GLOBAL ACTION PLAN ON PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS, 2019-2030: UPDATES

Member State Information Session

15 April 2025 | **WHO PHM and WHE**

World Health Organization

Agenda

Item	Speaker	Duration
Opening remarks	**Dr Michael Ryan,** Executive Director, Health Emergencies Programme, WHO HQ	4 min
Opening remarks	**Dr Ailan Li,** Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage, Healthier Populations, WHO HQ	4 min
PHM Update	**Dr Santino Severoni,** Director, Health and Migration WHO HQ	10 min
WHE Update	**Guillaume Simonian,** Unit Head, Humanitarian Policies and interagency Cooperation, Acting WHO Representative for Bulgaria	10 min
Q&A		30 min

Moderated by Daniel Mic, Technical Officer, WHO Health and Migration

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Opening Remarks

Dr Michael Ryan

Executive Director

Health Emergencies Programme

WHO HQ

World Health Organization

Opening Remarks

Dr Ailan Li

Assistant Director-General

Universal Health Coverage

Healthier Populations, WHO HQ

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PHM Updates

Dr Santino Severoni

Director

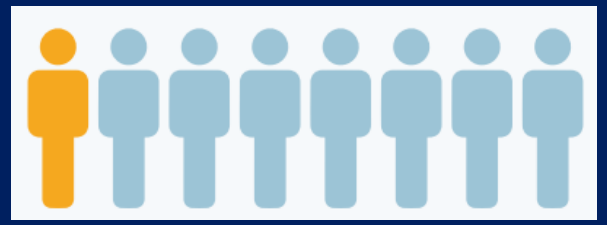
Health and Migration

WHO HQ

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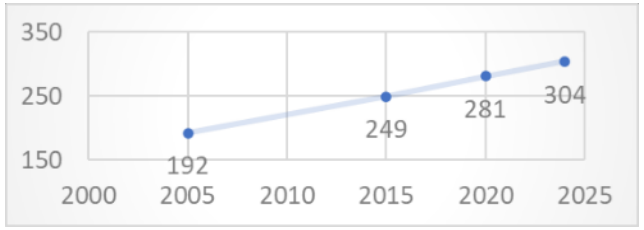
By the numbers: Displacement and migration trends

An estimated **1 billion people (or 1 in 8)** globally have migrated or been forcibly displaced



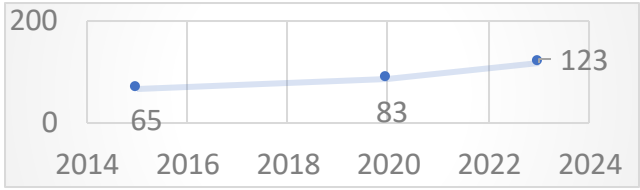
304 M

International Migrants
(UN DESA, 2025)



123 M

Forcibly Displaced
(UNHCR, 2024)



763 M

Internal Migrants – 71.1 IDPs
G.E.M report 2013

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Promoting the Health of Refugees and Migrants:
Global action plan and core functions

WHO global action plan on promoting the health of refugees and migrants 2019-2030 (GAP)



WHO Health and Migration's five core functions:



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Health and Migration Policy Landscape: **Redefining the Narrative**

2008
WHA
Resolution 61.17 on the Health of Migrants

2016
UNGA Summit for Refugees and Migrants
(NY Declaration)

2017
WHA
WHO Global Framework and Resolution 70.15

2018
WHO alignment with Global Compact for Migration and Global Compact on Refugees

2019
WHA
WHO Global Action Plan «Promoting the health of refugees and migrants»

2023
WHA
Extension of Global Action Plan from 2023 to 2030 (Resolution 76.14)

2024
Health and migration prioritized in the new WHO global health strategy (GPW14)

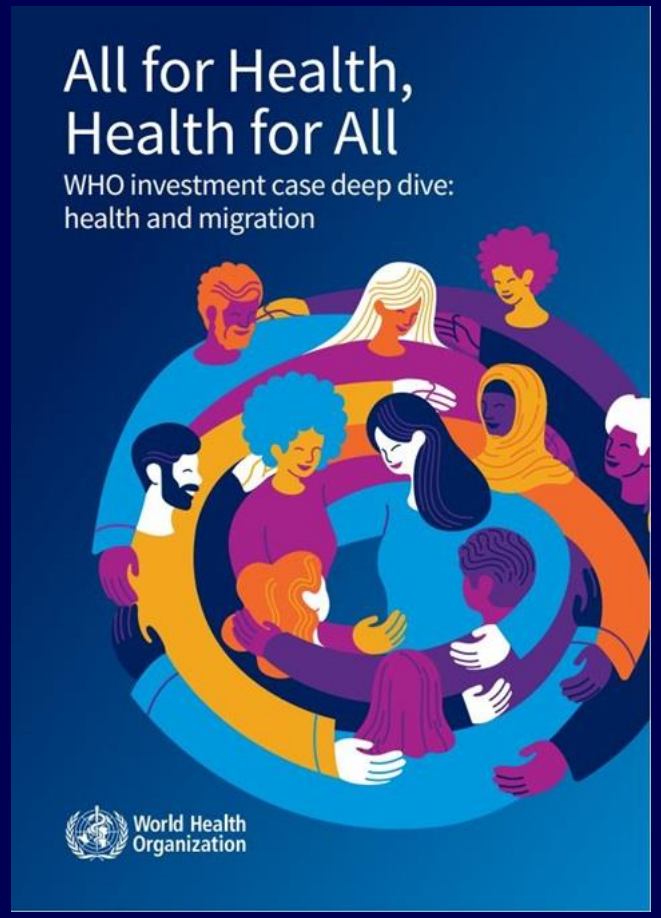
2025
WHA GAP Progress report

From a side-effect of migration



To an important political topic

Global leadership in health and migration policy, advocacy and diplomacy



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GPW14 and Policy Progress

- **First-ever inclusion** of health and migration in WHO global strategy (GPW14).
- **109 countries** prioritized health and migration in **Programme Budget 2026-2027** prioritization exercise.
- WHO prioritization guiding **WHO work on health and migration.**
- Investment case and deep dive on health and migration **support resource mobilization.**
- **Regional frameworks/guidelines** in place in AMRO, EMRO and EURO.

Update since October 2024

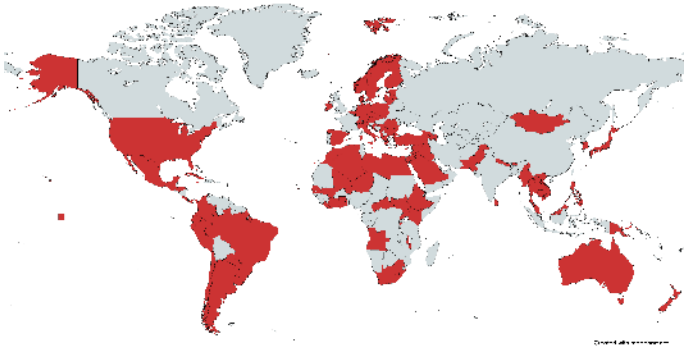
Monitoring trends, documenting progress and developing tools

GAP Monitoring Framework

- First baseline GAP Survey with 98 Member States' input.
- Results yielding 2nd World Report on the health of refugees and migrants.

Main preliminary finding
82% of participating countries reporting positively on equal access to emergency health services.

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Health and Migration – Baseline Indicator

"Equal access to emergency and/or essential health services to refugees and migrants as compared to host population" (GPW14, PHM Baseline Indicator)

Update since October 2024

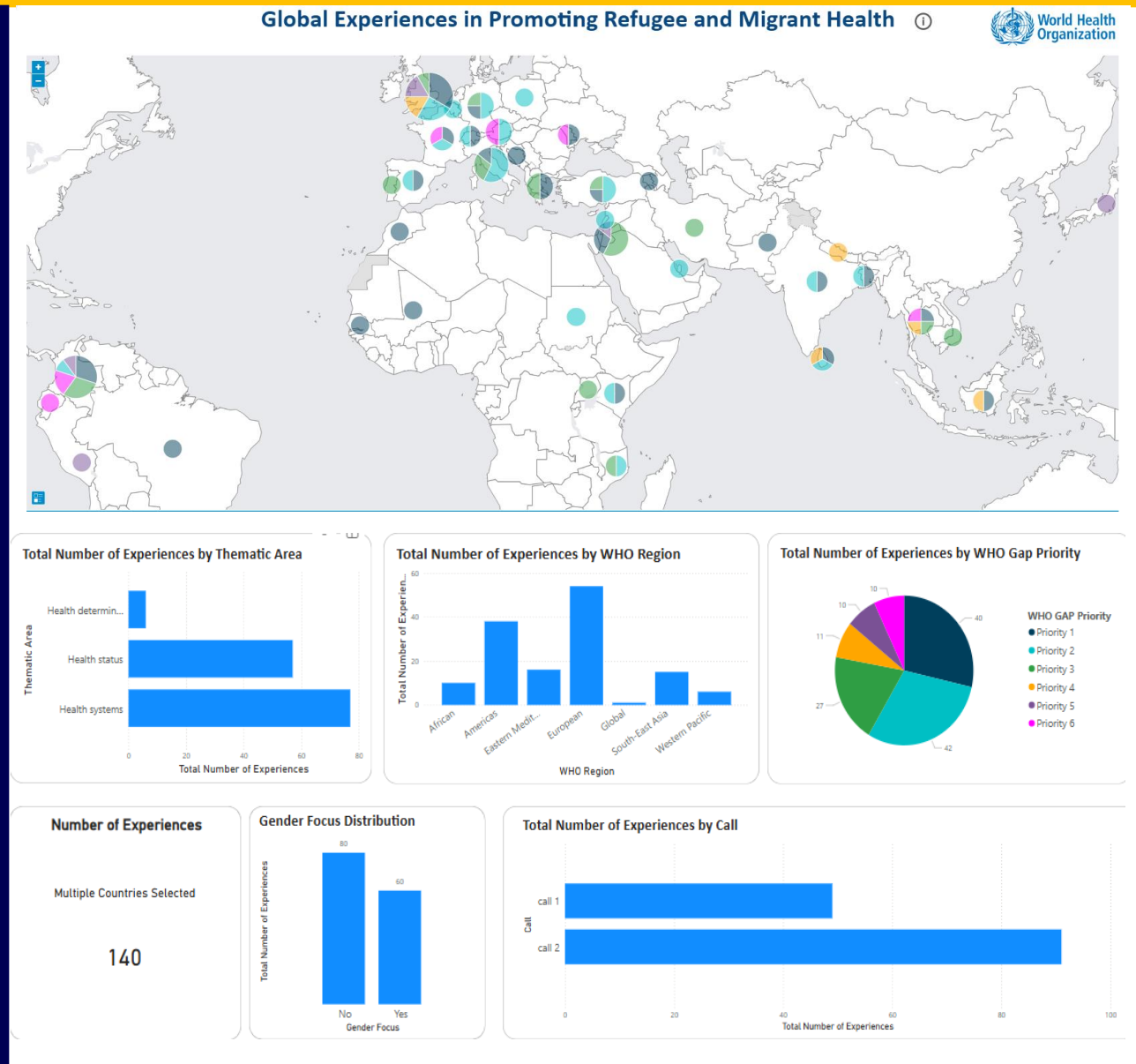
Monitoring trends, documenting progress and developing tools

Dashboard on global experiences in promoting refugee and migrant health

- **Annual contributions** from Member States.
- Since 2022, **140 promising practices** from **63 Member States** showcasing progress.
- Launched an **interactive dashboard** in Dec 2024.
- **Live platform-** an updated repository of best practices.
- Provides stakeholders with **data-driven insights.**

Third Open Call

10 April- 10 June 2025



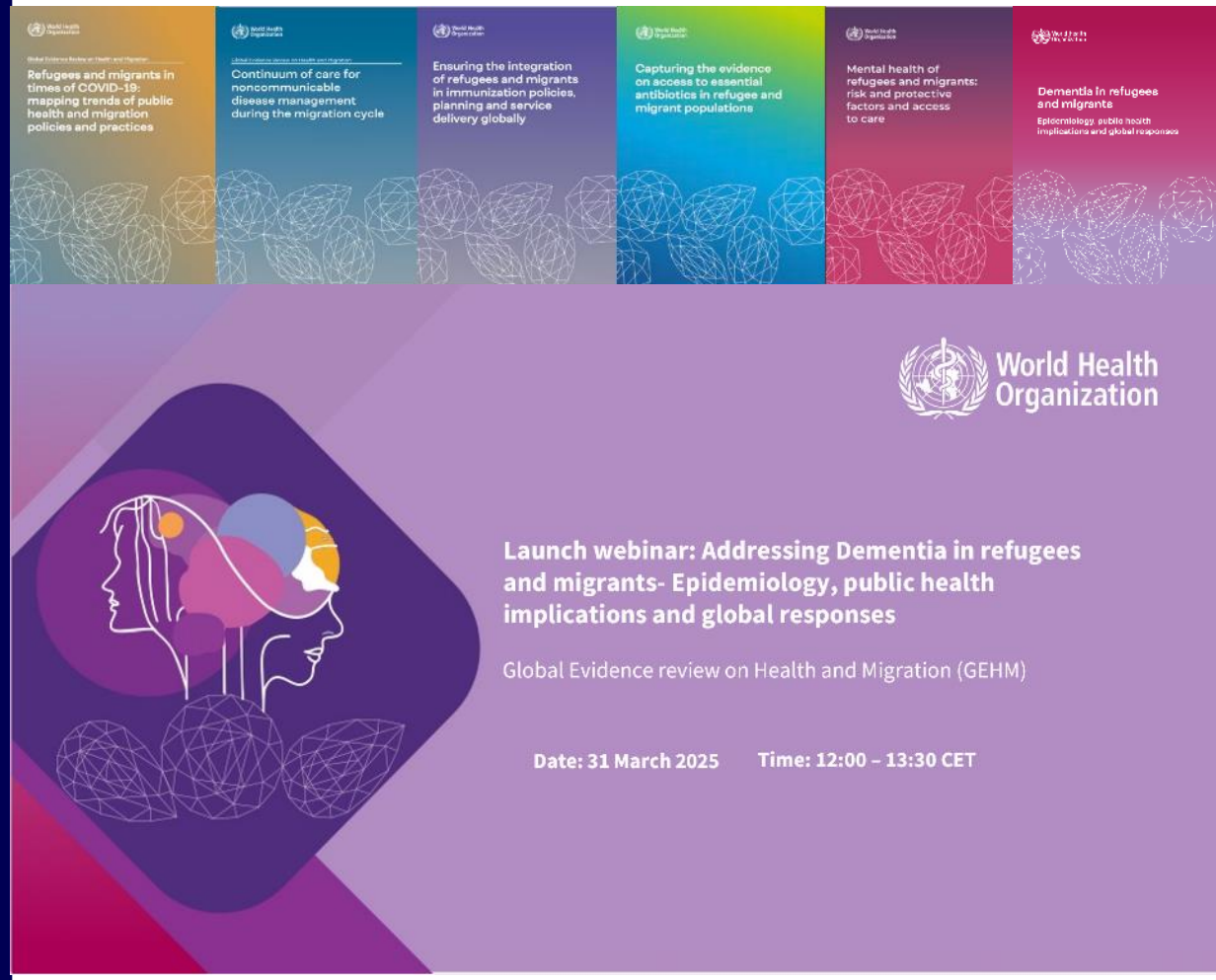
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Update since October 2024

Setting norms and standards and promoting research

Global Evidence Review Series (GEHMs) on health and migration

- Evidence-based normative products addressing global evidence gaps on priority topics related to health, migration, and displacement for policy action
- Published GEHMs on COVID-19, NCD, Immunization, Access to antibiotics, Mental health
- Latest GEHM on Dementia launched globally in March 2025 with over 900 registered.



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Update since October 2024

Technical assistance to countries and partners

Refugee and Migrant Health System Reviews and National Research Agenda Implementation

- Technical consultation in collaboration with the National Department of Health of South Africa, with over 100 stakeholders from government, NGOs, and Academia (March 2025)
- Supports the development of the National Research Agenda on health, migration and displacement in South Africa to guide policy action
- The Refugee and Migrant Health System Review explored opportunities to strengthen the health system in South Africa in providing services to refugees and migrants

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Update since October 2024

Technical assistance to countries and partners

Global school on refugee and migrant health

Brings together experts and stakeholders. Inspires innovation and partnerships.

Over 19,000 participants from 187+ MS trained through in-person and online courses.



(c) WHO

Keynote speeches | Live panel discussion | Video reportages | Q&A sessions

The fifth Global School at a glance

December 2024 – Held in Colombia and livestreamed

+3600 PARTICIPANTS

100 IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

22 SPEAKERS

5 DAY EVENT

+7500 VIEWERS OF OUR LIVE SESSIONS

+500 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY PAR-TICIPANTS

970 CERTIFIED PARTICIPANTS

4 NATIONAL SIDE-EVENTS

Next Steps

2025

- **WHA78 WHO GAP Progress Report**
- Update the **Dashboard on Global Experiences in Promoting Refugee and Migrant Health** with contributions from the third call (April–July 2025)
- **World report on refugee and migrant health - GAP Monitoring Framework** (May 2025)
- **Implementation research on health, migration and displacement -** Launch of **WHO Global Research Network** and supporting countries to develop **national research agendas and action plans**
- **Global Evidence Reviews (GEHMs)** on 1) Health Financing; 2) Health system strengthening for displaced and migrant populations in the context of climate change
- **6th Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health** under the theme "Building Migrant- and Refugee-Inclusive Health Systems in a Changing Climate."

2026

- **4th Global Consultation** on the Health of Migrants and Refugees
- **Global report** on the health of displaced and migrant populations in the context of climate change (May/June 2026)
- **International Migration Review Forum**

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Areas of collaboration - PHM and WHE

PHM and WHE collaborate to address the short- and long-term health needs of refugees and migrants through joint efforts including:

Mapping and prioritizing complementarities and synergies between PHM and WHE in line with the GAP and the Public Health Emergency Management Cycle

Global Compact for Refugees-related Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities

2025 High-level Officials meeting

Normative products on IDPs as well as climate, health, migration, and displacement nexus; World report on refugee and migrant health; Global report on the health of displaced and migrant populations in the context of climate change

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WHE Updates

Guillaume Simonian

Unit Head

Humanitarian Policies and interagency Cooperation, WHO HQ

Acting WHO Representative for Bulgaria

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Practical good practice: WHO’s support to **Bulgaria's** Strong Commitment to Supporting Refugees



Plovdiv, Ukraine Support and Renovation Foundation



Overview

Since March of 2022

- Over 950 000 Ukranians arrived in the country. Initial registration of 200 000 TP.
- Adding to the 70,000 refugees populations from Afghanistan and Syria
- 75 000 people granted or renewed temporary protection in 2024
- Government-sponsored accommodation in hotels and state facilities — especially in Burgas and Varna — has been a core humanitarian response since 2022. Currently a new approach has been drafted to be approved by end of April 2025.



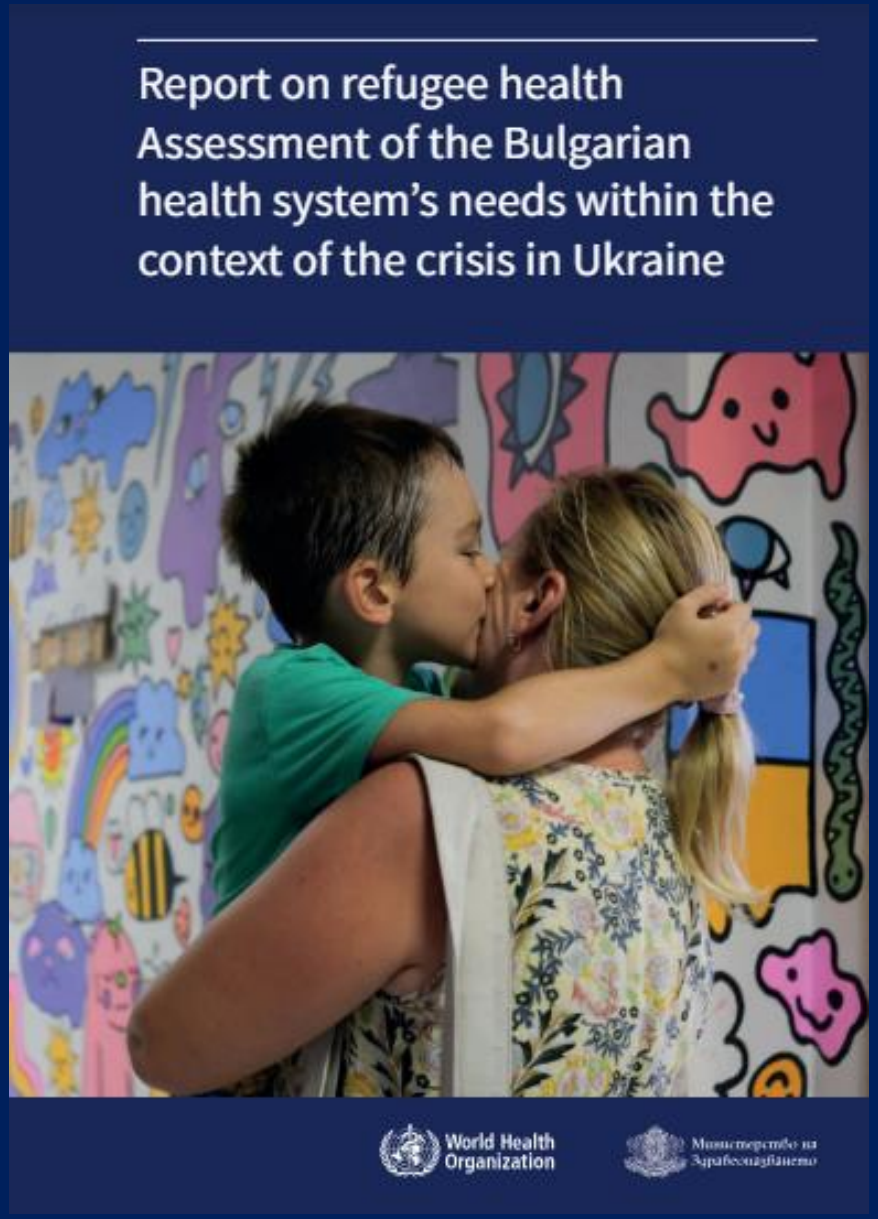
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https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/366531/9789240070707-eng.pdf?sequence=1

NEEDS

A joint assessment of health systems to absorb refugees –supported by PHM and WHE, completed in 2022

- Large number of Ukrainian refugees with Temporary Protection adding to the existing caseload of refugees
- Rapid increase in demand for health services puts a strain on the Bulgarian health system
- This assessment identified needs and risks, and opportunities



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NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING HEALTH ASSESSMENT

- Enhance **leadership**: support MOH coordination
- Support **health workforce**: shortage GPs and nurses
- Tailor **health communication** (communicable diseases and NCDs), including mental health and ensure necessary information reaches refugees: tailored Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE); engage refugees in planning RCCE campaigns
- Provide **MHPSS services** to strengthen coordination, communication, good practices, international MHPSS/MH practices: IASC or mhGAP for example
- Review **Health information systems:** roles MOH/Health inspectorates/GPs, Surveillance, epidemiological profiles of refugees and migrants including development of core indicators for routine monitoring of refugee health , status and analysis of health care utilization
- Strengthen **emergency preparedness and response capacity:** enhance system readiness

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https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/366531/9789240070707-eng.pdf?sequence=1

Needs & Gaps 2024:

According to the SEIS Report, UNHCR 2024, priorities for Refugees in Bulgaria are:

- **32% of refugees have chronic conditions;**
- **14% face health access barriers.**
- **20% report mental health concerns and only 36% receive support**

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Bulgaria's commitment to refugee health

Bulgaria has established a comprehensive legal framework to ensure ongoing healthcare support for all individuals under temporary protection – not limited to Ukrainian nationals.

Healthcare access is governed by the Asylum and Refugees Act, Health Insurance Act, and Health Act.

Government-Funded Health Insurance:

Highlights from Decree No. 69 (May 5, 2022):

Children under 18 and **elderly (63+ for women, 65+ for men)**:
Health insurance fully covered by the state budget.

Adults (18–63/65):
Covered for **90 days** by the state, then under general rules of the Health Insurance Act.

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https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/366531/9789240070707-eng.pdf?sequence=1

Bulgaria offers equal Access to Healthcare

- **Refugees granted temporary protection receive medical assistance and services equal to Bulgarian citizens.**

- **Healthcare access is governed by the Asylum and Refugees Act, Health Insurance Act, and Health Act**



https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/366531/9789240070707-eng.pdf?sequence=1

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PROGRAMMES of MOH supported by WHO

- **Established a MOH focal point**, filled by a WHO consultant, supporting the refugee program
- Supported drafting of the **National Health Strategy 2030** (via WHO EURO and HQ input)
- Programs developed in concert with the MOH, and **in line with national programs**
- Establishing **Regional refugee technical working groups** to address refugee health needs
- **Vaccines preventable disease prevention**: National officer to support national vaccination plans to reach under-vaccinated populations (refugees, Roma, other vulnerable Bulgarian communities)
- **Early Warning and Alert Response** (EWAR) Training: complete last week with 23 medical professionals (emergency responders, epidemiologists, laboratory specialists, etc) from Bulgaria
- Needs assessment and delivery of **essential medical equipment** needed in hospitals and in laboratories

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WHO's COORDINATION ROLE WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

- **UNHCR** : overall coordination, and development of the multi-sector needs assessment (2022/2023+current)
- Ongoing strategic coordination with **EU, Embassies in Bulgaria, Multi-laterals**
- **IOM:** support to health mediators
- **UNICEF** partnership on European Immunization Week, jointly support the National Immunization Program
- **ECDC**: Early Warning Alert and Response training
- **US CDC**: training of journalists in 2024
- **Asia-Europe Foundation**: Procured essential medical equipment to bolster capacity to detect, and respond to infectious diseases
- **MHPSS TWG members**: MHPSS Minimal Services Package translated



ASEF: hand over of equipment to the National Center for Infectious and Parasitic Disease, Sofia

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WHO's COORDINATION ROLE WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS

- National counterparts at **NCPHA and NCIPD**

- **General Practitioners (GPs):** Play a crucial role in primary healthcare and the initial medical assessment of refugees.

- **Regional Health Inspectorates:** Ensure compliance with health regulations and provide oversight.

- **Health Mediators:** Bridge cultural and linguistic gaps between healthcare providers and refugee communities.

- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Contribute expertise in health advocacy and refugee healthcare services.

- **International Organizations:** UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF, IOM.

- **State Agency for Refugees:** Coordinate refugee health services within broader social support mechanisms.



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WHO PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED BY PARTNERS

- **Bulgarian Red Cross**: health mediators to provide outreach to Ukrainian refugees to reimburse medicines, medical items and medical procedures not covered by NHIF

- Local non-governmental organization “transitional centers” for refugees:
  - **Aid for Ukraine** (Sofia): Providing support to children and families
  - **Ukraine Support and Renovation Foundation** (Plovdiv): Housing, mental health support, on-site GP



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PERSPECTIVES: from emergency response to sustainable solutions

- **Health workforce**: support Bulgarian health workforce: GPs, nurses, emergency hospitals, epidemiologists
- **Schools and kindergartens** (move from on-line schools and self-organized daycare centers, and get children vaccinated and in Bulgarian structures)
- **Mental health services**
- **Routine childhood immunizations** (plus HPV and Flu vax)
- Discussions around **integration of medical professionals into Bulgarian health care** (what are creative ways this can be achieved while still adhering to national regulations and not causing brain drain from Ukraine?)
- Support Ukrainian associations and service providers to **sustain operations**: reach Bulgarian technical requirements and receive domestic funding

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Thank you!

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https://www.who.int/teams/health-and-migration-programme/about

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