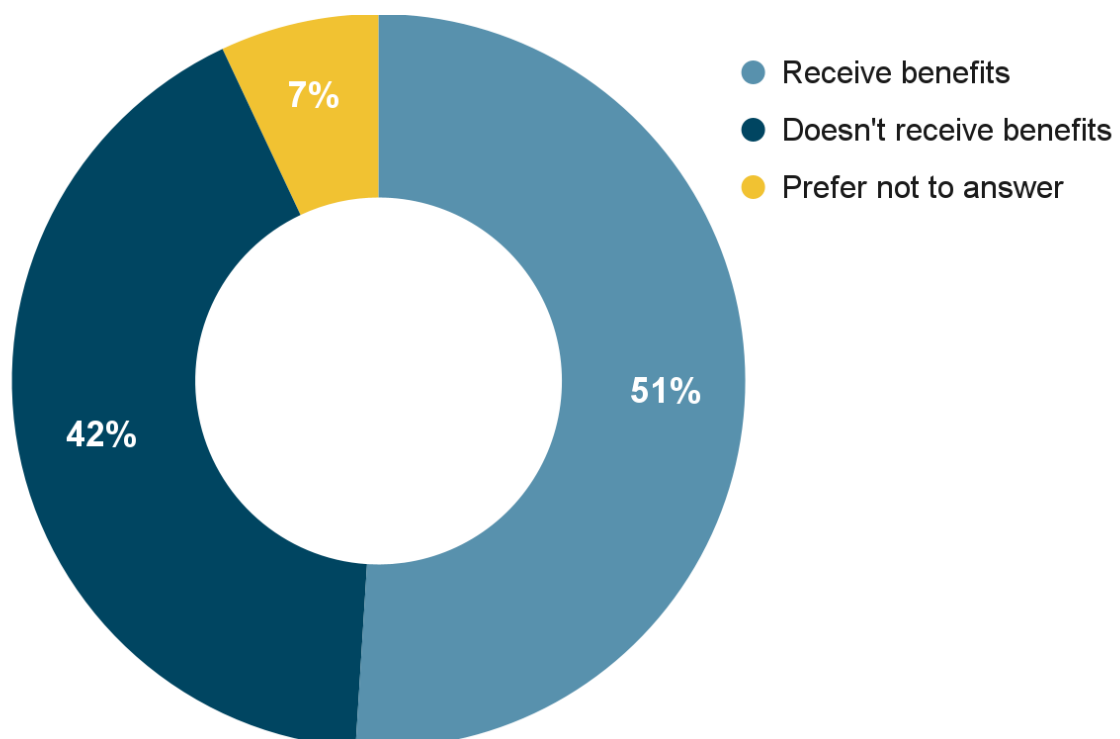


Figure 13. Percentage of benefit recipients





33% of respondents answered they receive government benefits from other countries. The chart below represents the types of benefits they receive from those governments.

Figure 14. Benefits received from other governments<sup>30</sup>

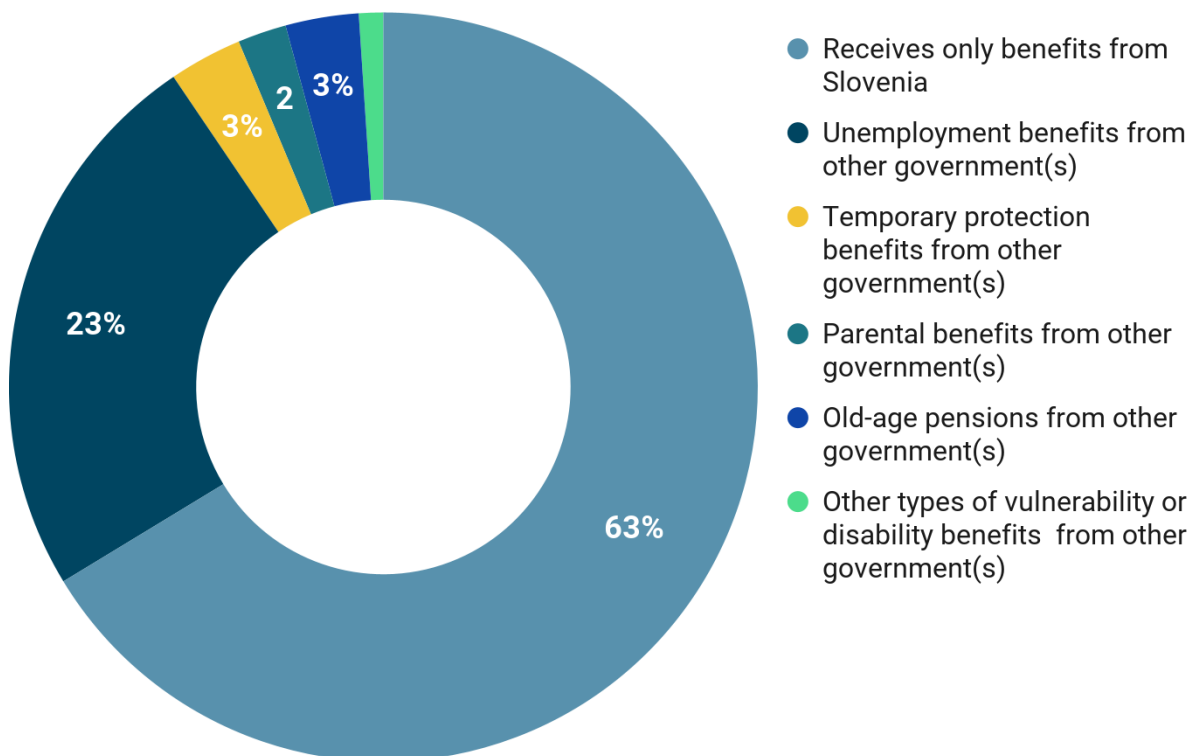


Table 6. Comparison of average benefit amounts received from the Slovenian and other governments, by legal status<sup>31</sup>

	No. of HH	%	Slovenian	Other
TP	189	94	763 €	153 €
IP	5	3	1002 €	/
Residential permit	4	2	56 €	/
Tolerated	1	0	0 €	/
Prefer not to answer	3	1	/	/

<sup>30</sup> 4% did not reply to the question whether they do or do not receive benefits from other governments.

<sup>31</sup> Three respondents preferred not to disclose the amounts of government benefits (Slovenian or other) they receive.

### Sources of income

Of all the respondents, six (6) replied that their primary income comes from employment outside Slovenia (country of origin or other countries). For respondents that receive income through employment (contract, temporary or self-employment), the average is 1,129 EUR/month.

In comparison with the average national wage in Slovenia for 2023, which is 1,445 EUR, the average income of TPs and IPs is 20% below the national average which can create several severe challenges and can lead to extreme poverty especially because of high average annual inflation in 2023 which reached 7.4 % in Slovenia.

Of all the respondents, six (6) disclosed they receive old-age pensions from another government, and 38 respondents receive minimum pension support.

### Household expenditures

The table below states the averages of HH expenditures and costs in 30 days between November and December 2023. The expenses were calculated on average from overall HHs, whether living in CC, private/shared accommodations, or other housing types.

On average, an HH would spend 901,00 EUR on rent, food, healthcare and healthcare products, hygiene products, communication (phone, internet), utilities, and other expenses (e.g., tobacco).

*Table 7. Reported expenses in the last 30 days before data collection by housing type*

	<b>Outside CC (private)</b>	<b>Outside CC (shared)</b>	<b>In CC</b>	<b>Hotel/hostel</b>	<b>Other<sup>32</sup></b>
<i>% of housing types</i>	64%	23%	4,5%	1,5%	6%
	<b>AVERAGE AMOUNT/month in €</b>				
Rent	392 €	323 €	0 €	133 €	300 €
Food	278 €	237 €	272 €	250 €	200 €
Healthcare	22 €	33 €	23 €	0 €	100 €
Hygiene	45 €	45 €	39 €	33 €	20 €
Communication	33 €	36 €	15 €	200 €	10 €

<sup>32</sup> The *Other* category includes respondents living in shared accommodation with Slovenians or those who preferred not to disclose their housing types.

Utilities	129 €	77 €	0 €	83 €	100 €
Other expenses	58 €	63 €	82 €	17 €	0 €
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>997 €</b>	<b>848 €</b>	<b>462 €</b>	<b>683 €</b>	<b>900 €</b>

*Table 8. Total reported expenses in the last 30 days before data collection*

<b>Reported expenses</b>	
Rent	495 €
Food	266 €
Utilities (electricity, gas, water...)	102 €
Health services	98 €
Other expenses	60 €
Hygiene items	44 €
Communication (phone, internet...)	34
Medicine & health products	24 €

The overall main expense for HH with international or temporary protection in this survey remains to be accommodation cost, even though 51% of respondents receive partial subsidy for their rent, 22% receive full subsidy of all accommodation expenses (rent, utilities, etc), and 21% receive free accommodation, on the grounds of their Temporary Protection status. This can be explained by the high percentage of refugees living in private accommodation.

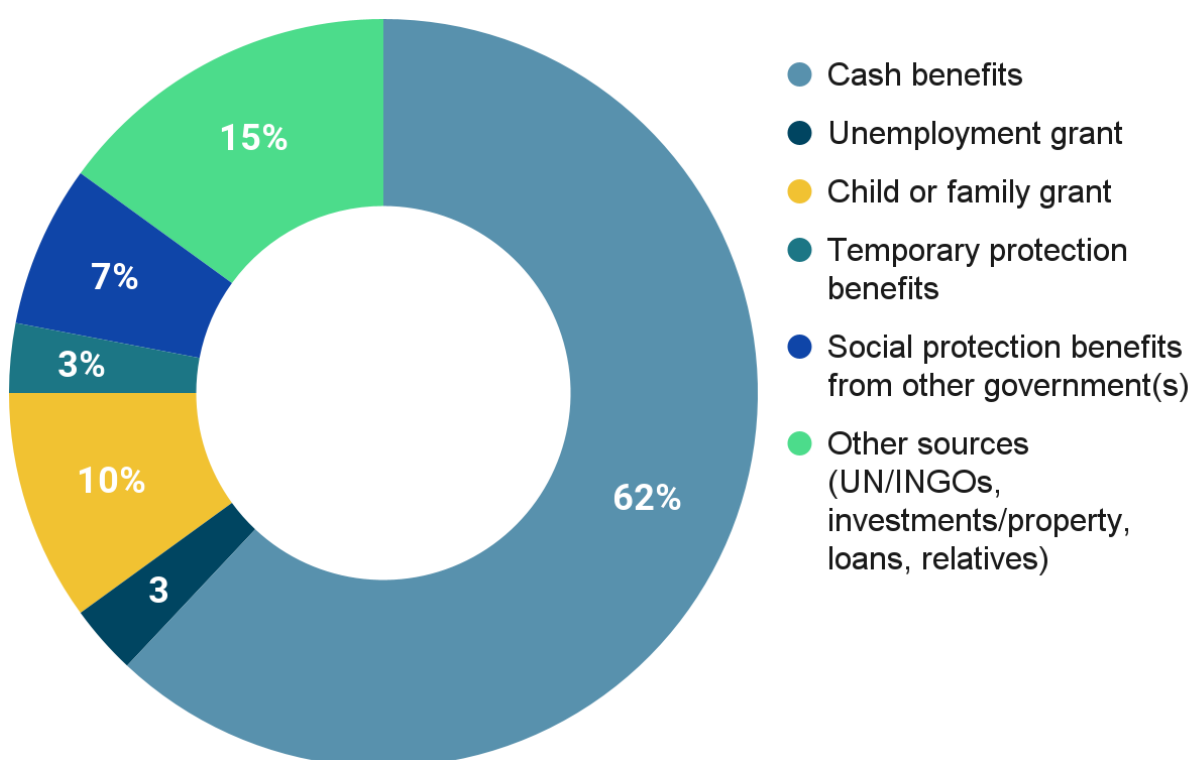
Other HH expenses are predominantly related to food, followed by utilities and health services.

### **Coping strategies**

Under the coping mechanism and resilience strategies of refugee HH in Slovenia, we aimed to measure the frequency of HH that rely on outside financial aid (remittances, borrowing money, savings) to meet their basic needs. On the HH level (202), most respondents replied they generally do not use additional coping strategies, however, nearly half of the respondents (47,5%) replied they had to actually spend savings due to a lack of resources to cover basic needs in the month prior to the interview, 14% receive funds from investments, loans and by way of remittances, and 9% of HH requires assistance with food.

Eight (8) respondents replied that they receive transfers from relatives or friends outside of Slovenia (in the country of origin or other countries). Of those, seven stated they receive remittances from the country of origin in an average amount of 971 EUR, and one respondent stated they receive remittances outside the country of origin in an average amount of 1633 EUR. While some count cash assistance from humanitarian organisations, five respondents also counted savings and investments as form of their monthly income.<sup>33</sup>

*Figure 15. Breakdown of household financial resources excluding employment income*



On an HH level, 8 respondents (4%) replied their rent was paid late due to difficulties, 38% respondents also replied that on an average of three (3) days per week, their HH had to rely on less preferred and less expensive food to cope with a lack of food or money to buy it.

Less than, and eight (8) respondents answered they had to sell household assets/goods due to a lack of resources. Seven (7) respondents admitted to borrowing or purchasing food on credit, while 3 others preferred not to answer this question. Four (4) of respondents also have or might have needed to sell productive assets or means of transport, and 13 reduce essential health expenditure to acquire sufficient funds to

<sup>33</sup> In the year 2023, 2% of people in Slovenia risked serious material and social deprivation and 21,8% of Slovenes lived below the poverty line. Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

cover their monthly living costs. 20 respondents also replied their HH had to reduce essential education expenditure in the past month. In contrast, 2 respondents admitted to withdrawing children from schools due to insufficient food or money to buy food. 6 respondents did not want to answer this question.

Regarding whether the head or co-head of the HH thought of moving HH elsewhere due to lack of resources, 4 preferred not to answer, and six (6) respondents' HH already applied that strategy.

Three HHs have also started involving school-aged children in the generation of income. Three (3) respondents had to resolve to use degrading or high-risk sources of income to secure funds for their families.

## HEALTH

This section is an overview of the health needs of HH and individuals, including access to health care and any barriers they face. The survey also reviews people's knowledge of and access to mental health services.

Beneficiaries of international and temporary protection in Slovenia have the right to receive emergency medical care, including emergency transport and dental care. Furthermore, they have the right to emergency treatment upon the decision of the attending physician and health care for women (e.g. reproductive health and health care during pregnancy and while giving birth). Beneficiaries of temporary protection also have the right to emergency services for specialist outpatient and inpatient activities, which beneficiaries of international protection cannot claim, and compulsory health checks before enrolling into primary or secondary education.

Compared with international protection, where beneficiaries receive mandatory health insurance based on their status, the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act does not afford such a benefit.<sup>34</sup>

More than half of respondents (53%) stated a person in their HH required access to healthcare or had health problems the month before the interview. Of them, 28% suffer

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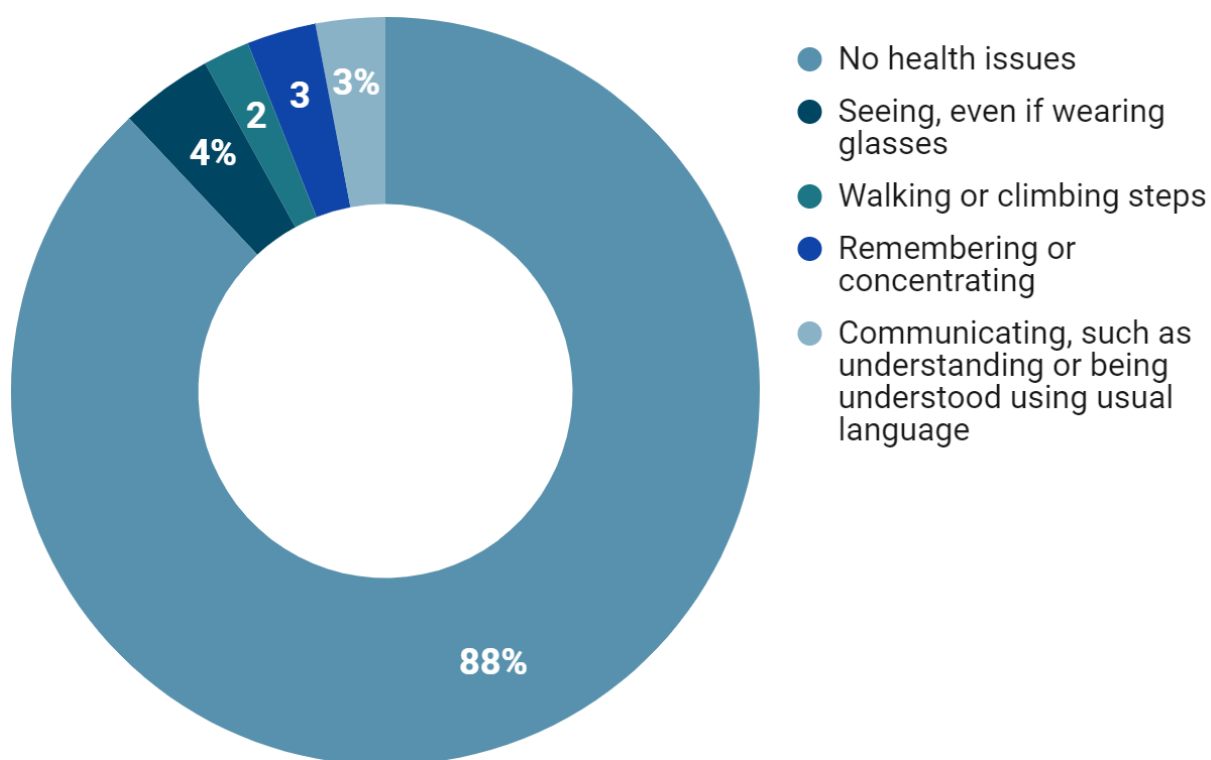
<sup>34</sup> Beneficiaries of temporary protection may be eligible for mandatory (free? State-provided?) healthcare based on the opinion of the Health Commission, which operates within the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants. The beneficiary must apply to the Office to authorise the increased healthcare and submit the necessary supporting documents. The Health Commission may also grant a mandatory level of healthcare in justified cases for specific target groups without an individual request from the person with temporary protection, e.g. the same vaccination coverage as the other children in Slovenia receive.

from chronic illnesses. Out of those with medical needs, 91% were able to access the needed care and 9% did not.

The most commonly reported barriers in accessing health care are: being unable to make an appointment, language barriers and financial constraints, where HH could not afford the clinic fee.

Respondents also reported they face very long waiting times to get an appointment (one or two years), difficulties with finding a family doctor, experiencing health difficulties that were not addressed on time, unavailability of regular treatments for recognised chronic illnesses or other disabilities (which results in health deterioration), and lack of ongoing treatments and health care beyond emergency support.

*Figure 16. Health-related difficulties reported among households*



This is also due to the fact that certain municipalities, most notably, Ljubljana, have significant difficulties in providing patients with primary care doctors. The latest information made available by the Ministry of Health in 2023 noted that from 2010-2022, between 106,600 and 131,940 people have not been registered with a primary care doctor<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Public statement of the Ministry of Health on the *Overview of the situation in Slovenian healthcare* document: <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2023-01-20-we-will-prepare-healthcare-for-all-challenges-that-lie-ahead/>

Related to Figure 15., we received 2 instances in which the respondent answered that a person in their HH has difficulties with self-care, such as washing all over or dressing, and one instance in which a family member has difficulties with their hearing.

Out of the 44 cases where respondents noted a family member in their HH has any of the above health issues, and 50 instances where difficulties with health have been mentioned, 58% have noted that a family member has *some difficulties* with their sight, hearing, walking, concentration, and general communication, and 38% noted that a family member has *a lot of difficulties* with mainly their sight, walking, concentration, self-care and general communication. Of all of these respondents, we received only one reply that an HH includes a person with general disabilities, e.g. a lot of difficulties with walking, concentration, self-care and communication, due to their medical condition (polio).

### Children's health and vaccination

Each respondent who reported having a minor in their HH was asked if the minor was vaccinated against measles and polio and the number of vaccine doses the child received. The findings below are based solely on respondents' feedback and should be interpreted cautiously.

The survey shows that almost 75% of all children living in HH covered by the study have never received a measles-containing or polio vaccination. Respondents' replies show that only an estimated 16,5 % of all children, aged between 9 months and 5 years have received a measles-containing vaccination in a majority of two doses, either in Slovenia, their country of origin or a third country. An estimated 15% of children of the same age range also received a polio vaccine in an average of two doses. In comparison, the percentage of vaccinations against measles, mumps and rubella with the 1st dose of the vaccine in 2022 in Slovenia was 95,8%<sup>36</sup>.

### Mental health (MH)

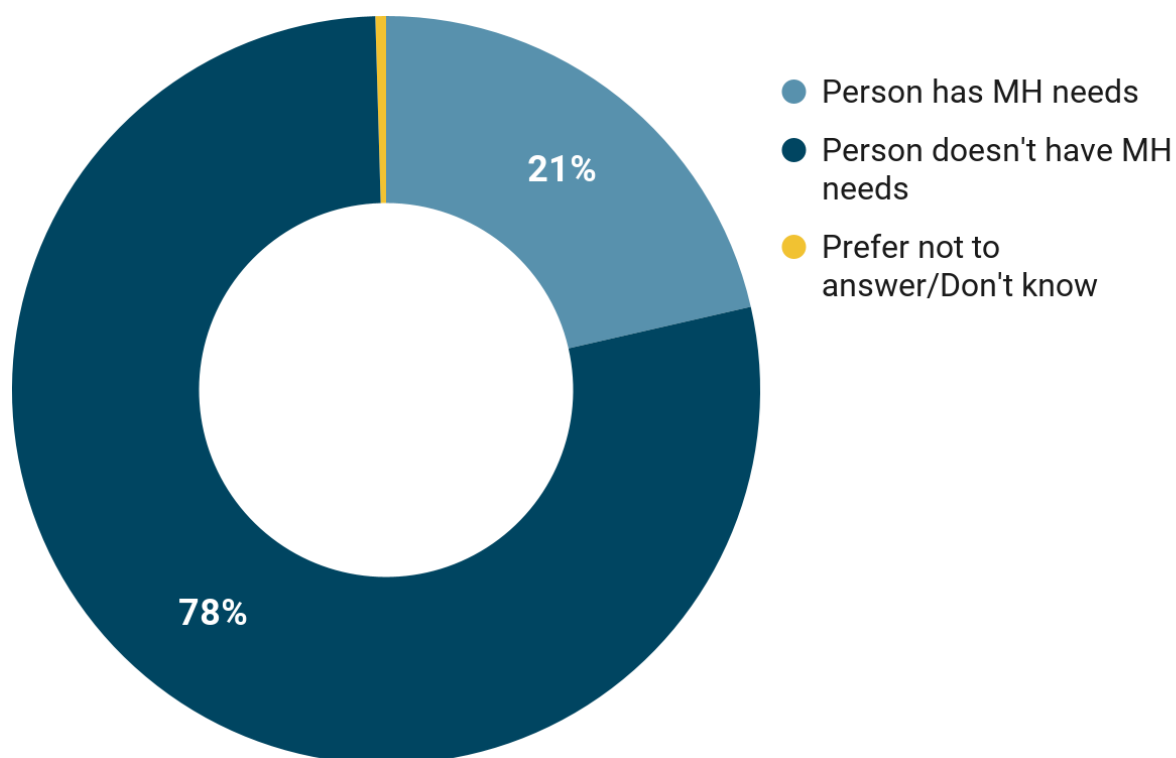
On the individual level, respondents reported 21% of cases in which a family member may have MHPSS needs, and of those, 38% assumed this person might need MHPSS. In 14% asserted this person had already received some support. In the latter cases MHPSS services were provided at refugee reception centres, remotely (e.g. through the phone), at healthcare facilities, community centres, at the therapist's office or in private settings. The most received MHPSS service is psychotherapy<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Vaccination of preschool children in Slovenia in 2022 (The National Institute of Public Health - NIJZ): [https://nijz.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Predolski-otroci\\_precepljenost\\_2022\\_preliminarno\\_porocilo\\_03042023.pdf](https://nijz.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Predolski-otroci_precepljenost_2022_preliminarno_porocilo_03042023.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Individual or group therapy designed to treat a mental health condition, provided by a professional, such as a psychologist.

Figure 17. Reported mental-health challenges



In 23% of the cases when MHPSS services would be needed but were not received, the predominant reasons were language barriers, the person was not aware where to access such services, or they wanted to wait if the problem would get better on its own in time. Some also required specific medication, treatment or service unavailable in Slovenia or are still waiting to receive the appointment.

Due to the prevailing stigma associated with disclosing mental health problems within the refugee community, the data likely does not reveal the full extent of the issue. It also does not cover milder cases of persons who are still able to function but nonetheless experience psychological issues.

Only one HH interviewed reported a person that suffers from both physical health and mental health disabilities in their HH, due to their medical and MH condition (polio and autism spectrum disorder).



## ACCOMMODATION

The Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants is responsible for ensuring that any person granted a temporary protection status is accommodated. There are two accommodation centres in Slovenia, namely, Logatec and Debeli Rtič, however more facilities are planned to be included in the future through agreements with the state.

When it comes to private accommodation, the Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants can issue a decision to grant financial support for private accommodation for a period of six months, or for the duration of the rental agreement on the property if the period is shorter than six months. This can be done through a prescribed form online, and if granted, will be paid by the Office on a monthly basis.

After receiving a decision granting international protection status, beneficiaries of international protection may stay in the reception centre (the Asylum Home) for only 15 days. After this period, they can request accommodation in one of the integration houses or other Office accommodation facilities for a maximum of one year from the date they were granted the status. The majority, however, aim to arrange their stay at a private address.

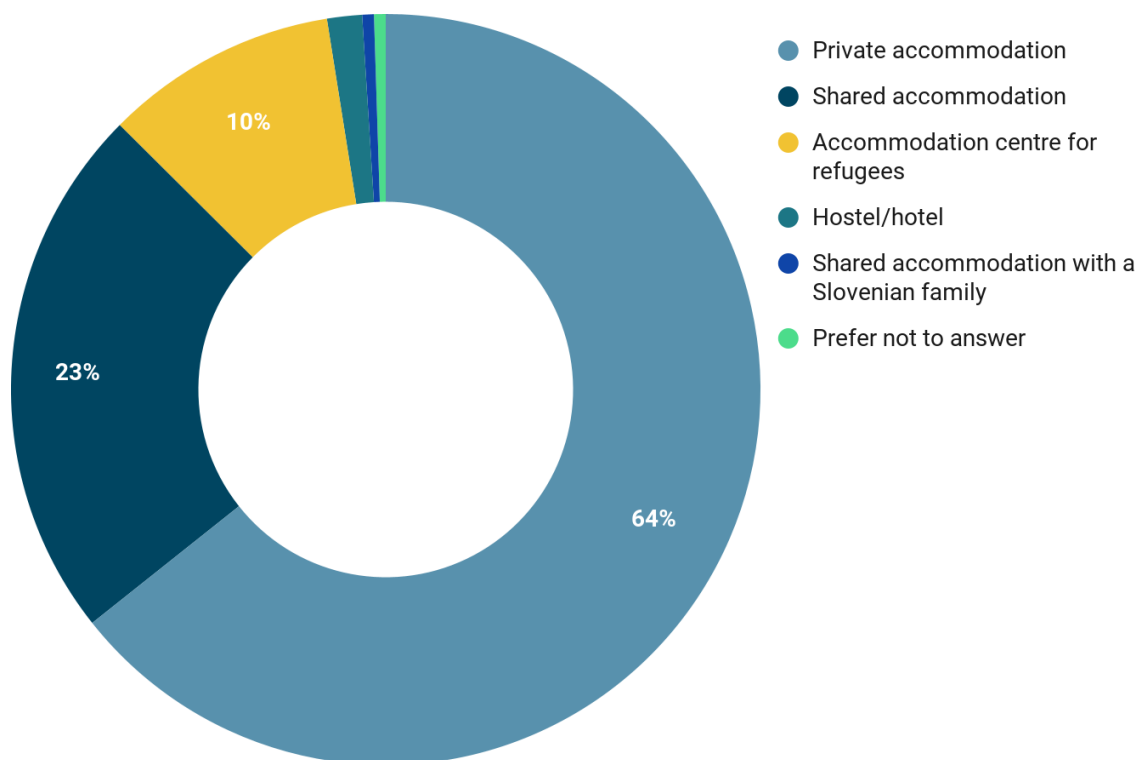
Temporary protection beneficiaries staying at private addresses are entitled to a cash allowance for accommodation costs if they have no means of subsistence or have no dependents in Slovenia who are obliged to support them<sup>38</sup>.

As is evident from this study's results, most beneficiaries with international or temporary protection throughout Slovenia are located in private (64%) or shared (23%) accommodation, mostly with acquaintances and relatives. A smaller number (10%) rely on accommodation provided by the Government of Slovenia in various accommodation establishments or accommodation facilities, some of which are organised as collective centres.

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<sup>38</sup> Beneficiaries of temporary protection with no income or other benefits are entitled to financial assistance, e.g. cash allowance and rent subsidies, provided by GOSIM. Cash allowance amount is set in relation to the basic amount of the person's minimum income: 100% for the adult person/applicant; 70% for the next adult in the applicant's family; 30% for a child up to 18 years of age; 70% for unaccompanied minors. Minors who are accompanied by only one adult person (e.g. parent) are entitled to a 30% increase of cash allowance. Persons who are not accommodated in the collective centres, can apply for a monthly cash grant for private accommodation. It is set on the basic amount of the minimum income, e.g. 100% for the applicant with no income or benefits, and is increased by 30% for each additional family member. This subsidy is paid for three months or for the duration of the accommodation.

Figure 18. Accommodation types



A small number of respondents stated they reside in hotels or hostels (3%) or share their accommodation with a Slovenian family (1 HH response)<sup>39</sup>.

Half of the respondents (51%) receive government subsidies for a partial accommodation payment, while 22% responded that the government subsidy fully covers their accommodation. Some respondents (21%) receive free accommodation or are hosted by locals or families (almost 4%), for which they pay partial or no rent at all. One respondent replied that the employer subsidises their accommodation.

Many respondents reported issues related to living conditions and accommodation, such as lack of separate washrooms, insufficient cleanliness of their accommodation, lack of privacy, inadequate sleeping conditions, unsafe or insufficient cooking facilities, or feeling unsafe.

### Security of tenure

More than half of the respondents (53,5%) disclosed they can stay in their current accommodation for at least 6 months, 5% between 3 and 6 months, and almost 7% between a month and three months. 18% of respondents replied they were not sure of that matter, while 16% did not want to respond to this question.

<sup>39</sup> The % of all accommodation types do not sum up to 100, because one respondent preferred not to answer.

Also, at least 5% of respondents conveyed that they are currently under pressure to leave their current accommodation because their landlord is revoking their ability to house or planning to renovate the property. Other respondents conveyed that their accommodation contract is only valid until March 2024. Some respondents also reported they are under pressure to leave because they plan to leave the country, due to increasing living costs, lack of employment opportunities, and tensions with the landlord/neighbours.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to support an evidence-based humanitarian response in Slovenia through the provision of multi-sector data about the needs and coping capacities of international and temporary protection beneficiaries who have fled the ongoing conflict in their country of origin or other reasons stated in the 1951 Refugee Convention that may grant them international protection. Therefore, this study aims to inform the governmental authorities of the Republic of Slovenia and the humanitarian community of refugees' living situations, level of services and refugees' priority needs in the country. The findings from this report will be disseminated through the UNHCR office in Slovenia and ZRC SAZU (website and social media channels), alongside the cultural mediators who conducted these interviews. In addition, these findings will be sent to all the relevant ministries in question (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education), GOSIM, NGOs, MPs, the Ukrainian Embassy as well as various media outlets. This assessment provides a snapshot of these households' needs and challenges as of December 2023. The report is based on the survey conducted in December 2023 among 202 households residing in Slovenia (434 individuals) during the interviews in 6 statistical regions for families that stay in private and shared accommodations and accommodation centres established by the Government of Slovenia.

Enumerators interviewed households with international and temporary protection in Slovenia; 55% of the latter have applied for the extension of temporary protection. According to the results, 77% of the households interviewed would prefer to remain in Slovenia due to ongoing conflict and have made extended accommodation arrangements (6 months or more). Only 1.5% declared they would like to move to another country, and 7% would prefer to return to their country of origin. Some respondents with temporary protection also offered an intention to apply for temporary/permanent residency in Slovenia because they had lost any reason to return to their country of origin.

Most households with temporary protection receive partial (51%) or full subsidies of accommodation expenses (22%) through the protection subsidies in Slovenia. These subsidies are heavily linked to their employment status and income. Based on the findings of the MSNA survey, 64% of households receive some form of social assistance benefits: 44% receive child benefits, minimum pension support (19%), school meal subsidies, large family allowance, reduced kindergarten payment, maternity benefits, etc. 33% of households receive government benefits from other countries. Around half of the households are coping relatively well with their new surroundings as they are mainly able to cover the cost of their basic needs, however, 47,5% indicated that they had to spend savings, rely on borrowing money to buy food

or even involve school-aged children in income generation to cope with the lack of money. Given that subsidies for accommodation expenses are heavily linked to employment status and income, efforts should be made to enhance access to employment opportunities for refugee households. This could include vocational training programs, job placement services, and initiatives to promote entrepreneurship among refugees.

23% of all adult respondents replied they are currently employed or self-employed in Slovenia or have continued distance work in their country of origin. The higher proportion of employment is in households in private accommodation. On the other hand, the unemployment rate is relatively high at 63%.<sup>40</sup> Respondents who are currently job-seekers responded the reasons for their unemployment are mostly lack of knowledge of the local language, lack of needed skills, lack of decent employment in the labour market and even discrimination. It also shows that current employment offers in Slovenia's labour market do not correspond with their previous employment (information and communication, transportation, education, secondary industries, public administration and administrative support) or the education they achieved before coming to Slovenia. Most respondents have a bachelor's (26%) or a master's (42%) degree. Providing tailored employment support services, such as job counselling and job matching programs, can help refugees navigate the Slovenian labour market more effectively. Moreover, investing in language and skills training programs tailored to the needs of refugee populations can help them overcome these barriers and access better employment opportunities in the Slovenian labour market.

Another area in need of protection is healthcare. For example, respondents who are beneficiaries of temporary protection reported lacking healthcare in cases of chronic illness, difficulties with accessing a family doctor, increased language barriers when accessing health services, and even being rejected from healthcare services because of not speaking Slovenian. Something to consider is to improve language access to healthcare services by providing interpretation services and translated materials to overcome language barriers. Moreover, training healthcare professionals in cultural competency and sensitivity to diverse linguistic needs can also enhance the accessibility of healthcare for refugees.

Children's welfare and education are predominantly taken care of, with 60% of children with temporary protection attending both Slovenian and distance learning classes and

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<sup>40</sup> In comparison, register data on Ukrainians benefiting from the EU Temporary Protection scheme shows that in January 2024, 297,000 Ukrainians were registered as unemployed in 20 EU countries. It's important to note that some countries like Belgium, Denmark and Poland register Ukrainians through nationality, while other EU countries have a general registry of beneficiaries of the EU Temporary Protection scheme or similar national legislation. More data is available on the Eurostat website: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment\\_statistics#Registered\\_unemployment\\_of\\_refugees\\_from\\_Ukraine](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment_statistics#Registered_unemployment_of_refugees_from_Ukraine)

only 4% of children attending solely Ukrainian distance learning programmes. Generally, inclusion into compulsory education is good, according to the Ministry of Education, with high institutional support in the form of additional language classes, adjustable curriculums, etc. However, the survey did show that in 113 cases, respondents (parents) noted that their children (with IP and TP status) face a milder form of peer violence and bullying from their classmates, to which authorities in the field of education should nevertheless, be attentive. In 3% of responses, the data presented acute cases of peer violence (bullying, ridicule and exclusion based on discrimination and fear of classmates), and in two cases children stopped attending Slovenian education for that reason. Providing cultural sensitivity training to educators and school staff to better understand the unique needs and challenges faced by refugee children and youths is essential in this case. This training should focus on recognising and addressing discrimination and exclusion based on cultural, ethnic, or refugee status.

In conclusion, while most refugee households in Slovenia are generally satisfied with their living conditions and humanitarian aid, the responses from the survey show concerns regarding the quality of social and humanitarian support. While many refugees are aware of their rights and have access to available services, there is still a need for enhanced collaboration between the government, NGOs and social organisations. This collaboration should prioritise establishing effective feedback mechanisms for refugees to voice concerns without fear of reprisal or bias. Given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and new conflicts arising, such as the one in Gaza, it's vital to address the concerns of Ukrainians who are currently residing in Slovenia (particularly when taking into consideration living costs and social challenges), from both humanitarian and governmental entities.