



HUNGARIAN
HELSINKI
COMMITTEE

Protecting Refugees from Ukraine In Hungary

Hungarian Helsinki Committee

"2025 R-EU-R – Jean Monnet Module"

Athens

4 February 2025

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- **Two worlds – two border sections:**
- **Ukrainian-Hungarian border: over 570 000 arrivals in 2022**
- **Serbian-Hungarian border: over 30 000 push-backs in 2022 (over 72 000 in 2021)**

Response of state-entities

- **Purposefully destroyed asylum system:**
 - No access to territory and to the asylum system
 - Violent push-backs
 - Lack of procedural safeguards
 - No integration
 - Hate-propaganda
- **Temporary protection for Ukrainians:**
 - Opening of border crossing points
 - Protection - European Council Implementing Decision: Ukrainians arriving after 24 February
 - Non-Ukrainians, non-Hungarians – left out
 - Helping Points at border crossing
 - Volunteers, charities, civil society



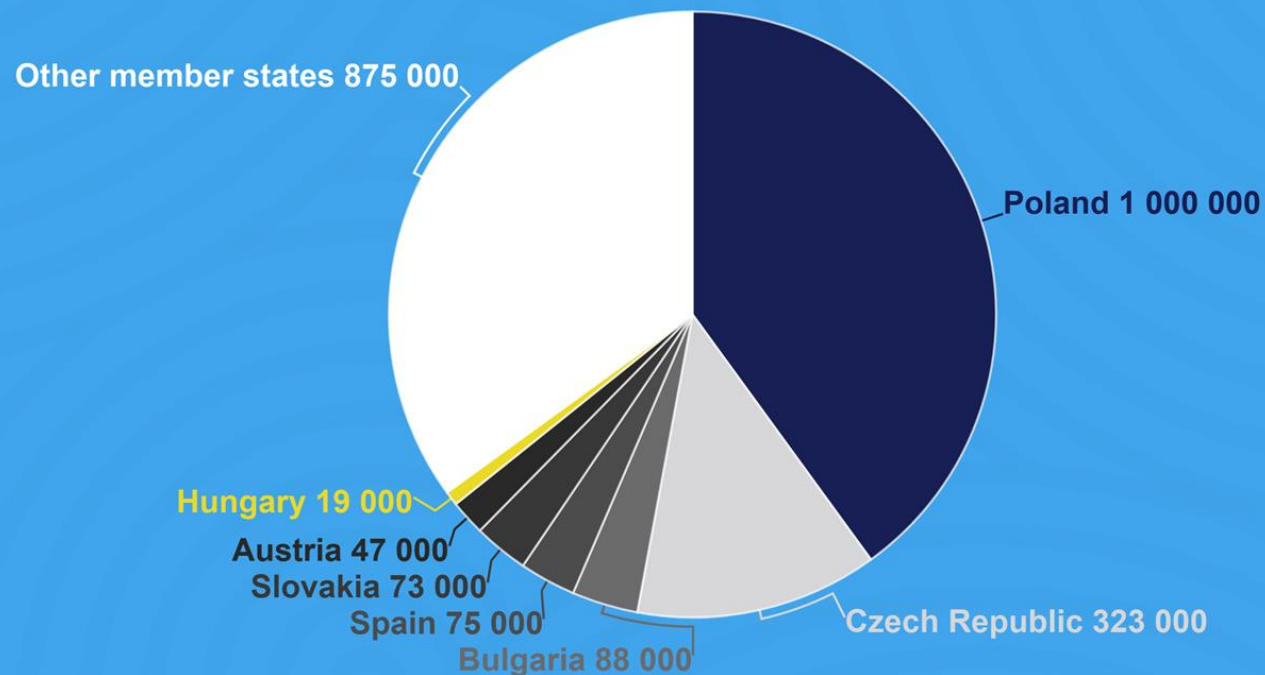
Response in Hungary

- **Temporary protection for Ukrainians**
- Opening of border crossing points
- Protection: Ukrainians arriving after 24/2/2022, non-Ukrainians, non-Hungarians – left out
- Helping Points at border crossing
- Shelters all over Hungary
- Charities: humanitarian assistance
- Civil society organisations: more specialised assistance (legal, social, psychological)
- Municipalities: funding
- Volunteers: lawyers, interpreters, citizens
- Integration perspectives – consequences of a broken system



Number of applicants for temporary protection in EU Member States, who fled Ukraine (as of 1 May 2022)

Total number of applicants: 2 500 000



Refugees from UKR across Europe: **6,303,200**

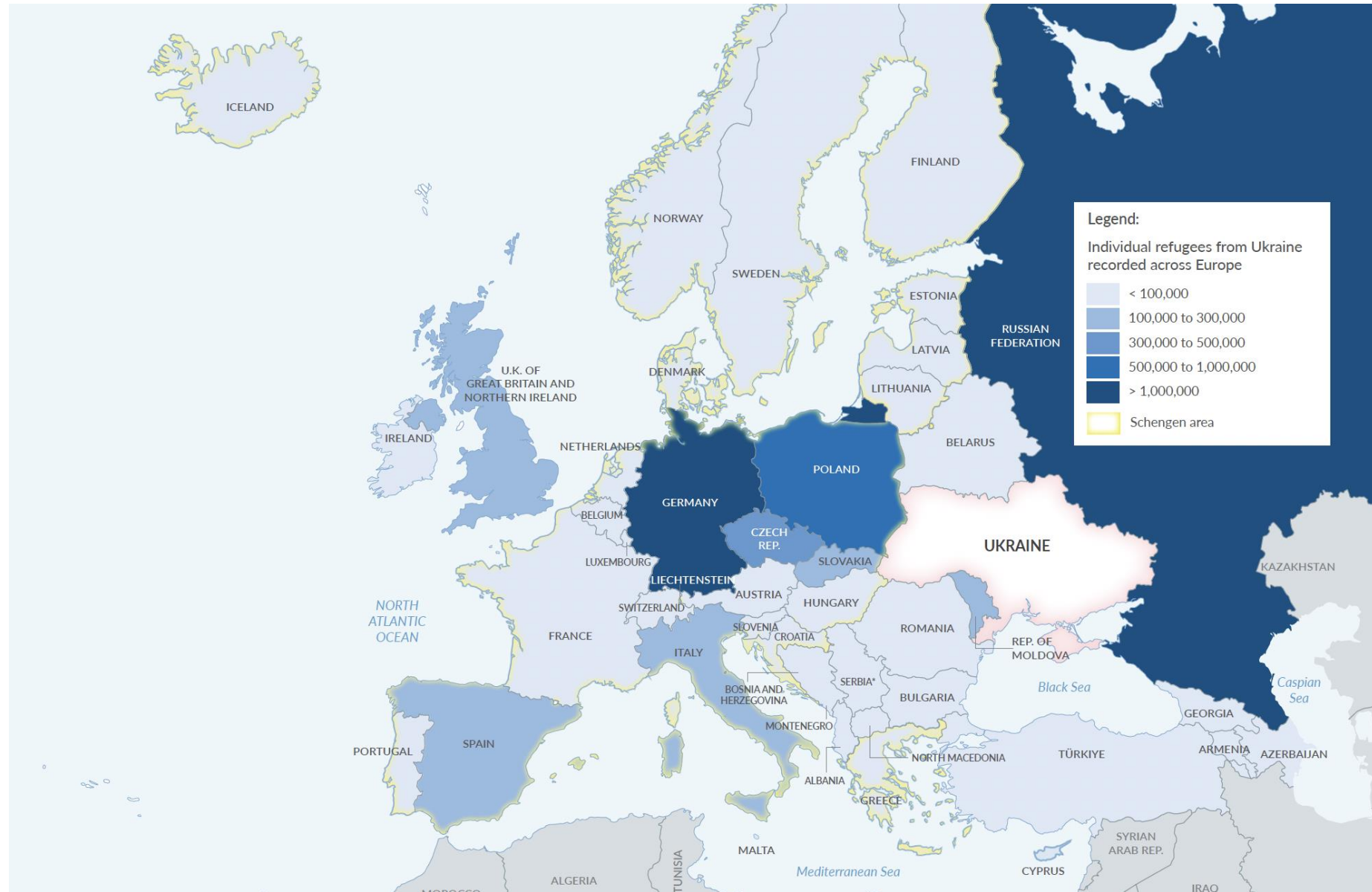
IDPs in UKR:
3,665,000

Source: IOM (Dec 2024)

Refugees from UKR under TP in HU:
48,725

Border crossings UKR/HU (24/2/2022-):
6,252,370

Border crossings HU/UKR (24/2/2022-):
5,780,315



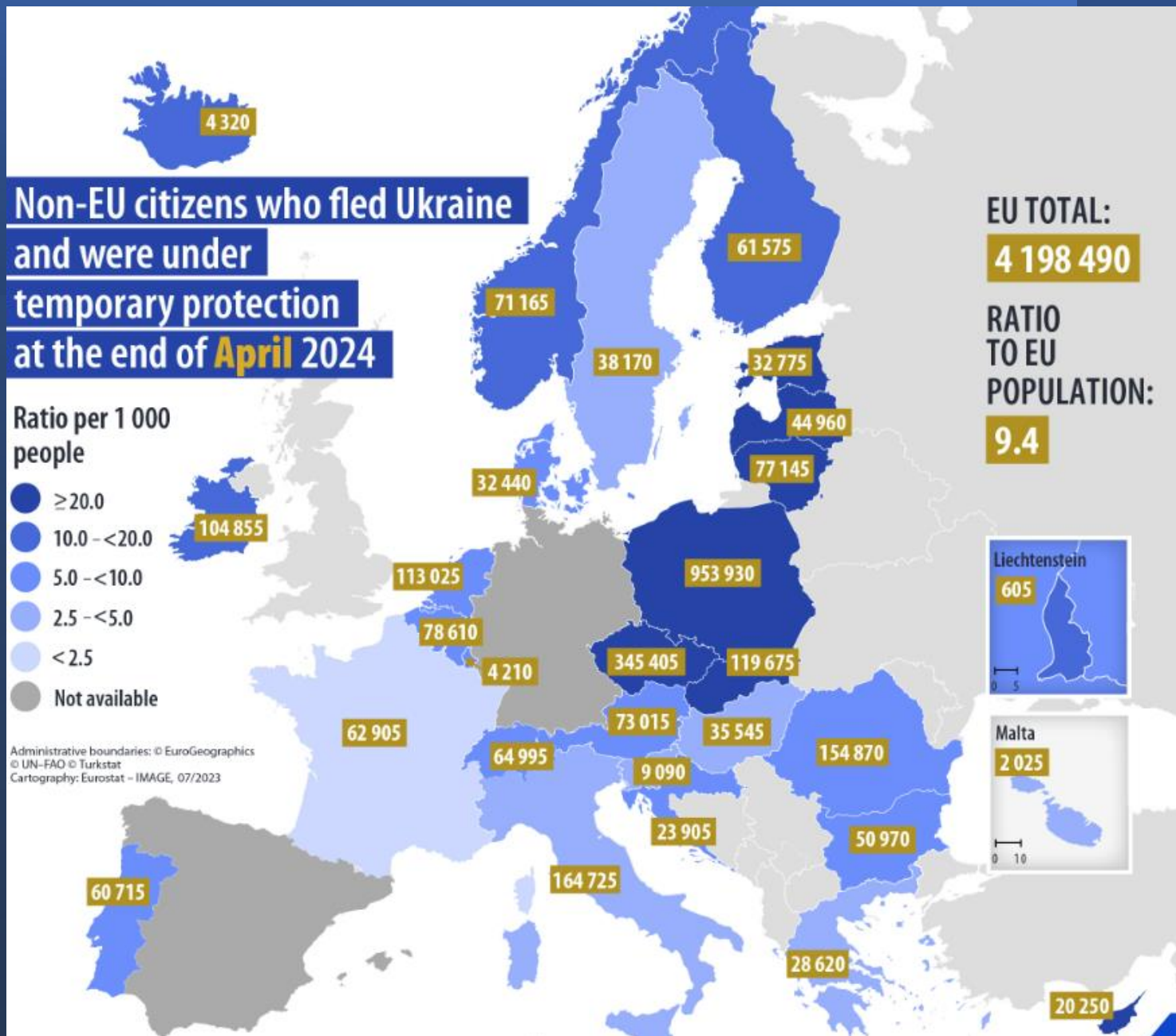
Last updated: 16 January 2025
Data: UNHCR

Non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine and were under temporary protection at the end of **April** 2024

Ratio per 1 000
people

- ≥ 20.0
- 10.0 – <20.0
- 5.0 – <10.0
- 2.5 – <5.0
- < 2.5
- Not available

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics
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Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 07/2023



Challenges

- **Access to territory and protection** by third-country nationals.
- **Adequate protection** for third-country nationals.
- The absence of **information** provision by the authorities.
- Differing **level of services**, personal capacities, and individual motivations among the various shelters where people are accommodated.
- The **lack of interpreters** at shelters and the immigration office hinder access to protection and other services.
- **Accessing financial aid** is complicated and people are not informed.
- Members of the **Roma minority** from Ukraine face discrimination and hindered access to services and sometimes to shelter in Hungary.
- Lack of **good coordination** among state and charity actors.
- **Access to shelters** since 21 August 2024.



Access to shelters

After 21 August 2024

- Accommodation: only for people coming from areas of Ukraine “directly affected by the war” (13 oblast)
 - Territorial distinction is contrary to EU law
- For people already in Hungary: “request for equity”
- Deadline for requests was 10 July 2024
- 80% denial rate (of 1486 requests, 1202 were denied)
- No formal decision
- Anti-Roma sentiments in the government’s communication:
 - “Just because they are Roma, they can’t get free accommodation on taxpayer money”
 - “There are 3000 people who don’t want to work even though they could”



Consequences

2000-4000 people were left without accommodation



Consequences

- Insufficient capacity of non-state actors
- Vulnerability to exploitation
- Constant insecurity
- Losing access to other means of support
- Forced return to Ukraine



Response from civil society

- Petition of Roma activists
- Provision of shelter/financial support
- The Hungarian Helsinki Committee
 - Legal representation of over 100 people in 29 cases
 - Complaint to the European Commission
 - Alerting the media



What would be most needed

- A **change in perspective:** switch from emergency humanitarian assistance to a more medium- and long-term vision of integration.
- More effective **information provision** by the authorities.
- **Coordination of services** and service providers on a national level. Missing from the start, and as resources are becoming scarce, the need for it becomes even more urgent.
- Clear guidance from the European Commission on what **adequate protection** means and whether territorial distinction can be applied when limiting **access to shelters**.
- **Vision** for refugees from Ukraine after March 2025, **post-TP**.
- **Narrative re-framing** of the discourse on refugees.

