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Emerging needs of the ECE region in the areas of housing, real estate, and urban development

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Note by the Committee Bureau

Summary

At its meeting of 29 March 2022, the Bureau of the ECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) requested the secretariat to prepare a background document on impact of the Ukrainian refugee crisis on housing and urban development in the ECE region for informing discussions at CUDHLM 83rd session. The background document needs to be evidence-based following the outline that was approved by the Bureau.

The secretariat prepared the background document based on the results of a survey, which focuses on cities belonging to the neighbouring countries of Ukraine, namely: Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Slovakia, which are hosting the largest segment of refugees, measured in terms of the number of refugees per head of total population.

This document contains the findings emerging from the impact assessment. The Committee is invited to take note of the main findings of the background document.

1. Introduction

The war in Ukraine has created one of the biggest refugee crises in modern times. Cities across the ECE region were quick to offer Ukrainian refugees a new life with dignity, even as many are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and are faced with rising energy prices in addition to climate change, including, more frequent and intense drought, storms, heat waves.

The experience of these cities in addressing this multifaceted crisis offer valuable lessons on creative, human-centred responses under conditions of adversity as well as insights into the implications of this crisis for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These issues form the focus of this needs assessment, which was launched in May 2022 pursuant to a request by the Bureau of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM).

The assessment focuses on cities belonging to the neighbouring countries of Ukraine, namely: Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Slovakia, which are hosting the largest segment of refugees, measured in terms of the number of refugees per head of total population (Table 1). Only cities with the highest number of refugees per head were included in this assessment as well as frontier cities and towns. The cities and towns, 13 in total, were selected in consultation with the capitals and city associations (Table 2).

Table 1. Ukrainian refugees per head of total population

Country	Per head of population (Percentage of total population)
Hungary	0.08
Republic of Moldova	0.12
Poland	0.10
Romania	0.04
Slovakia	0.09

Source: Calculated by the secretariat based on UNHCR's refugee data¹ and county population data by national statistical offices.

Table 2. Selected cities covered in the ECE needs assessment

Country	Selected cities
Hungary	Budapest; Debrecen
Republic of Moldova	Chişinău; Ungehi
Poland	Elbląg, Inowrocław; Poznań; Przemyśl; Rzeszów; Stary Sącz; Tychy
Romania	Bucharest
Slovakia	Bratislava; Trnava

The assessment combined desk research and a survey using ECE semi-structured questionnaire. The desk research involved a review of national laws and initiatives launched by the selected cities and towns and an analysis of relevant official statistics by national statistical offices (NSOs) as well as by Eurostat, UN agencies and international organizations. The results of the desk review were used as a basis for developing the semi-structured questionnaire that was discussed with the selected cities/towns to ensure responsiveness to local contexts.

¹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

The questionnaires were filled out by the cities/towns and the secretariat conducted preparatory interviews to ensure due diligence in interpreting responses. In the case of Poland, which is hosting the highest number of Ukrainian refugees², the secretariat partnered with the Polish Association of Cities for launching the questionnaire online. The Association adapted the questionnaire to the local context, translated it into Polish and disseminated it to members using its various communication channels. The Association also arranged online interviews between the secretariat and two frontier cities (Rzeszów and Przemyśl).

This background report provides a summary of the main findings emerging from the ECE assessment along with action-oriented recommendations. The report is organized in six sections. The introduction is followed, in section two, by an overview of challenges that faced the selected cities and towns at the eve of the refugee crisis with a view to setting the context for the analysis. Section three discusses the creative, human-centred solutions implemented by the selected cities and towns. The section reflects on the lessons that can be drawn from these solutions; highlight the links between local solutions and national efforts as well as successful best practices. Sections four and five highlight the immediate and strategic long-term needs of the selected cities and towns.

2. The selected cities and towns at the eve of the Ukraine refugee crisis

The selected cities and towns reported recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, noting the decreased number of inhabitants and enterprises requiring support. However, available statistics show that many were faced with high unemployment rates (e.g., 11.7 per cent in Stary Sącz in 2021 up from 4.5 per cent in 2019). For others (Chişinău) income recovery was undermined by higher poverty rates, with absolute poverty from 4.4 per cent in 2019 to 7.6 percent in 2020 and 8.6 percent in 2021 (Annex). This points to a fragile economic recovery in that income growth did not trickle down. Moreover, as shown below, cities were operating under significant financial constraints, a lingering effect of the COVID-19 response measures. Many were also challenged by aging and shrinking population and rising housing prices.

2.1 Financial pressures

The selected cities were quick to launch extensive emergency and support measures to contain the spread of the pandemic and mitigate its socio, economic impact. As shown in table 3, these measures involved awareness raising campaigns with targeted relief and support schemes for the business sector and vulnerable groups. The schemes combined national measures (developed and financed by the central and regional governments with the cities acting as an executive arm to ensure the broadest possible outreach) and city-specific measures (developed and financed by the cities). The private sector was not an active contributor to the city-specific measures. Only a few cities reported benefiting from private funds, which represented between 10 per cent (Debrecen, Elbląg) to 30 percent (Chişinău) of the total budgets allocated for COVID-19 response. Many cities provided detailed descriptions of these measures, which are provided in the Annex. Below is a brief overview of the COVID-19 response measures launched by the selected cities and towns.

² <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

Table 3. COVID-19 response measures launched by the selected cities and towns

COVID-19 response measures	Cities and towns
Financial aid to local businesses in the form of, among others , co-financed bank loans, one-time cash injections and grants	Debrecen, Elbląg, Poznan, Tychy
Temporary pausing of rent payments or rental discounts for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions	Bucharest, Budapest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Elbląg, Inowrocław, Poznan, Stary Sącz, Trnava, Tychy
Tax reduction for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions	Bucharest, Chişinău
Temporary tax exemptions for affected businesses and cultural institutions	Bucharest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Ungheni
Guidelines/explanatory brochures and counselling services to help businesses adapt to the uncertainties and new realities created by the pandemic	Bucharest, Budapest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Elbląg, Inowrocław, Jaroslaw, Poznan, Stary Sącz, Trnava, Tychy, Ungheni
Support schemes for the elderly, children and other vulnerable groups	Bucharest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Elbląg, Trnava, Ungheni

Source: UNECE

Awareness raising campaigns

All the selected cities marshalled the municipalities' institutional websites and communication channels for implementing awareness raising campaigns, focused on informing inhabitants about the epidemiological situation in the country and the health risks posed by the virus as well as providing them with detailed guidelines on basic health and hygiene practices and up-to-date information on applicable national safety and health protection measures.

The survey reveals that the provision of accurate, timely, and up-to-date information in a language that inhabitants understand was a critical element in containing the spread of the virus, preventing misinformation and enabling inhabitants to make informed decisions. Some cities (Stary Sącz and Trnava) also distributed free face masks to all inhabitants and undertook city-wide cleaning and disinfection of public spaces and establishments on a regular basis.

Support for the vulnerable groups

The selected cities launched targeted programmes for supporting vulnerable groups, including the elderly, women and the homeless. These measures involved providing essential food staples, shopping services and assistance with housework (Bucharest, Budapest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Jaroslaw, Inowrocław, Stary Sącz, Tychy, Ungheni). Some cities (Elbląg) provided the elderly and low-income individuals with Christmas and Easter packages as well as essential food staples and meals, with the meals sourced from restaurants that were affected by the lockdown.

To achieve the broadest possible outreach within available human resources, Chişinău created a crisis cell, staffed by representatives from the different municipal departments and focused on mobilizing the different municipal programmes in the provision of support measures. Chişinău also included frontline health workers as part of the targeted vulnerable groups and used municipal funds to equip them with protective gears, thermal scanners, respirators, mask, disinfectants and diagnostic equipment. On its part, Bucharest included women who are victims of domestic violence as part of the targeted vulnerable groups, and provided them with accommodation, food, emergency medical care, psychological counselling, and legal guidance.

The selected cities also launched programmes for encouraging the early vaccination of the elderly. Bucharest offered free COVID-19 tests to residents, while Inowrocław, Jaroslaw and Stary Sącz created vaccination centres for the elderly and individuals who, for a variety of reasons, were unable to make it to the vaccination centre on their own. Jaroslaw and Stary Sącz also provided free transportation to and from the vaccination centers for elderly and vulnerable groups. Yet other cities (Tychy) provided the elderly with psychological counselling.

Only two cities reported launching targeted support for the homeless, namely, Chişinău and Bucharest, which provided permanent shelter to homeless adults. Bucharest also provided social housing tenants with rent reductions, which varied by income, and piloted a vocational training programme to help individuals who lost their jobs. In addition, the city piloted a project to help citizens who lost jobs because of layoffs re-enter the labour market.

Support measures for local businesses

Cities launched targeted support measures to help businesses withstand the dwindling demand and supply chain disruptions caused by lockdowns and health protection measures deployed by national Governments and trading partner countries. For instance, Debrecen established a City Capital Fund to provide subsidized loans to businesses with growth potential. With the help of national government, it also subsidized the wage bills of businesses (up to 70 per cent of the wage bill) and doled out financial support to new investments (up to 50 per cent of the value of investments) to support job creation. On their part, with the support of the Government, Tychy and Elbląg launched relief packages worth around Polish zloty (PLN) 85 million (about USD 300 million) and PLN 68 million (about USD 14 million) respectively, which featured subsidized loans and direct cash injections to help local businesses cover their wage bill and running costs. Tychy also provided direct cash assistance worth PLN 286, 612 (about USD 57,904) to 56 business that were forced to suspend operations during the lockdown period.

Other notable measures launched by almost all the cities included rental support in the form of discounts and temporary suspension of rental payments. For instance, Budapest exempted small and medium enterprises from paying rents, while micro enterprises and non-government organizations received a 25 percent discount on rent in city-owned properties during the initial period of the pandemic (March-June 2020). Thereafter, the discounts were proportionate to monthly revenue losses. Trnava exempted local businesses from rent in city-owned properties for an extended period of 1.5 years, while Debrecen forgone HUF196 million since the start of the pandemic until the end of 2021 to rental subsidies and rental exemptions

Yet another support measure deployed by many cities and towns was the provision of temporary tax exemptions. For instance, Ungheni exempted start-ups from local taxes for a period of three years, while Chişinău exempted businesses that were forced to suspend operations from municipal taxes, including among others, the territory development tax and market tax. On its part, Debrecen allowed small business to defer tax payments during the initial period of the pandemic, while Tychy exempted catering businesses and restaurants from paying alcohol levies throughout the initial period of the pandemic. It also exempted advertising agencies from fees for advertisements in public spaces.

The selected cities and towns reported that the above measures were critical for containing the spread of the virus and mitigating its socio, economic impact. However, these measures have placed a strain on municipal resources, as many used city funds to finance complementary programmes (i.e., in addition to executing national ones). Moreover, several noted that enterprises, particularly, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were struggling to service the high debt levels accrued during the initial months of the pandemic, including those resulting from subsidised bank loans and tax deferrals.

2.2 Ageing and shrinking population

The lack of desagregated population data by city meant that it was difficult to establish a clear understanding of the selected cities' population dynamics. Nonetheless, data provided by some of the selected cities point to declining urbanisation, with cities reporting a reduction in the size of their population. This was the case of Jaroslaw, which saw its population contract by 9 per cent over the period 2010-2021. Similarly, Elbląg and Tychy reported that the size of their population was reduced by 6 and 5 per cent, respectively, over the same period, while Budapest registered a slight decrease in the size of its population (less than 2 per cent).

Debrecen simultaneously showed signs of shrinking and ageing. The city registered a decrease in the size of its population (5 per cent) and sustained a decline in the size of the youth population (also by 5 per cent) in 2010 – 2021. Other cities did not register any change in their population size, and this was the case of the city Sary Sącz and to a lesser extent Ungehni. In contrast, Chişinău reported increased urbanization, though the population grew at a modest rate over the same period, namely by 3 per cent from 756,600 persons in 2010 to 779,900 in 2021.

These trends suggest an aging or/and shrinking population, which, while often interconnected, are two separate phenomena, posing different set of challenges. These challenges, were ranking high on the many of the selected cities' development agenda, evidenced by the emergency response measures they put in place to target the elderly and their long-term development needs (Section 5). An aging population, which is a defining trend in many countries in the ECE region,³ requires rethinking labour market policies to compensate for the decline in the working-age population with the increased participation of women and older adults in high productivity activities. It also requires rethinking, among others, pension fund policies, and the provision of health and welfare services as well as urban planning to improve the elderly's quality of life and reduce their vulnerability (e.g., age-friendly public spaces and urban mobility). In contrast, a shrinking population, often caused by migration or lower fertility rates, risks increasing income inequality (large and smaller cities).

2.3 Rising housing prices

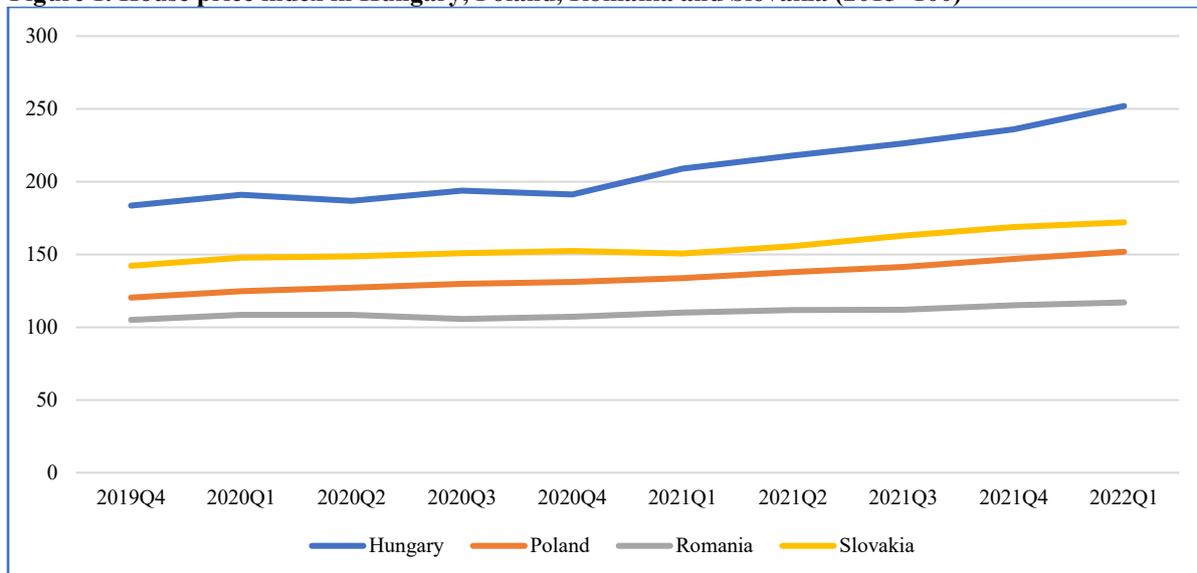
The selected cities exhibited a strengthening in their housing supply over the past few years. For instance, in Tychy, the number of conventional dwellings increased by more than 30 per cent, while in Chişinău, the total housing stock increased by 13 per cent from 2010 to 2021. This corresponds to an additional 37,000 dwellings, equivalent to about 6 million square meters of additional living area. Similarly, Debrecen saw its housing stock increase by more than 9 per cent in 2010-2020, equivalent to almost ninety thousand new housing units, while Bucharest's housing stock increased by 11 per cent increase over the same period. In these cities, the housing supply growth outpaced the population expansion.

Other cities recorded a modest expansion in housing supply over the period 2010-2021, and this was the case of Budapest (2 per cent) and Jaroslaw (less than 1 per cent). In contrast, the number of conventional housings in Elbląg decreased by 40 per cent from 8,626 to 4,956 buildings during the same period.

³ Recent projections show the proportion of people aged 65 years and above in the ECE region as increasing from 16.8 per cent in 2020 to 24.5 per cent by 2050. See UNECE at: <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/ECE-WG.1-39-PB27.pdf>

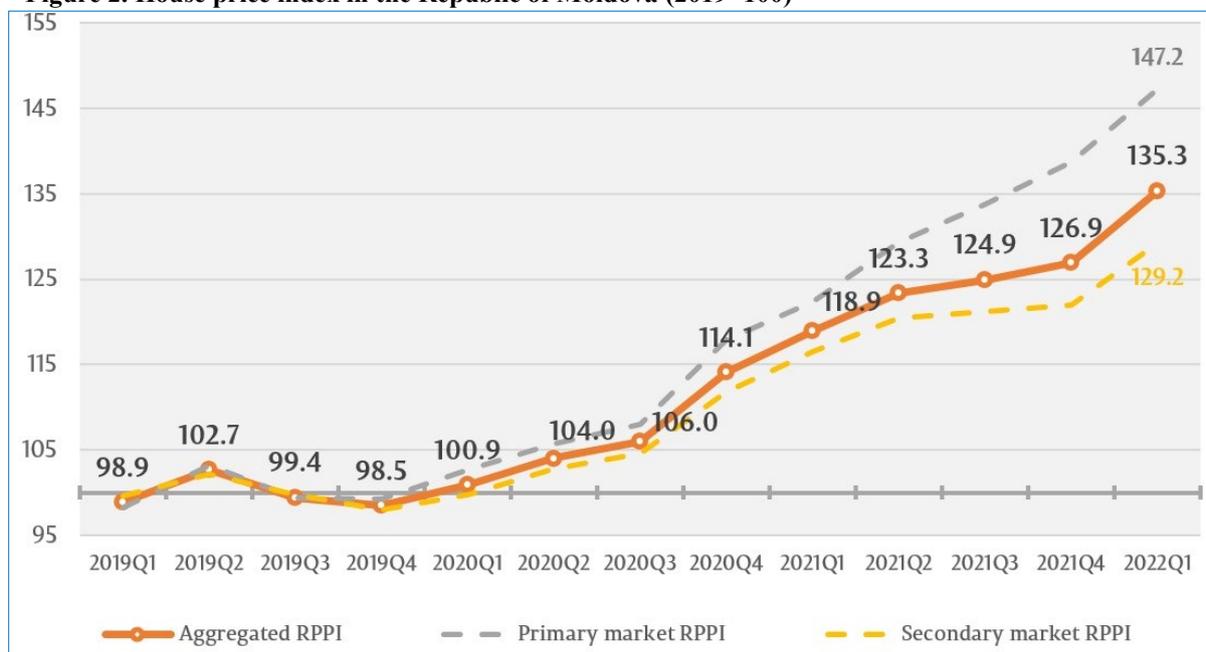
Mirroring national trends, all the selected cities reported rising year-on-year housing prices, including those that witnessed an increase in their housing stock (Figures 1 and 2) owing to the rising construction costs.⁴ In some cities, the rising housing prices came in addition to a rolling back of social housing. For instance, in Chişinău, there were one million square meters of housing area in 2010, equivalent to 6 percent of total housing units, while in 2021, the area dropped to 438,000 square meter or two per cent of total housing. In Stry Sącz, the share of social housing in total housing units decreased from 56 per cent in 2015 of total housing stock to 37 per cent in 2021.

Figure 1. House price index in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (2015=100)



Source: Eurostat

Figure 2. House price index in the Republic of Moldova (2019=100)



Source: National Bank of Moldova

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/page/STS_COPI_A

Only a few cities and towns that expanded their supply of social housing and the improvements were modest. Elbląg⁵ stood apart, in that it improved the supply of social housing, albeit slightly, with its share in total housing units increasing from 2.64 per cent in 2010 to 3.29 per cent in 2021. In Bucharest and Tychy, the percentage of publicly-owned social housing units remained stagnant thought the same period at 0.9 per cent and 10 per cent of total housing units, respectively.

Thus, Ukraine's surrounding cities and towns were not experiencing housing shortages. Rather, at issue was the rising housing prices. Furthermore, many experienced shortages in social housing. Others were also challenged by informal settlements, including homelessness (Chişinău and Ungheni) and unlicensed residential buildings (Bucharest).

Creative, human-centred solutions by the selected cities

Ukrainian refugees had the possibility to seek temporary protection in European Union (EU) countries pursuant to the EU Temporary Protection Directive, which provides for immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries who are unable to return to their country of origin.⁵ This includes, among others, a residence permit for the entire duration of the protection (which can last from one year to three years) as well as access to employment, accommodation or housing, social welfare or means of subsistence, if necessary, medical care and education for persons under 18 years. The Directive also provides for the possibility to move freely in EU countries (other than the Member State of residence) for 90 days within a 180-day period after a residence permit in the host EU country is issued as well as to another EU country, before the issuance of a residence permit.

All the selected cities and towns reported hosting significant numbers of refugees. However, they were unable to provide accurate data as to the number of refugees who remained in their communities. Officials explained that they remain unable to track the number of refugees who transited through or stayed in the cities as many bypasses official intake procedures and opt to stay with friends and family. The Moldovan cities and many of the Polish cities covered in this assessment tried to track the number of refugees with varying degrees of success.

Przemyśl, one of Poland's border cities with Ukraine served as a reception point, where incoming refugees could be accommodated for a few days and then transported to other cities in Poland and Europe. The city, which had an estimated population of about 60,000,⁶ saw around 1.5 million refugees cross from Ukraine. Of these around 6,000 opted to stay in Przemyśl. Proximity with their home and family, and the fact that schools in the city give bilingual classes, were the reason why many of them decided to stay.

The Polish city of Rzeszów, which is about 100 km away from the border with Ukraine, is also serving as a frontier city and as of September 2022 was hosting around 30,000 refugees, including 1,200 children, but only 10,000 were registered. Just like Przemyśl, the city was meant to serve as a reception point, providing the refugees with temporary shelter and organizing for their transport to their final destinations of choice. Also serving as a frontier city is Ungheni, the seventh largest Moldovan town with a population of 42,814⁷. The town, which borders Romania, received around 4852 refugees, of which more than 90 percent continued to other destination. In addition, as frontier points, Przemyśl and Rzeszów used city buses to provide transportation from the border to other cities, with most of the refugees opting to move on to larger cities such as Warsaw, Krakow, Gdańsk and Wrocław.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32001L0055&qid=1648223587338>

⁶ City of Przemyśl

⁷ <https://www.city-facts.com/ungheni-ungheni>

Poznań, the fifth largest metropolis in Poland with an estimated population of 533830 in 2021, registered 56,772 refugees while Chişinău attended to 35,504 refugees who crossed the city, of which an estimated 10,000 established temporary root in the city. This means that around two-thirds of them leave for another destination after registration and staying in the city for few days. The city of Tychy in southern Poland (118, 557 inhabitants), the town of Jaroslaw in south-eastern Poland (37,836 inhabitants) and the town of Stary Sącz in southern Poland (14,699 inhabitants) recorded 4,964; 1,414; and 514 arrivals, respectively. In Bucharest, around 84 percent of registered 11,000 refugees who crossed the city moved to another destination, while Budapest approximated that there are 25-35,000 refugees who stayed in the city.

Cities were quick to enact the required legislative basis for hosting the refugees. They also re-allocated part of their municipal budgets to cover the costs with the provision of medical services, food, clothes, sheltering and transportation services with the central governments transferring additional funds. Chişinău earmarked 4.25 million lei (estimated USD225,000), of which 75 percent was spent as of July 2022. The Moldovan government also allocated 9.55 million lei (estimated USD500,000) to cover expenses related to the maintenance of refugees in temporary placement centres that were managed by the cities. In addition, civil society in the city donated 3,5 million lei (estimated USD185,000), foods, household goods and school supplies.

On its part, Tychy allocated PLN 2.5 million to help Ukrainian refugees. This amount was used in addition to PLN16 million allotted by the national government and PLN 300,000 donated by civil society. Stary Sącz budgeted PLN53,000 to complement the amount allocated by the national government (PLN1.6 million) and PLN23,000 from non-government organization. Elbląg received PLN4.7 million from the voivodship as well as food and essential goods (e.g., clothes, toys and hygiene products) from the private sector and civil society organizations. Budapest estimated that the city covered 30 per cent of the costs associated with hosting the refugees. It also housed 1,383 individuals out of approximately 25-35,000 refugees who stayed in the city, while Ungheni allocated city funds to cover the costs associated with providing pre-school education (kindergartens) for Ukrainian children.

This resource mobilisation effort brought into focus the central role of cities in addressing complex emergencies, given their direct interaction with the different segments of the population. Central governments worked to support the cities through financial transfers, which enabled the cities to rise to the challenge and implement creative solutions as follows.

2.4 Adaptive reuse of buildings and facilities

Sheltering, the most challenging aspect of the crisis response, was swiftly ensured through the adaptive reuse of available facilities, including converting abandoned spaces into safe shelters (Table 4). In addition, vacant buildings were transformed into shelters and many hotels placed their facilities at the service of the cities for inclusion in municipal placement programmes. These solutions were used as second-best options, with most of the refugees hosted by families within the context of a country-wide placement programmes that were financed by central governments and implemented by the cities. These programmes involved daily subsistence allowance for hosting families, which in the case of Poland, amounts of euro 10/ hosted refugee/day, to enable them to cater for the refugees' basic needs.

Table 4. Accommodation Provided by Selected Cities to Ukrainian Refugees

Description	Selected cities and towns ⁸
Sheltered in vacant apartments and houses	Bucharest, Poznan, Stary Sącz, Trnava, Tychy
Sheltered with families	Bucharest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Poznan, Przemyśl, Stary Sącz, Trnava, Tychy, Ungheni
Sheltered in hotels	Bucharest, Chişinău, Debrecen, Elbląg, Poznan, Ręszów, Stary Sącz, Tychy, Ungheni
Sheltered in repurposed buildings (<i>unspecified</i>)	Budapest, Bucharest, Elbląg, Poznan, Tychy
<i>Cultural and sport facilities</i>	Chişinău, Bucharest, Debrecen, Poznan
<i>Abandoned industrial sites</i>	Poznan
<i>Schools, health centres and other facilities</i>	Budapest, Debrecen, Przemyśl, Stary Sącz, Ungheni, Ręszów
<i>Tents</i>	Chişinău

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2.5 Learning by doing

Even as they were quick to mobilise resources, most of the cities were caught by surprise, lacking crisis management and emergency response strategies. As explained by Ungehni, from an institutional point of view, the municipality was completely unprepared to manage the influx of refugees, lacking the experience, the institutional set up as well as resources and necessary legislation. Furthermore, the municipality did not have emergency response specialists on its staff.

A major challenge facing the municipality was the lack of options for sheltering the refugees, the majority of which moved on to final destination, particularly Romanian cities. While families were quick to provide temporary sheltering, they could not keep up, and the municipality did not have facilities that could be easily repurposed. It transformed the cultural and tourist centres into temporary shelters, in a process that involved a steep learning curve. The municipality also developed guidelines on crisis management, drawing on its experience. While the guidelines proved to be useful, they do not compensate for the lack of a dedicated crisis management unit. The municipality is exploring how best to establish such a unit.

In contrast both Przemyśl and Ręszów have well established crisis management strategies as well as resources, including dedicated budget allocations PLN 1.5 million (304, 255) in the case of Przemyśl) that the municipalities keep on a permanent basis; experienced staff; warehouse and facilities for storing beds and essential items. As such, they were able to swiftly mobilize the required resources and infrastructure for hosting the refugees. The population decline, caused by the migration of the young in search of better jobs elsewhere, meant the availability of school buildings and made it easier to reallocate resources to accommodate the refugees. Przemyśl, initially provided refugees with temporary accommodation for a limited duration of three days in placement centres, which were quickly repurposed to fit for purpose, and equipped with teams of medical staff. Many moved on to other cities in Poland and the region, and those who stayed were hosted by families, which received daily subsistence allowance from the central government.

On its part, the municipality of Ręszów created mobile reception desks at the rail stations to facilitate the registration of those who opt to do so. It was also quick to organize the donations of its inhabitants, who brought over food, clothes and other essential items to the train stations,

⁸ Inowrocław, Jaroslaw did not provide any estimates.

by transforming one of its warehouses into a collection point for voluntary donations. The municipality also repurposed part of a large commercial facility in partnership with the private owners and equipped it with all the necessary items (beds, hygiene items, etc), which were already available in the municipality's warehouse. The city also partnered with hotels which offered temporary shelters to the refugees. Many preferred to remain in the city to be close to their home cities/towns in Ukraine, and these were hosted by Polish families.

Poznan, which received one of the highest number of refugees, housed around 40 per cent of refugees with families. The rest were housed in repurposed buildings, cultural facilities and abandoned industrial sites. Tychy also housed majority of the refugees with families or vacant apartments while around 3 percent of refugees were sheltered in repurposed buildings. The success of the Polish cities was also due to the well-established decentralization system that equipped local governments with decision-making powers.⁹ The lesson to draw is the need to allocate larger budgets in the future.

In Chişinău, 10,993 refugees were sheltered in vacant apartments and houses while 8,347 and 15,795 were housed in families and repurposed buildings (cultural and sports facilities, abandoned industrial sites, medical institutions and social centres), respectively. As these options proved to be insufficient, an additional 400 tents with flashlights were provided by the city's Department of Education, Youth and Sports. In addition, the municipality provided the incoming refugees with COVID-19 tests. The experience of mounting large tents was a first-of-its kind for the city, which considers this as a last resort option. In contrast, the municipality of Trnava, which did not have facilities that could be repurposed, allocated vacant 20 city-owned apartment buildings for hosting Ukrainian refugees, and managed the national programme for compensating host families.

2.6 Social and educational services

The cities and towns provided outpatient medical services to the refugees; accommodated children in their schools to enable them to learn the language and integrate into the host communities; launched recreation activities for children under 3 years old; created special programmes to help the refugees learn national languages and assisted them in finding jobs.

For instance, Inowrocław registered Ukrainian children in school summer programmes, while Jarosław and Stary Sącz organized day camps. Tychy offered education in the Polish language, a place of support, care and recreation for children and their parents/guardians, and co-financed the meals provided by day care centres and kindergartens by city resolution.

Since Polish legislations allows cities and towns to implement complementary programmes, Elbląg enacted city ordinance to establish additional classes for children. It also organized free counselling with psychologists and therapist to help the refugees to cope up with the ongoing conflict. On its part, the municipality of Przemyśl offered Polish classes to children who want to learn the language, even though schools in are bilingual Polish-Ukrainian.

The selected cities and towns also facilitated the integration of refugees into local labour markets. For instance, the municipality of Elbląg hired interpreters to assist with registration as well as in referring to work or internships. In Przemyśl and Ręszów, some refugees managed to get employment as cleaners and workers in clothing and furniture factories, and the municipality of Ręszów provided food and hot meals for kindergartens accommodating the children of working mothers.

⁹ <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20220000583>

2.7 City-to-city collaboration

City-to-city collaboration constitutes an important coping strategy to many of the selected cities and towns. Many received support from other cities and several reached out to Ukrainian cities with in-kind assistance.

- Trnava is collaborating with other Slovak cities through group messages in order to exchange ideas to come up with solutions.
- Ungheni estimated that 45 percent of all expenses were sourced through city-to-city collaboration. These funds came from the cities of Cluj Napoca, Romania and Winston Salem, United States, and from Program EU4Moldova. Other funds came from city budget (10 percent, which financed children's education), national government (15 percent, which supported host families), private sector (10 percent, in form of food and hygiene products) and civil society (30 percent, in form of food, clothing and hygiene products). Meanwhile, Jaroslaw cooperated with cities in France and Germany.
- Tychy received PLN 771,000 in cash from other cities. It also cooperated with other cities in terms of provision of goods and exchange of information. Like other Polish cities Inowrocław, Jaroslaw and Poznan, it also organized transportation of refugees in coordination with other Ukrainian cities. In addition, Jaroslaw provided power generators, foodstuffs, tents to partner cities Ukraine.
- The municipality of Elbląg contributed 51 tons of food, clothing and hygiene materials to the city of Ternopil in Ukraine. It also launched a donation drive to mobilise resources for Ukraine.

2.8 Partnerships with the private sector and international organization

The selected cities and towns partnered with the private sector as well as national and international non-governmental organizations to scale up their resources and outreach. Below are some examples of these partnerships that are detailed in the annex.

- Inowrocław set up a special fund for mobilizing private finance, which went into sourcing food and covering the costs associated with sheltering the refugees.
- Przemyśl was assisted by several United Nations (UN) agencies as well as non-governmental organization in covering the costs of obtaining beds, food and hygienic materials.
- Ręszów was assisted by the World Central Kitchen, which provided food and meals for the refugees
- Chişinău was assisted by several United Nations in covering the costs associated with sourcing tents, beds, outside lamps and other essential items.
- In most of the selected cities and towns, local businesses donated food and essential items; fast tracked the absorption of refugees with the required qualifications; and participated in mobilization workshops to help refugees find jobs.
- Elbląg cultural institutions offered free activities: workshops, activities and other forms of spending free time, including: internet café, film screenings for children, games, animations, activities for children and adults, while the Elbląg Chamber Orchestra organized free concerts for Ukrainian families.

3. The immediate needs of the selected cities and towns

All the selected cities and towns were concerned about the rising energy prices, which will undermine their ability to cater for the needs of their communities, including the refugees. Available statistics show the energy inflation in the EU region as jumping to 37.5 per cent in August 2022, up 14.1 percentage points in January 2022.¹⁰ For many cities and towns, the rise in energy costs is all the more challenging as it would be difficult to provide adequate sheltering for the refugees. The frontier cities and towns are particularly affected, since most of the refugees are hosted in temporary shelters pending their transportation to other cities in the host countries and Europe.

All the selected cities reported that they urgently need financial support, and this was also the case of large cities. Below are the main immediate priority needs identified by the municipalities:

- All the selected cities and towns emphasized the need for smart solutions for tracking the number of refugees, their health conditions and qualifications as well as special programmes for integrating the refugees into local communities. This will enable the municipalities to improve its planning and implementation processes.
- Bucharest was expecting to serve as a transit city. However, it is also serving as a destination city and, as such, may not be able to accommodate all the refugees that might want to establish a new life in the city. Further, many refugees of Romanian origin declared that they intend to stay in Bucharest for the near future, and that they are unlikely to return home upon the end of the conflict. With this, the city face issues on how to provide them with permanent housing and how to integrate them in local community. This is in addition to immediate needs for financial resources for furnishing the temporary shelters (e.g., beds, kitchen utensils, hygiene, clothes, food, etc.), for hospitals where refugees are being treated, for educational services to provide: day care centers for children of different ages, after schools, entertainment facilities for them (sport classes, painting classes, music classes, dancing classes, etc.), and for basic utility services (water and electricity and waste management services)
- Chişinău reserved several placement centres in case more refugees arrive but indicated that it needs financial resources for setting up temporary shelters for refugees with special needs as well as maternity centres. The city also lacks human resources and volunteers who could help the City Hall manage the Ukrainian crisis. In addition, because the number of places in schools and kindergartens are limited, the city might not be able to offer the children with placements. This will undermine the children's integration into their local communities. Similarly, Ungheni noted that it needs financial support to rebuild the existing kindergarten to accommodate children.
- Inowrocław indicated that it lacks funds to cover basic health and dental services as well as to purchase medicine. Trnava also reported that providing healthcare services to the refugees is a challenge. Further, the municipality does not have information on the health conditions of refugees, which makes health planning difficult, if not impossible. This concern was also raised by all the selected cities and towns.
- Inowrocław and Tychy indicated that helping Ukrainian refugees find jobs and leave the temporary shelters pose an immediate challenge, given the shortages in housing supply. Stary Sącz noted that this problem is compounded by the fact that most of the

¹⁰https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/PRC_HICP_MANR__custom_2160811/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=2597def3-51fc-4f00-a59e-77753ab94b90

refugees are women with children, making it difficult for women to seek employment. Inowrocław proposed a mechanism of co-financing to help Ukrainian refugees find employment. Municipalities participate in helping refugees from Ukraine, but they should do so with the financial support of the state and these financial resources should cover the necessary needs of refugees.

- Trnava and Przemyśl indicated that it would continue to accept refugees as long as there is financial support from the national government. In Trnava, all city-owned apartments allotted to refugees are in full-capacity. Meanwhile, Przemyśl indicated that while it has the capacity to accommodate additional 6,000 refugees in emergency shelters (i.e., repurposing schools as refugee centres), this coming winter can be difficult. Organizations which provided food, hygienic materials and other basic needs have reduced their presence in the city and moved to Ukraine. The city has limited stocks in its crisis warehouse such as fuel for generators, blankets and beds. Concerns over the impending winter and the challenges of ensuring adequate sheltering for the refugees were also by the municipality of Rzeszów, which indicated that it has enough materials in its warehouses but will not be able to provide food and basic items on its own.
- With this, the city face issues on how to provide them with permanent housing and how to integrate them in local community. This is in addition to immediate needs for financial resources for furnishing the temporary shelters (e.g., beds, kitchen utensils, hygiene, clothes, food, etc.), for hospitals where refugees are being treated, for educational services to provide: day care centers for children of different ages, after schools, entertainment facilities for them (sport classes, painting classes, music classes, dancing classes, etc.), and for basic utility services (water and electricity and waste management services)
- Ungheni highlighted as an immediate challenge the lack of adequate legislation for governing crisis management as well as the lack of contingency plans for complex crisis resulting in refugees and/or internal displacement in need of temporary housing. The municipality also noted that it lacks ready-made meals, food and essential items (folding beds, beddings, warm clothes, food for children, diapers, hygienic materials) as well as the outreach to international organizations that could assist and provide expert advice.

4. The long-term needs of the selected cities and towns

- Tychy indicated that galloping inflation poses a big risk in the social and economic development of the city while Jaroslaw mentioned increasing unemployment in the city. To address this, it suggested the creation of a favourable environment for entrepreneurs to create new jobs
- Bucharest noted that in the context of refugee crisis, the main challenges relate to housing; the integration of refugees into the local community (Romanian language courses and culture activities); assisting the refugees in finding jobs so that they do not become a vulnerable group; provision of education, kindergartens, after school day care centres for children; intercultural mediation. Similar priorities were highlighted by Budapest that also emphasized greening the city as a key element for achieving sustainable development.

- Przemysł needs more companies to invest in the city as a pre-requisite for job creation.
- Bratislava is environmental sustainability and plans city districts in such a way as to support the creation of socially diverse spaces and further develop the education system so as to enable the youth to acquire the required skills for leading the city's development.
- Chişinău: public spaces; improving the education system; support the development and integration of SMEs to regional and global supply chains; developing the city water and waste management systems; addressing the problem of homelessness that is becoming more pronounced through , among others, the rehabilitation, modernization and development of dedicated centres for the homeless; developing social programmes for other vulnerable groups including differently abled groups and orphans (including, through, the establishment of community homes, shelters and occupational workshops), and the development of palliative medical services.
- Ungheni identified as a priority the development of an industrial zone to support local enterprises, as a pre-requisite for job creation and expanding the municipality's tax base. The municipality also highlighted the renovation of the city's water treatment station as another priority, noting that the station has exceeded the exploitation term that expired 10 years ago. The water only undergoes the coagulation and flocculation and sedimentation steps, and this not only pollutes the river and contaminates the fish that is a food staple for the town.
- Trnava noted that it would continue implementing its smart and greenery plans, and will be purchasing more land for the purpose of creating urban forests.
- Stary Sącz listed among its priorities the construction of additional residential buildings and the development of entrepreneurship to create more employment in the city.
- Bucharest and Budapest indicated that their long-term priority when it comes with Ukrainian refugees is housing and integration (Romanian language and culture course, finding a job for the migrant), healthcare system, which is already over stretch because of the pandemic.
- Elbląg reported among its main priorities the integration of Ukrainian refugees into their local communities; the development of inland water transport; improving the local economy's competitiveness as well as the labour market; and further developing the city's housing supply.
- Debrecen highlighted job creation, local economic and transport development, education and culture development as ranking high on its agenda.

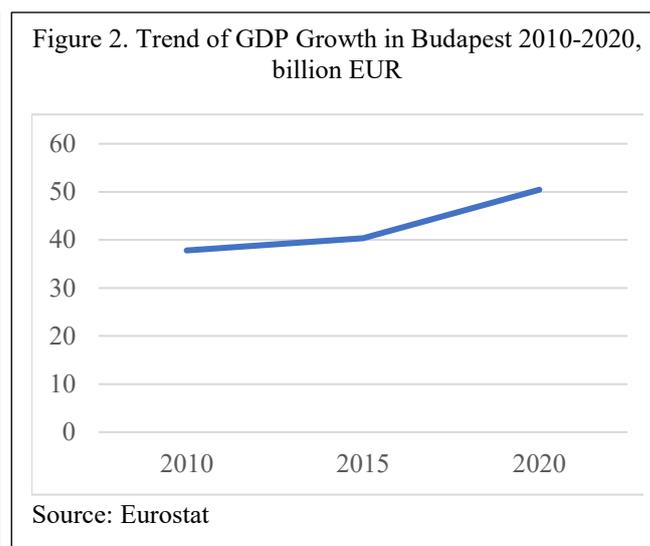
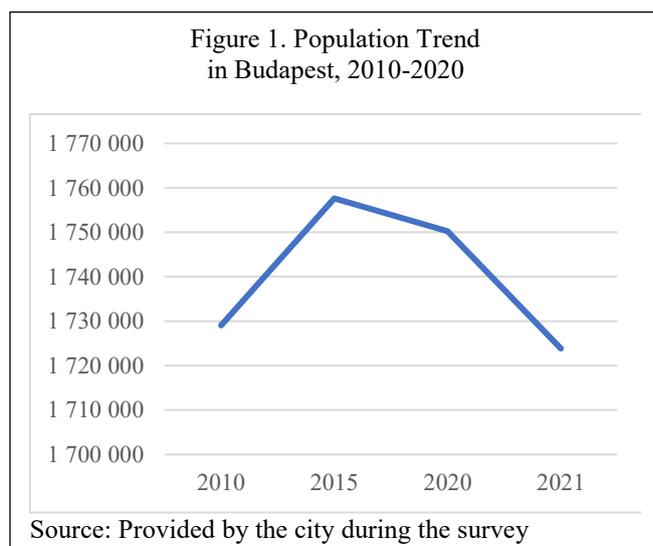
ANNEX- Statistical data and detailed answers provided by the selected cities and towns

Hungary

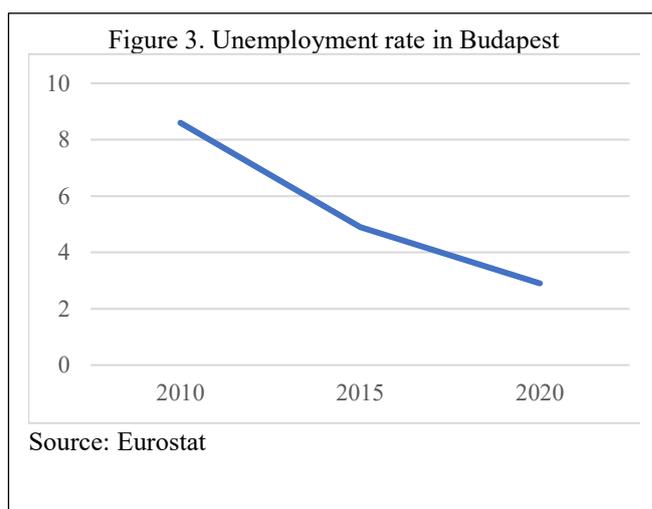
Budapest

1. City profile

- The capital of Hungary, Budapest is the ninth largest city in European Union in terms of population (1.723 million in 2022), and appears to be experiencing population decline (Figure 1). The metropolitan area of Budapest, which also includes surrounding municipalities, is home to 3.3 million people, 33 percent of Hungary's population.
- Budapest is the political, commercial, financial, media, education, research and cultural centre of the country, and generated around 37 per cent of Hungary's economic output in 2019.
- The city is service driven, with GDP estimated at euro 50 billion in 2030 (Figure 2).
- The unemployment rate has been assuming a declining trend from 8.6 percent in 2010 to 2.9 percent in 2020 (Figure 3).



- Budapest is considered as the most innovative one in Central and East Europe region, as evident in several start-ups headquarter there. Tourism plays an important role in the economy of Budapest. The central part of the city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site which attracted more than 4 million visitors in 2019, just before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- More than 13 per cent of Budapest is covered with forests, while 2.3 per cent is allocated to public parks. In its residential areas, there is an estimated 930, 714 conventional dwellings. This is a modest increase of 2.7 percent from 2010.



Trend of Conventional Dwellings in Budapest

Year	Conventional dwellings★ (Number)
2010	905 405
2015	909 962
2020	924 664
2021	930 714

Source: Provided by the city during the survey

2. Covid-19 response measure

Emergency relief and response measures

Measures	Brief description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary pausing of rent payments for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions 	Small and medium-sized businesses that rent their business premises from the Municipality of Budapest were exempt from paying rent fees from March to June 2020. Lease rates for micro and small enterprises, NGOs and trade unions were reduced by 25% in the period from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2020. SMEs who decided on retaining their employees not only received an extension but also received significant discounts on rent payment in proportion to the decline in sales, but only by up to 90 percent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax reduction for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions 	As part of its coronavirus crisis relief, the Hungarian government halved the local business tax for companies with annual turnover of under 4 billion forints (EUR 11.1m) and fewer than 250 people on payroll.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schemes for the elderly and other vulnerable groups 	Until 31 December 2020, tenants of social houses owned by capital could have claimed a rental fee decrease proportional to their income if their income has decreased due to the pandemic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other measures/initiatives, please specify 	At the meeting of the Municipal Reconciliation Council (FŐÉT) in June 2020, the representatives of the employers' and employees' agreed that the Municipality of Budapest should respond to the social and economic situation caused by the pandemic. For this goal, they reached an agreement with the City Administration to

Measures	Brief description
	help citizens who have lost their jobs, to aid distressed micro-enterprises, and support small and medium-sized businesses under the jointly developed new public health Start Program, Elderly Care Start Program, Digital Start Program pilot projects in Budapest. Pilot projects were accompanied by forms of training that would help those working in the public service to have a chance to return to the primary labour market after the program was completed. To this end, the Municipal Job Search Office has been extended by bringing the employment services closer to those in need, along with other social and human services.

3. Ukrainian Refugee Crisis Response

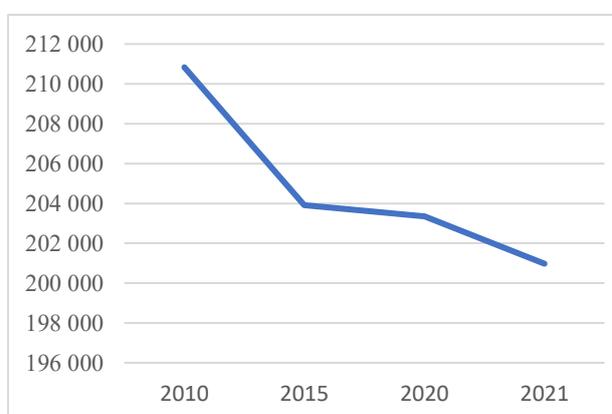
Source of Funding for Ukrainian Refugee Crisis Response

Description	Percentage
City funds	30
National/State funds	51
Private sector through special funds	18
Civil society (donations)	1
City-to-City support, including from cities outside the country	0

Debrecen

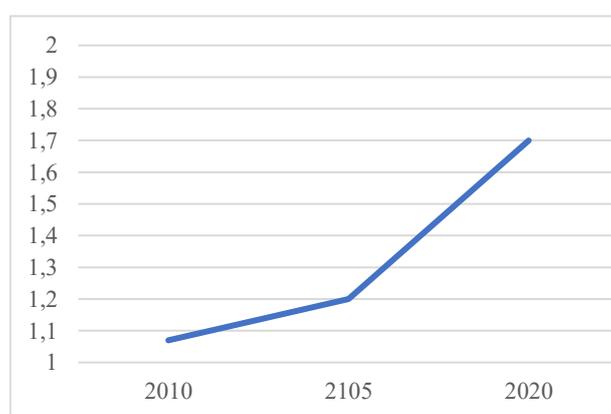
- Debrecen is Hungary's second largest city is located in the northern part of the country. It occupies an area of 261 square kilometre.
- Debrecen was the capital of Hungary for two occasions – during the 1849 revolution that witnessed the fall of the Hapsburg dynasty and towards the end of Second World War in 1944-45.

Figure 4. Population Trend in Debrecen
2010-2021



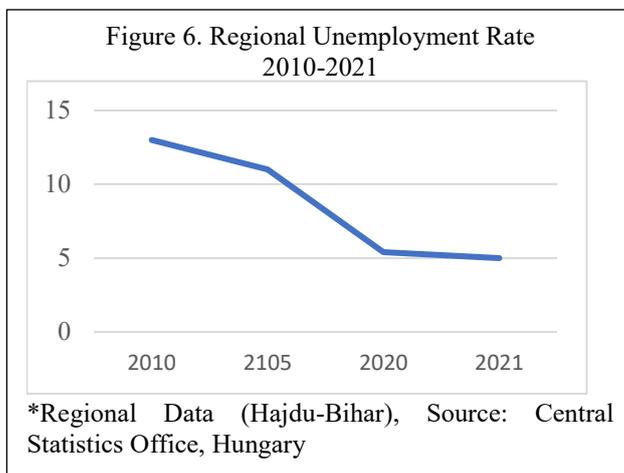
Source: Provided by the city during the survey

Figure 5. Regional GDP Trend, 2010-2020
billion EUR



*Regional Data (Hajdu-Bihar) Source: Central Statistics Office, Hungary

- In 2021, city population stood at 200,974 while the agglomeration area had a population of 960,000. Inner city population continued to decrease since 2010 by 5 percent as shown in Figure 4.
- Service sector in Debrecen and the region around comprised 58.7 percent of all economic activities.
- Debrecen is also home to manufacturing site of several multinational companies including BMW, National Instruments and Continental, among others. This contributed to the 31.7 percent economic out of Debrecen and surrounding areas.
- The rest is agriculture sector, in which 101,500 hectares of land dedicated to corn production, 60,400 hectares for autumn wheat, 52,100 hectares for sunflower and 7,600 hectares for colza.
- The economy of Debrecen grew by almost 60 percent from EUR1.07 billion in 2010 to EUR1.7 billion in 2020 (Figure 5). This economic growth trickled in the wider economy as unemployment continued to decrease from as high as 13 percent in 2010 to 5 percent in 2021 (Figure 6).



Housing Situation

- Number of conventional housing increase by 9 percent from 2010 to 2021. In spite of the increase, housing prices and rents of properties continued to increase significantly as shown in Table 3.

Trend of Conventional Dwellings in Debrecen

Year	Conventional dwellings★ (Number)
2010	90 124
2015	95 772
2020	97 012
2021	98 493

Source: Provided by the city during the survey

Trend of Housing and Rent Prices

Year	Housing prices (year-on-year percentage change)	Rents (year-on-year percentage change)	
		Flats	Houses
2020/2019	+6,1%		+3,6%
2021/2020	+20,4%		+8,1%
Q12022/Q12021	+30,1%		+13,1%

Source: Provided by the city during the survey

2. Covid-19 response measures

Emergency relief and response measures

Measures	Brief description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial aid to local businesses in the form of, for example, co-financed bank loans, one-time cash injections, grants, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wage subsidies (governmental): within the framework of the Hungarian wage subsidy programme (~Hungarian “kurzarbeit”), the state took over 70 % of the wage for reduced working hours - non-repayable investment-related aid of up to 50% of the value of the investment (government) - acceleration of the recovery of the value added tax (governmental) <p>Opening the Debrecen City Capital Fund as a source of financing for companies with growth potential (local level)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary pausing of rent payments for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions 	<p>The municipality provided the following rental discounts to help local businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – only 10% of the rent has to be paid until the end of the emergency. In 2021, tenants were required to pay 45% of the pre-reduction rent for the period covered by the reduction in 12 equal instalments, in addition to the monthly rent payable at that time. Due to the protracted nature of the pandemic, claims arising from the 2021 instalment payment were waived. – In certain cases, 100 % rent reduction until the end of the pandemic. Rent reduction in the year 2020 was net 98,339,025 HUF, and in 2021, it was net 98,444,219 HUF.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax reduction for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local business tax halving (governmental) The local business tax rate to be paid by SMEs in the SME sector was maximized at 1% (the tax was virtually halved). - social contribution tax reduction (governmental)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary tax exemptions for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions 	<p>Deferral of payment of itemized tax (KATA-small business lump-sum tax) for small taxpayers in the industries most affected by the pandemic</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines/explanatory brochures and counselling services to help local businesses adapt to the new business conditions 	<p>EDC Debrecen (Economic Development Centre Debrecen) drew attention to the new business conditions through several online workshops and personal consultations and company visits after the strict lockdowns (local level).</p>

<p>• Support schemes for the elderly and other vulnerable groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the help of the Debrecen Charity Board, the Municipality organised programmes assisting the elderly – which included donations of preserved food, as well as volunteering for providing assistance in doing the shopping or managing the daily life activities of old people. (local level) - organising a financial assist fund (local level)
<p>• Other measures/initiatives, please specify</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - postponing tax return deadline (governmental) - special payment facilities in the industries mostly affected (governmental) - regulatory facilitations in transport (governmental) - providing favourable credit facilities to manage liquidity problems (mainly in export-oriented sectors) (governmental) - imposing a moratorium on loan repayments for businesses (governmental) <p>The Municipality of Debrecen established a financial assist fund to alleviate the damage caused by the national emergency, to offer financial compensation, to support people in need. Beyond municipal support, private individuals, businesses, associations, and religious congregations also provided assistance in the fight against the virus. In 2020-2021, a total of 138,832,203 HUF financial support accumulated on the account of the assist fund.</p>

3. Ukrainian refugee crisis response

Solutions Adopted by Debrecen to Shelter Refugees

Description	Number
Sheltered with families	Sheltering was done on a voluntary basis. Debrecen Charity Board took care of 10 families (altogether 50 people).
Sheltered in hotels	Mathias Corvinus Collegium Debrecen Aranybika Hotel – 20 people
Sheltered in repurposed buildings:	
<i>Cultural and sport facilities</i>	Gym of the Construction Technology and Engineering School of the Debrecen Vocational Centre – accommodation to shelter 80 people
<i>Other</i>	Dormitory places of the University of Debrecen – 100 people, Dorcas Camping – 100 people

Legislative Acts and Initiatives Related to Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

Description	City level
Integration into the labour markets laws and initiatives	Govt. decree 301/2007. (XI. 9.), Govt. decree 86/2022. (III. 7.), Govt. decree 96/2022. (III. 10.), Govt. decree 106/2022. (III. 12.), Govt. decree 121/2022. (III. 28.), Govt. decree 173/2022. (IV. 29.)
Health services	Law LXXX of 2007 on asylum, Govt. decree 301/2007. (XI. 9.), Govt. decree 86/2022. (III. 7.), Govt. decree 171/2022. (IV. 29.)
Educational services	Govt. decree 301/2007. (XI. 9.), Govt. decree 106/2022. (III. 12.), Govt. decree 115/2022. (III. 22.)
Recreation for children	Govt. decree 106/2022. (III. 12.) At a local level, it is Debrecen Charity Board that provides free-time activities, for example visit to the zoo.

Source of Finance for Ukrainian Refugees Crisis Response

Description	Percentage	Brief description
City funds	40%	From the city budget, through the institutional system involved in the provision.
National/State funds	10%	Capitation for individuals accommodated at refugee accommodation.
Private sector through a special fund (s)	40%	Through the Debrecen Charity Board, with financial and in-kind donations
Civil society (donations)	10%	Primarily with in-kind donations

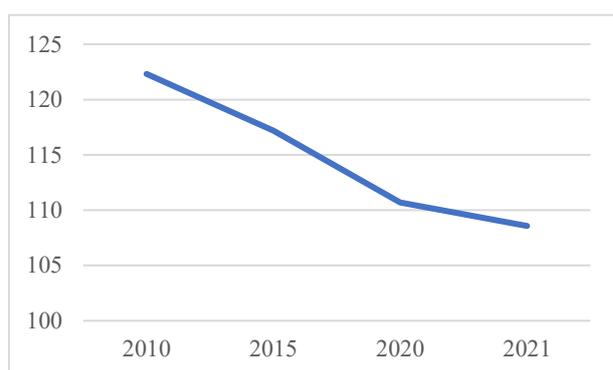
Poland

Elbląg

1. City Profile

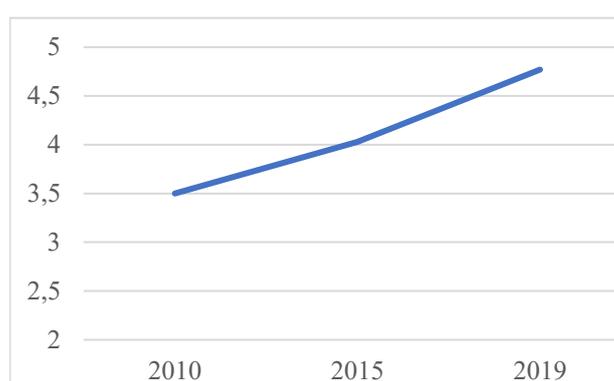
- Elbląg is located in Gdańsk Voivodeship in the northeastern part of Poland.
- It is one of the major cities near to the boarder with Kaliningrad, Russia.
- The population in 2021 is 108.573, which is 11 percent decrease from its population of 122.318 in 2010 (Figure 7).
- The size of its GDP increased over years. In 2019, its GDP is EUR4.77 billion, which is 36 percent larger than its GDP in 2010 (EUR3.5 billion)

Figure 7. Population Trend in Elbląg, 2010-2018



Source: Provided by the city during the survey

Figure 8. Trend of GDP Growth in Elbląg 2010-2020, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

Share of Youth in total population

Year	Population (number)	Youth (15-24 years) percentage of total population
2010	122.318	13,82%
2015	117.178	11,33%
2020	110.699	9,52%
2021	108.573	9,50%

2. Covid-19 response measure

Emergency relief and response measures

Area	Support measures and associated legislative acts
<p>Financial assistance for local enterprises in the form of, for example, co-financed bank loans, one-off cash injections, grants, etc.</p>	<p>In 2020, the District Labour Office in Elbląg allocated the amount of PLN 70,571,347.61 to finance tasks under the as per the law on special solutions related to the prevention, counteracting and combating COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them of March 2020 (Journal of Laws of 2020.item 1482, as amended), of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLN 58,285,006.00 from the reserve of the Minister of Development, Labour and Technology, • PLN 2,000,000.00 from the Labour Fund, • 2.734.968,65 within the limit of ESF funds from the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (OP WER V), • 7,551,372.96 within the limit of ESF resources from the Regional Operational Programme (ROP). <p>Within the above amount, aid was granted in the total amount of PLN 68,703,101.24 for the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a loan for micro-entrepreneurs to cover the costs related to running a business for 8,120 entrepreneurs in the amount of PLN 40,532,611.39, • co-financing of part of the costs of running a business for an entrepreneur who is a natural person not employing employees in connection with the decrease in business turnover as a result

Area	Support measures and associated legislative acts
	<p>of COVID-19 – d la 1464 entrepreneurs in the amount of PLN 7,762,450.96,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-financing of part of the costs of employees' salaries and social security contributions due from these salaries for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, in connection with the decrease in economic turnover as a result of COVID-19 – for 629 entrepreneurs out of 4,850 employees in the amount of PLN 19,241,301.00, • co-financing of part of the costs of employees' salaries and social security contributions due from these salaries for non-governmental organizations or entities referred to in Article 3(3) of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit activities and volunteering, in connection with the decrease in economic turnover as a result of COVID-19 – for 13 organizations per 130 employees in the amount of PLN 596,737.89, • one-off subsidy for micro and small entrepreneurs of specific industries (the support entered into force on 19.12.2020) – for 114 entrepreneurs in the amount of PLN 570,000.00. <p>In 2021, for the implementation of tasks resulting from the Act of 2 March 2020 on <i>special solutions related to the prevention, counteracting and combating COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them</i>, the District Labour Office in Elbląg will spend PLN 18,224,731.81 for the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low-interest loan from the Labour Fund for micro-entrepreneurs – for 80 entrepreneurs in the amount of PLN 389,613.15, • co-financing of part of the costs of running a business for self-employed entrepreneurs – for 317 entrepreneurs in the amount of PLN 1,790,920.00, • co-financing of part of the costs of employees' salaries and social security contributions due from them for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises – for 139 entrepreneurs out of 937 employees in the amount of PLN 4,608,348.85, • co-financing of part of the costs of employees' salaries and social security contributions due from them for non-governmental organizations – for 2 organizations per 2 employees in the amount of PLN 15,849.81, • subsidy to cover the current costs of business activity of a micro-entrepreneur and a small entrepreneur COVID-19 – for 225 entrepreneurs in the amount of PLN 1,130,000.00, • subsidy to cover the current costs of business activity of a micro-entrepreneur and a small entrepreneur COVID-19 – on the basis of the regulation – 2,053 subsidies were paid in the amount of PLN 10,265,000.00, • subsidy to cover the current costs of the gosp.'s operations by COVID-19 school shops – 5 subsidies were paid in the amount of PLN 25,000.00. <p>In 2022, in connection with the implementation of tasks on the basis of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 20 December 2021. <i>amending the regulation on support for participants in business transactions affected by the COVID-19 pandemic</i>, PUP has obtained funds in the amount of PLN 350,000.00 for the implementation of industry subsidies for 3 industries. On the date of the task, i.e. from</p>

Area	Support measures and associated legislative acts
	01.01.2022 to 15.04.2022, PUP granted subsidies for 8 entrepreneurs in the total amount of PLN 40,000.00.
Temporary suspension of rent payments to affected local businesses, social institutions and cultural institutions	Due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, the "Elbląg Aid Package for Entrepreneurs" has been implemented in three periods of validity: I package valid for receivables arising from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020. II package applicable to receivables arising from 1 November 2020 to 30 November 2020 III package applicable to receivables arising from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021
Tax cuts for affected local businesses, social institutions and cultural institutions	
Temporary tax exemptions for the local enterprises, social institutions and cultural establishments concerned	As a result of the proposed solutions, ZBK received 106 applications from tenants and tenants of commercial premises asking for assistance in the field of redemption, distribution into installments or postponement of the payment date of rent payments, of which in 36 cases assistance was provided in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redemption or partial remission of receivables – 30 cases for the amount: PLN 51,307.17 • postponement of the payment date – 6 cases for the amount: PLN 38,695.15
Support schemes for older people and other vulnerable groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Support the Senior" program. The program was a response to the needs of older people over 70 years of age in terms of protection against COVID-19 infection. Tasks carried out by the Regional Volunteer Centre in Elbląg. As part of the Program, 26 applications were received for 21 seniors. In the cases of 16 people, applications were forwarded for implementation to the Regional Volunteer Center in Elbląg. 2. In connection with the remote learning of students in educational institutions, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, assistance was provided in the form of a targeted allowance for the purchase of food products and in-kind assistance in the form of a food parcel. 3. Providing support and advice to people in collective quarantine or home isolation reporting the need for help individually, through institutions and the "Home Quarantine" application during the Center's working hours and from Monday to Friday from 3.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. and on non-working days from 7.30 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. 4. As part of the project "Support for children placed in foster care during the Covid 19 epidemic" under the Operational Programme Knowledge, Education, Development for 2014-2020 – we have lent remote learning laptops for children staying in foster families. 5. Co-financing for the total amount of PLN 1,541,060.00 obtained from the Operational Programme Digital Poland 2014-2020 as part of remote learning support (purchase of computers for students of Elbląg educational institutions): Remote School, Remote School + and PPGR Grants. 6. GE provided 46 laptops, printers and copiers as well as stationery were provided to 3 primary schools in Elbląg.

Area	Support measures and associated legislative acts
<p>Other measures/initiatives, please list</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 2020 , during the Easter and Christmas period, Christmas packages were organized for 236 elderly, lonely, low-income people. 2. During Christmas in 2020, 1,000 food packages purchased by UM from the most needy Elbląg restaurateurs were distributed. 3. The project "Let's see each other after years" was implemented as part of the celebrations of the XXIII Warmian-Masurian Family Days from May 10 to June 20, 2021. 4. The project "Christmas tree dizziness" was implemented in the period 01-24 December 2021. 5. On 20-24 December 2022, additional support for people with disabilities was implemented in connection with the state of epidemic caused by the SARS-Cov-2 virus announced in the territory of the Republic of Poland, implemented from the funds of PFRON Module IV of the program "Assistance to disabled people as a result of the element or crisis situations caused by infectious diseases". 500 food parcels were delivered to 500 disabled people in need in Elbląg. 6. Current information for customers about mask collection points in Elbląg 7. Protective masks were distributed among the inhabitants of Elbląg. 8. Ozonators, masks, disposable gloves and disinfectants were given to foster families 9. Current information on the rules of hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment, informing about the rules of vaccination against covid, informing about the addresses of vaccination points, providing homeless people with protective masks and protective gloves. 10. Verification of quarantine in residential premises for employees of the entire Center before entering the environment in the State District Sanitary Inspectorate in Elbląg 11. Cooperation with the Municipal Guard in Elbląg in the distribution of food parcels to people in quarantine. 12. Cooperation with the Municipal Crisis Management Center to secure food products (so-called weekend packages) for people in quarantine after the Center's working hours and on days off. 13. Employees of the Elbląg Center for Social Services as part of the improvement of health m.in caused by COVID-19 took advantage of the preventive health care program – from packages of tests m.in after the coronavirus. 14. A Customer Reception Point equipped with a protective glass was created to limit contact with the customer and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. 15. In the District Disability Adjudication Team, a glass cover was inserted to separate the employee part from the customer part. The center is equipped with wall thermometers.

3. Ukrainian refugee crisis response

Legislative acts and initiatives to enable Ukrainian refugees to start a new life

Area	Description
Main law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act of 12.03.2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with armed conflict on the territory of this country (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 583, as amended)
Labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 690, as amended) • March 2022, to ensure the refugees' access to information, the District Labour Office in Elbląg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created an information point for employers and citizens of Ukraine has been launched - Hired a translator to assist in registering in the office, issuing referrals for work or internship, translating documents, personal and telephone conversations with Ukrainian citizens. • On 18.03.2022, PUB employees took part in a meeting with Elbląg Technology Park, presenting information on the employment of foreigners on the basis of statements on entrusting work and seasonal work permits, with particular emphasis on the principles of employing Ukrainian citizens. • On 20.03.2022 the Academy of Medical and Social Applied Sciences in Elbląg organized an event entitled: "Academy for the Children of Ukraine". The District Labour Office put up an information stand with job offers for parents who came with their children. • From 28.03.2022, the website of the PUP in Elbląg has been posting information materials translated into Ukrainian informing about living and working conditions in Poland, registration in the office and the rules of taking up work. In addition, PUP disseminates leaflets and posters donated by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. • PUP in Elbląg organized 6 recruitment meetings at the headquarters of the office with employers for Ukrainian citizens. 26 people took part, 15 people were employed. • On 17-18.05.2022, PUP in Elbląg, as part of the European Days of Employers, organized meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for employers and employment agencies, entitled "Legal stay and employment of foreigners. Citizens of Ukraine on the labor market". The aim of the meeting was to present current regulations regarding the legalization of foreigners' stay in Poland and practical information on the principles

Area	Description
	<p>of employing foreigners, in particular citizens of Ukraine,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for Citizens of Ukraine entitled "Citizens of Ukraine on the labor market – opportunities to change professional qualifications". 18 refugees registered with participated and gained information on: job offers, opportunities to co-finance vocational training, internships, subsidized employment, subsidies, barometer of occupations, the situation on the labor market and employers' expectations regarding the qualifications required of candidates were presented. • PUP organized training in Polish for 20 Ukrainian citizens registered in PUP. • By the end of June 2022, the PUP issued 39 internship referrals to Ukrainian citizens, of which 38 people undertook internships and 21 job referrals, of which 16 people took up employment. • In addition, in the period from March 2022 to 15.05.2022, 31 people not registered in the PUP were sent to employers for employment interviews , of which 27 took up employment.
Education	<p>Due to the significant number of Ukrainian children arriving from the country affected by the war, in 2022 6 preparatory units were created to ensure the continuity of education for children from Ukraine staying in Elbląg. Persons who are not Polish citizens, subject to compulsory schooling and compulsory education, shall benefit from education and care in public primary and secondary schools under conditions applicable to Polish citizens until the age of 18 or the completion of secondary school.</p> <p>The following Ordinances of the President of the City on the establishment of preparatory classes in primary schools in Elbląg for students coming from abroad, subject to compulsory schooling, who do not know Polish or know it at a level insufficient to use education and require adaptation of the education process to their educational needs, as well as adaptation of the organizational form supporting the effectiveness of their education.</p> <p>The above are regulated by the Ordinances of the Mayor of the City No.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 96/2022 of 24.03.2022 on the establishment of preparatory classes in the Maria Dąbrowska Primary School No. 23 at 14 Słoneczna Street at the level of grades IV – VI and VII – VIII; 2. 97/2022 of 24.03.2022 on the establishment of preparatory classes in the Józef Wybicki Primary School No. 16 at 2 Sadowa Street at the level of grades I – III; 3. 99/2022 of 24.03.2022 on the establishment of preparatory classes in the Michał Kajka Primary School No. 12 at 12 Zajchowskiego Street at the level of grades I – III;

Area	Description
	4. 134/2022 of 1.04.2022 on the establishment of preparatory classes in the Kornel Makuszyński Primary School (grades VII – VIII); 5. 135/2022 of 1.04.2022 on the establishment of preparatory classes in the Stanisław Staszic Primary School (grades I – III).

Funding sources for Ukrainian refugee crisis response

Description	Summary
City measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The local government from the city budget provided humanitarian aid in the form of gifts for the twin city – Ternopil (in 4 previous transports, a total of about 51 tons of donations with food, dressing materials, hygiene products worth over PLN 180,000 were transferred). In September, another tranche of in-kind aid worth approx. PLN 100,000 will be transferred. 2. The local government coordinated the collection of donations from the inhabitants of Elbląg 3. A round-the-clock Information Point has been created at the sports and entertainment hall for refugees from Ukraine: applications from people offering accommodation, transport, medical care, psychological care, issuing food and other items for people in need of material support – since March, functions taken over by the Food Bank: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the city has launched a round-the-clock hotline for people who want to help and need help – notifications from people offering accommodation, transport, medical care, psychological care, as well as other forms of help and people in need of help • the local government organized sports and common room activities conducted by primary schools • the local government organized the admission of children to pre-school groups and primary schools • the city applied exemptions from public transport charges from February 24 to July 1 4. The Municipal Sports and Recreation Center organized free sports activities: swimming lessons, skating lessons 5. Elbląg cultural institutions: Galeria El, Biblioteka El, Muzeum, CSE Światowid created a special cultural and educational offer and organized friendly meeting places. Offer of free activities: workshops, activities and other forms of spending free time, including: Internet café, film screenings for children, games, games, animations, activities for children and adults, 6. The Elbląg Chamber Orchestra organized free concerts for Ukrainian families 7. Free meetings with psychologists and therapists were organized – a municipal database of psychologists was created, providing free psychological support 8. A database of doctors and nurses (also speaking Ukrainian) was created – contact via a round-the-clock city hotline

Description	Summary
	<p>9. Postgraduate studies for Elbląg teachers "Teaching Polish as a foreign language in consultation with the Academy of Applied Sciences in Elbląg" were launched.</p> <p>10. The Elbląg Social Store was created run by the Elbląg Social Services Center: accepting and dispensing clothing, bedding, suitcases, dishes, equipment, toys and accessories for children, etc.</p>
National/regional measures	<p>Funds of the Aid Fund to Ukraine in the total amount of PLN 4,799,778 subsidy of the Voivodship Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of accommodation and all-day meals: PLN 523,390 • transport to accommodation: 7.800 PLN • financing of public and specialist transport for people with disabilities: PLN 1,900 • provision of cleaning and personal hygiene products and other products: PLN 9,000 • family benefits: PLN 297,747 • one-off cash benefits in the amount of PLN 300 / person and task service: PLN 468,180 • social assistance benefits – providing a meal for children and young people: PLN 52,506 • PESEL: 24.042 PLN • photographer: 33.734 PLN • payment of cash benefits pursuant to Article 13 of the Act (accommodation and meals PLN 40 per person): PLN 3,285,484 • psychologist: 5.032 PLN • transport to accommodation, medical care and other activities necessary to implement the assistance: PLN 55,566 • social assistance benefits (permanent allowance, periodic allowance) – ECUS: PLN 28,197 • scholarships and allowances for students from Ukraine 97.200 PLN
Private sector through special measures	<p>Free activities for children and adults from Ukraine, including transport of children to classes, provision of sportswear, assistance in the organization of equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training of football, handball, volleyball, basketball, judo, athletics, MTB: MKS Truso, ZKS Olimpia Elbląg, MMKS Concordia, Handball Academy Handbalowy Elbląg, Academy of Young Footballer El-Futbol • dance classes: Dance School; Broadway, Salsa Elbląg Dance School, Katarzyna Panicz's Artistic Studio Szalone i Szalone Małolaty, Destination; • integration games, animations: Bonanza Entertainment Center, Piekarczyk Park, mini disco – Magiel Club • Robotics classes: Fan Robot • film screenings with Ukrainian dubbing: Multikino Elbląg • course on the basics of Polish for children, free lessons: Academy of Applied Sciences, Leonardo School Elbląg, - Fast English Tricity and Elbląg • games, sensory integration classes for children, psychological care, transport and meal – psychologist Agnieszka Bratuś;

Description	Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English classes: Modern English Language School • Contact Advertising Agency, Merlin Advertising Agency: information materials (leaflets, signs, posters, stickers, turn signals) in Ukrainian; • Euro-net: transfer of household appliances – transport to Ternopil • accommodation provided: Hotel pod Lwem, Hotel Vivaldi • The Management Board of the Association of Employers of the Elbląg Land for over PLN 37,000 equipped with field beds, mattresses, duvets, bed linen, screens, towels and blankets a transition and buffer room in SP No. 8 with 36 beds, it also purchased 3 washing machines that were sent to Ternopil • #DobraDruzynaPZU provided the participants with training sets (T-shirts, shorts and sports gaiters) and footwear
Civil society (fundraisers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • citizens' collections • Volunteers • accommodation in apartments of private individuals, collection of food and clothing, assistance in transport, dealing with formalities related to the stay in Elbląg and the surrounding area
City-city support, including non-national cities	<p>The local government from the city budget provided humanitarian aid in the form of gifts for the twin city – Ternopil (in 4 previous transports, a total of about 51 tons of donations with food, dressing materials, hygiene products worth over PLN 180,000 were transferred). In September, another tranche of in-kind aid worth approx. PLN 100,000 will be transferred.</p>
Other, please specify	<p>Coordination of aid to Ukraine carried out by Elbląg NGOs and other institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA Social Cooperative, • Elbląg Association for the Support of Non-Governmental Initiatives • Association of Family Initiatives: free classes, psychological support for children, material assistance, donation collections, language assistance • CSE Światowid and Teatr have created a cultural offer. Offer of free activities: workshops, activities and other forms of spending free time, including: Internet café, film screenings for children, games, games, animations, activities for children and adults, performances • Elbląg PCK – collection of donations – humanitarian aid for Ukrainian Bucha, • Greek Catholic parish of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist in the collection of food products, • free legal assistance for refugees from Ukraine provided by the Warmian-Masurian Children's Assistance Center in Elbląg and the Elbląg Center for Mediation and Social Activation • food, accommodation, in-kind assistance: Dom pod Cisem, parish of Blessed Dorota and parish of St. Joseph the Worker, parish of St. Paul the Apostle • Rotary Club: purchase of m.in dressing and hygienic materials for the amount of PLN 70,000 (transport to Ternopil); equipment of the classroom for Ukrainian children in SP 12 (furniture, computer

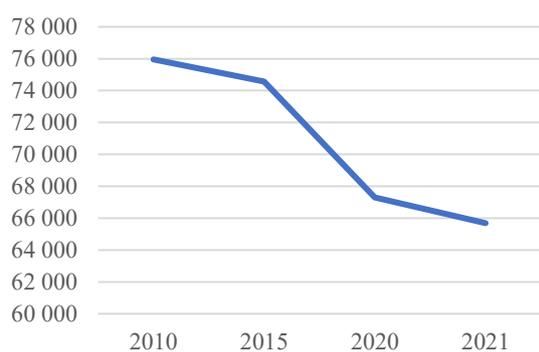
Description	Summary
	<p>equipment, teaching aids, textbooks), organization of integration classes, including culinary workshops (PLN 33,000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fabryka Dobra: Recreation and Training Centre "Wiking" in Jantar – a holiday for 350 refugees

Inowrocław

1. City Profile

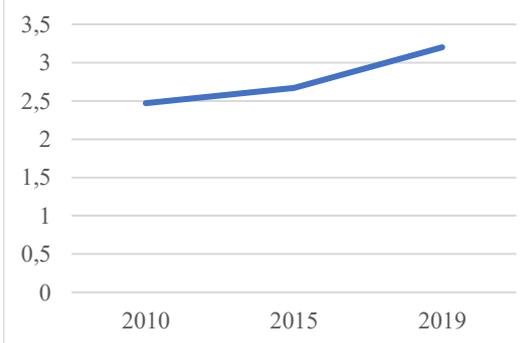
- Inowrocław is one of the most important cities in south-central Poland.
- It is part of Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship and has a land area of 30.42 square kilometres.
- Its population continued to decline over years. In 2010, its population is 75,957 and declined by 13.5 percent to 65,684 in 2021 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Population Trend in Inowrocław 2010-2021



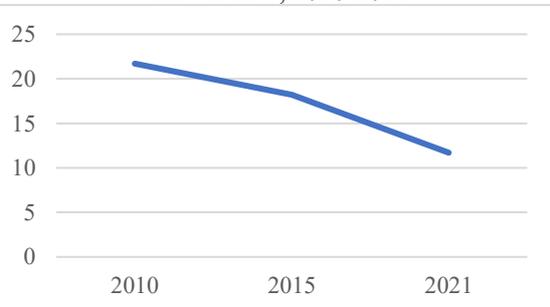
Source: Central Statistics Office, Poland

Figure 10. Trend of Regional GDP Size of Inowrocław 2010-2019, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

Figure 11. Unemployment Rate Trend in Inowrocław, 2010-2021

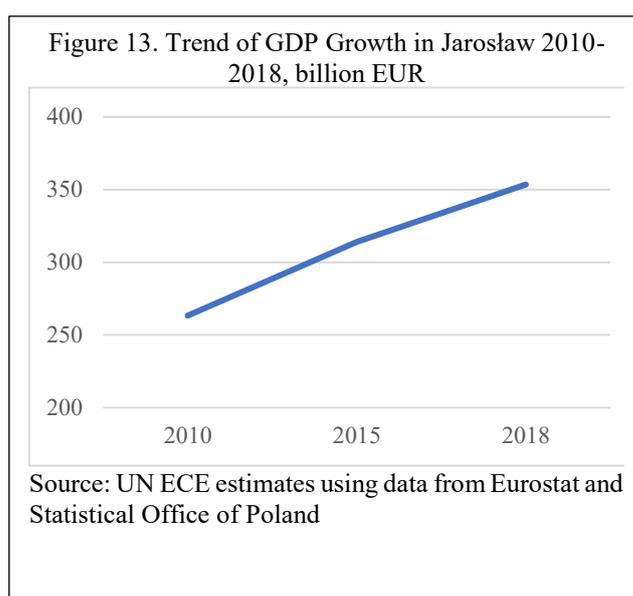
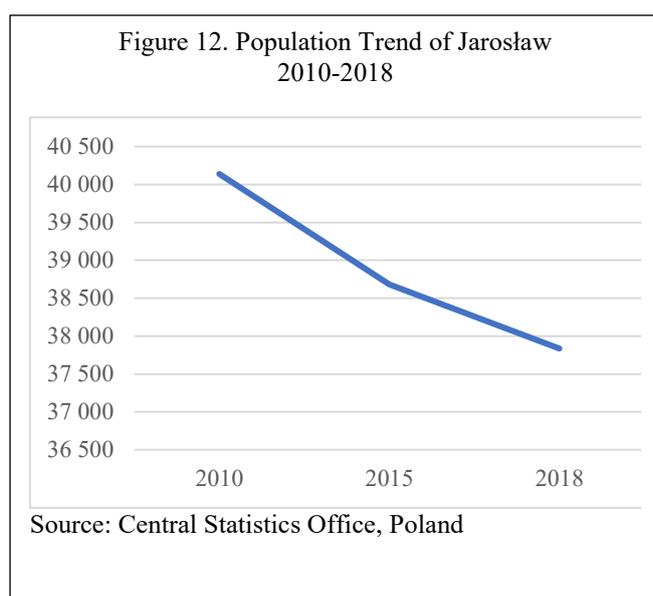


Source: Central Statistics Office, Poland

Jarosław

1. City Profile

- Jarosław is small town located in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship in the southeastern part of Poland.
- In 2018, its population stood at 37,836 which is a slight decline from 40,139 in 2010 (Figure 12).
- In spite of decreasing population, its economic size grew by 34 percent from 2010 to 2018 (Figure 13).

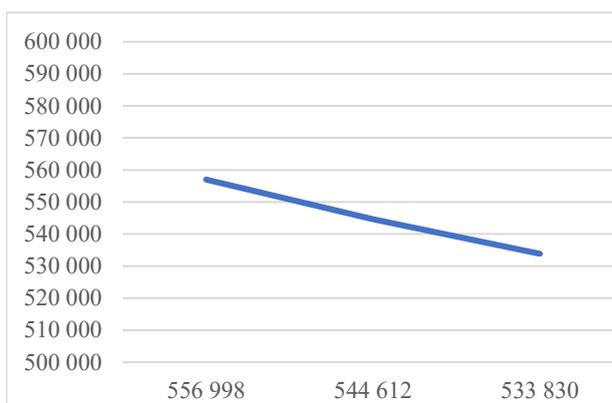


Poznań

1. City Profile

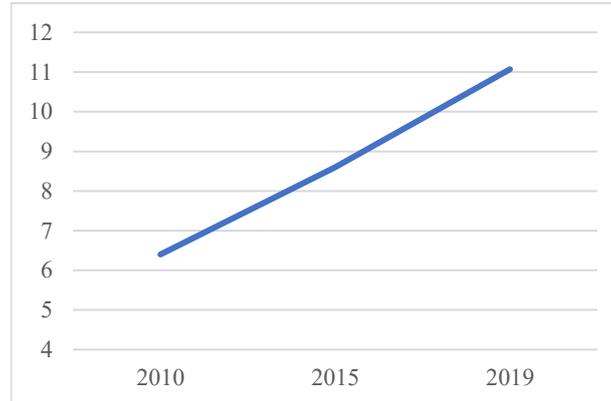
- Poznań is the fifth largest metropolis in Poland. It covers an area of 261.3 square kilometres.
- Situated in the west-central Poland on the banks River Warta.
- The population is 533830 in 2021, which is 4 percent lower than its population of 556,998 in 2010 (Figure 14).
- Regional GDP in 2019 is EUR11 billion (Figure 15)
- Unemployment rate continued to decrease from 3.5 percent in 2010 to 1.6 percent in 2021 (Figure 16).
- There are eight national universities in the city. Adam Mickiewicz University is the third largest in Poland.

Figure 14. Population Trend in Poznań, 2010-2021



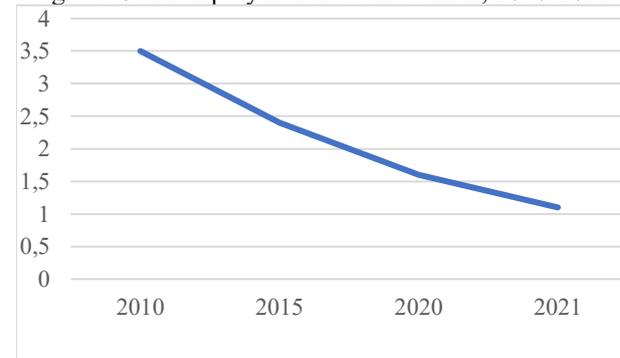
Source: Statistical Office, Poviát of Ponzan

Figure 15. Trend of GDP Growth in Poznań, 2010-2019, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

Figure 16. Unemployment Rate in Poznań, 2010-2021



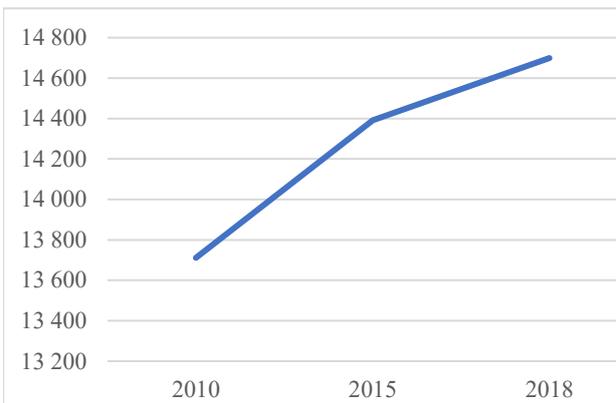
Source: Statistical Office of Poland

Stary Sącz

1. City Profile

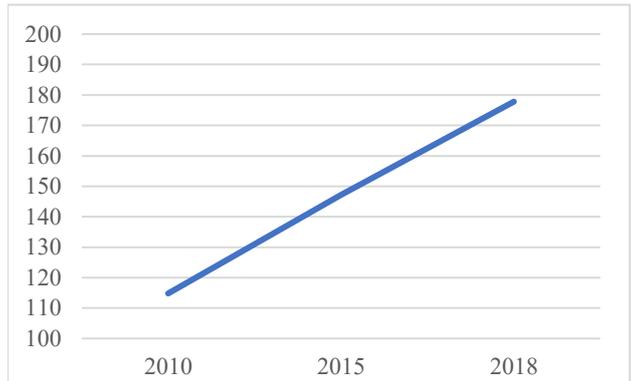
- Stary Sącz is a small historical town located in Lesser Poland Voivodeship in southwestern Poland.
- Its population increased by 6 percent from 13,711 in 2010 to 14,699 in 2018 (Figure 17).
- The size of the city's GDP increased 77 percent from an estimated EUR114.8 million in 2010 to EUR177.8 million in 2018 (Figure 18).

Figure 17. Population Trend of Stary Sącz, 2010-2018



Source: Statistical Office of Poland

Figure 18. Trend of GDP Growth of Stary Sącz, 2010-2018, million EUR



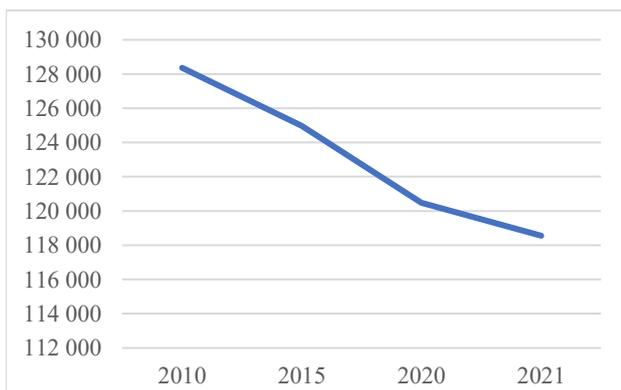
Source: UN ECE estimates using data from Eurostat and Statistical Office of Poland

Tychy

1. City Profile

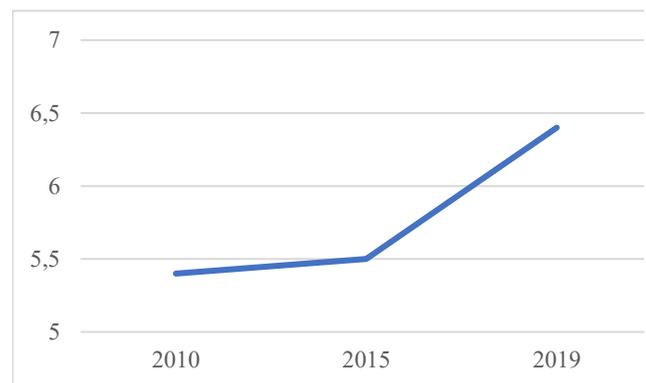
- Tychy is a city in Silesia Voivodeship located in the southern part of Poland and occupies an area of 81.64 square kilometre.
- Population of the city continues to decrease over time. In 2021, it has a population of 118, 557, which is 7 percent lower than its population in 2010 (Figure 19).
- In 2019, its economic output is EUR6.4 billion, which is 7 percent higher as compared to its GDP in 2010 (Figure 20).

Figure 19. Population Trend of Tychy 2010-2021



Source: Statistical Office of Poland

Figure 20. Trend of GDP Growth of Tychy 2010-2019, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

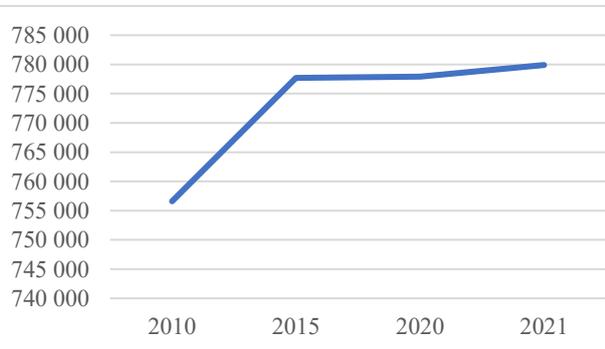
Republic of Moldova

Chişinău

1. City profile

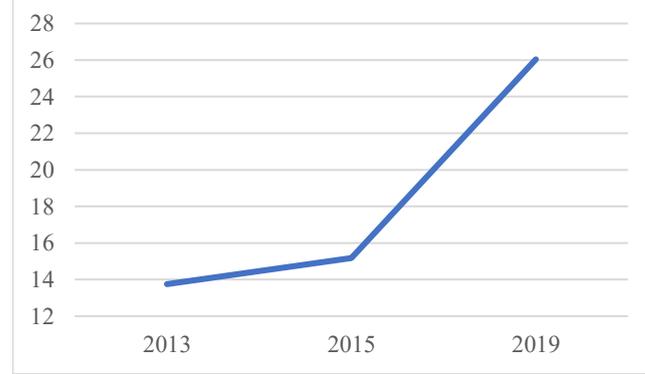
- Chişinău is the capital of Republic of Moldova. As a centre of politics, economics and culture of the country, Chişinău is home to more than third of the population, which is estimated at more than 780,000 in 2019.
- The city is located in the central part of the Republic of Moldova. As a capital of a landlock country, Chişinău is an important transportation and trade hub.
- Chişinău comprises 60 percent of national output, in spite of the size of its population. This imbalance is further reflected by the fact that Chişinău's GDP per capita is 2.5 times more than the rest of the country. GDP of the region of Chişinău almost doubled from 2013 to 2019 (Figure 22).
- Due to its historical occupation by great powers from Ottoman to Russian and Romanian, its city scape is a melange of different influence. Rows of Soviet era apartment blocks and buildings are dotted with cathedrals and Orthodox churches. Several research and educational institutions are also located in the city.

Figure 21. Population Trend of Chişinău, 2010-2021

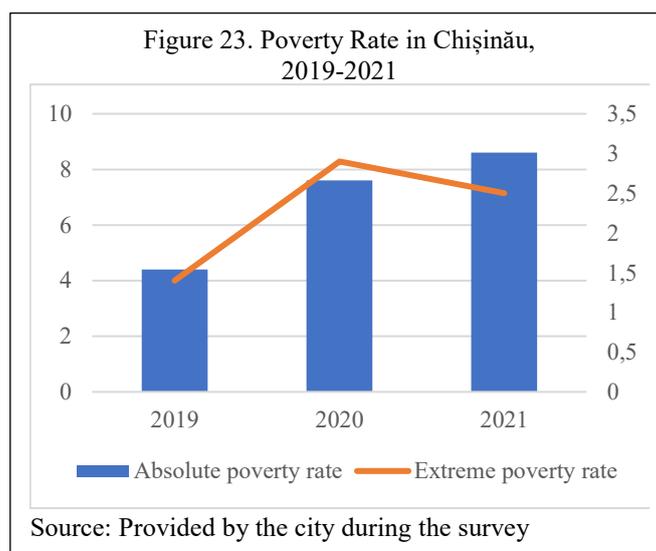


Source: Provided by the city during the survey

Figure 22. Trend of GDP Growth of Chişinău Region 2013-2019, billion EUR



Source: Statbank



Housing Situation in Chişinău

Overview of Apartment and Housing Units in Chişinău

Year	Individual apartments and houses, thousands of units ★	Total area, thousands sqm	Living area, thousand sqm
2010	282,2	16 621,5	10 439,1
2015	297,5	18 499,2	11 512,9
2020	311,9	21 499,3	15 930,3
2021	319,9	22 145,5	16 304,9

Land Tenure in Chişinău

Year	Total area, thousands sqm	Public property	Private property	Other forms
2010	16 621	1014	15 567	40
2015	18 499,2	982,1	17 486,9	30,1
2020	21 499,3	438,4	21 057,5	3,4

2. Covid-19 response measure

Emergency relief and response measures

Year	Number of confirmed cases	Number of reported deaths
2020	61044	976
2021	77657	1743
2022	59423	288

Covid-19 emergency response and measures

Measures	Brief description
<p>• Temporary pausing of rent payments for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions</p>	<p>By Chisinau Municipal Council decision no. 8/2 of 18.06.2020 "Regarding the exemption/rescheduling of payment of rent during the state of emergency", economic agents - tenants, renting premises from the Chisinau Municipal Council, who during the exceptional situation related to COVID -19 have suspended their activity, during the suspension period they were granted payment exemptions for the lease of the municipal public heritage.</p>
<p>• Tax reduction for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions</p>	<p>As a measure to support the economic agents in the municipality of Chisinau in the crisis situation, by the decisions of the Chisinau Municipal Council no. 6/9 of 21.05.2020 and no. 13/4 of 08/04/2020 "On the operation of changes to decision no. 6/1 of 26.12.2019 "Regarding the approval and implementation of local taxes for 2020", facilities were granted for the payment of local taxes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic agents in the municipality - commercial and/or service units during the suspension of activities by the Commission for exceptional situations and the Commission for public health in connection with the exceptional situation with COVID-19 upon payment of the tax for the development of the territory, the market tax, the tax for commercial and/or service units; - economic agents - external advertising service providers. The tax rates for advertising devices have been reduced from 1,200.0 lei and 1,000.0 lei (depending on the location of the object of taxation) for each m.p. of the surface of the advertising device up to 700.0 lei (with recalculation from 01.01.2020). At the same time, they were exempted from paying the tax subject to the imposition for the surface of the advertising device on which images of the social campaign to prevent COVID-19 were placed, coordinated with the City Hall of Chisinau and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection.
<p>• Temporary tax exemptions for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions</p>	<p>As a measure to support the economic agents in the municipality of Chisinau in the crisis situation, by the decisions of the Chisinau Municipal Council no. 6/9 of 21.05.2020 and no. 13/4 of 08/04/2020 "On the operation of changes to decision no. 6/1 of 26.12.2019 "Regarding the approval and implementation of local taxes for 2020", facilities were granted for the payment of local taxes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic agents in the municipality - commercial and/or service units during the suspension of activities by the Commission for exceptional situations and the Commission for public health in connection with the exceptional situation with COVID-19 upon payment of the tax for the development of the territory, the market tax, the tax for commercial and/or service units; - economic agents - external advertising service providers. The tax rates for advertising devices have been reduced from 1,200.0 lei and 1,000.0 lei (depending on the location of the object of taxation) for each m.p. of the surface of the advertising device up to 700.0 lei (with recalculation from 01.01.2020). At the same time, they were exempted from paying the tax subject to the imposition for the surface of the advertising device on which images of the social

	<p>campaign to prevent COVID-19 were placed, coordinated with the City Hall of Chisinau and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection.</p>
<p>• Support schemes for the elderly and other vulnerable groups</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The creation of the Crisis Cell in the social field, in order to monitor the situation of social assistance beneficiaries and manage the aspects arising from the evolution of their situation, formed by representatives of the General Department, the Territorial Social Assistance Directorates, the Community Social Assistance Service, the Social Care Service at home, to the "Personal Assistance" social service, to the "Mobile Team" social service and to the Center for accommodation and orientation of people without a permanent residence. 2. Carrying out campaigns to inform social assistance beneficiaries about the epidemiological situation and measures to prevent and prevent the spread of the infection with COVID-19, including the distribution of informative materials. 3. Daily monitoring by social assistants/social workers of the situation of social assistance beneficiaries (lonely elderly people, people with disabilities) by contacting them by phone to follow the state of health, with the recording of strict notes and, respectively, with the reporting of suspicious cases to the doctor of the family or the single national service for emergency calls 112; 4. Realization of social assistance interventions directly at the homes of vulnerable people; 5. Intensification of collaborative relations with Local Public Administration, social partners, NGOs, international organizations, in order to make assistance actions more efficient; 6. Providing humanitarian assistance to socially vulnerable persons/families in the form of food products, hygiene and disinfection products, used clothes, shoes and other items; 7. Start of the "Be a volunteer" campaign. During the campaign, around 500 volunteers were registered, who dealt with assessing the needs of vulnerable people, solving cases, collecting and distributing donations, procuring and distributing food products, medicines at home for elderly people, people with disabilities, transport insurance for vulnerable people who need to go to the doctor, etc.; 8. The launch of the Social Campaign for the collection of food products in the chains of stores in the sectors of the Chisinau municipality. The food products were packed in packages of 6-8 kg each and later distributed to families/persons in difficulty. 9. Provision of accommodation and orientation services for homeless people, 24/24, 7 days a week, including provision of food, clothes, hygiene and sanitary activities, information services, psychological and social counseling and support in family reintegration activities/ community, employment, etc.
<p>• Other measures/initiatives, please specify</p>	<p>As an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, starting in 2020, the municipality promptly intervened by allocating financial means from the Chisinau municipal budget in order to provide protective equipment (gloves, thermal scanners, masks, equipment and screens protection, respirators, disinfectants, coveralls and equipment, diagnostic tests, medicines, feeding front-line medical personnel, etc.) in combating the COVID-19 infection of municipal public medical and sanitary institutions.</p>

Thus, in 2020, for this purpose, expenditures totaling 26,991.9 thousand lei were executed, of which 25,526.2 thousand lei for municipal public medical and sanitary institutions (including the municipal budget, donations and the reserve fund of the municipality), 1465.7 thousand lei for the municipal and level I budgetary authorities/institutions (from the funds of the reserve fund of the municipality and donations) year 2021 – 10041.0 thousand lei, and in 2022 the amount of allocations provided for this purpose is 30 000.0 thousand lei.

Also, annually, financial means are provided in the Chisinau municipal budget to ensure compliance with the requirements for preventing and combating the COVID-19 infection within the municipal budgetary authorities/institutions.

1. The launch of the Green Line in the field of health and social assistance;
2. By the order of the General Mayor of the municipality of Chisinau no. 102-d of 12.03.2020 "Regarding the emergency measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus on the territory of the municipality of Chisinau" immediate medical interventions were drawn up for the subordinate subdivisions in the municipality.
3. Drafting and approval of the Plan regarding the measures to prevent and control infection with the new type of Coronavirus;
4. Activation of strategic municipal hospitals for the treatment of patients with COVID-19: Municipal Clinical Hospital "Gh. Paladi", Municipal Clinical Hospital "St. Arch. Mihail", Municipal Clinical Hospital "St. Treime", the Municipal Clinical Hospital for Contagious Diseases for Children, the Municipal Clinical Hospital for Children "V. Ignatenco" and Municipal Maternity no. 2;
5. Supplementing the number of COVID-19 beds in municipal hospitals, including intensive care beds;
6. Activation of the "Constructorul COVID-19" Center with a capacity of 120 beds;
7. Direct support and mobilization of the necessary services for the establishment of the "Chisinau COVID-19 Center" at MoldExpo and its management (according to HG no. 715 of September 23, 2020 (200 beds for the triage of suspected patients)
8. Ensuring the supply of medical personnel;
9. Activation of the COVID-19 blocks at SCM "Sf. Treime" with a capacity of 220 beds;
10. Inauguration of an additional intensive care unit for COVID-19 at SCM "St. Trinity" on 24 beds;
11. The preparation, for activation at the first need, of 200 beds for the treatment of patients with COVID-19 at the "Chisinau COVID-19" Center, including 20 intensive care beds;
12. Securing and redirecting the resources planned in the 2020 budget (approx. 43 million lei) for the needs of the medical system in the fight against COVID-19;
13. Providing medical personnel with free transport for traveling to work;
14. Permanent purchase of specific protective materials (gloves, masks, protective overalls, visors, detergents, disinfectants, etc.);
15. Free distribution of protective equipment to municipal medical institutions, including those in the suburbs;

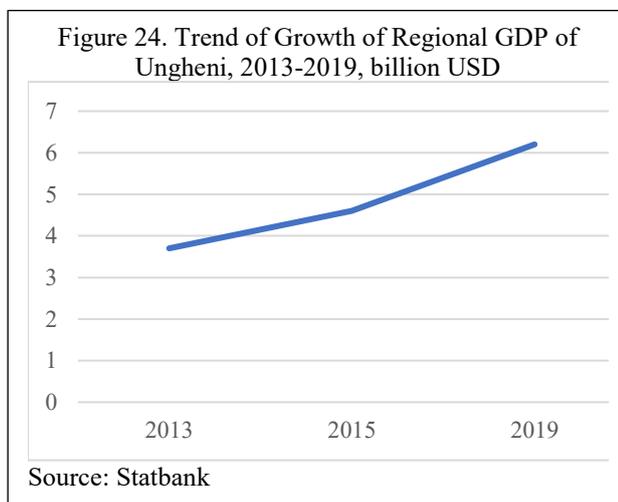
	<p>16. Allocation and distribution of financial means to municipal medical institutions, including health centers in the suburbs;</p> <p>17. Assessment of medical equipment needs and procurement of necessary medical equipment;</p> <p>18. Equipping intensive care and resuscitation departments in municipal hospitals with artificial respiration machines and boxes for intubating patients with COVID-19 infection, defibrillators, medical monitors, electrocardiographs and pulse oximeters, etc.;</p> <p>19. Additional deployment of medical personnel to strategic COVID-19 hospitals;</p> <p>20. Establishing 10 collection centers for testing medical personnel in 10 municipal medical institutions and procuring PCR (real-time) molecular biology tests for testing medical personnel;</p> <p>21. Initiation of general voluntary testing for COVID-19 antibodies (rapid serological tests) of medical personnel in strategic municipal hospitals;</p> <p>22. Conducting, jointly with the WHO, training with simulations of the correct use of protective equipment by medical personnel, following decontamination procedures and epidemiological control of the risks of self-contamination or infection at work;</p> <p>23. Ensuring psychological counseling of medical workers and implementing mental health support programs, as appropriate;</p> <p>24. Identification of challenges and risks reported by employees in the medical system with their immediate analysis and removal;</p> <p>25. Implementation of the rest and full recovery program for the medical staff in the strategic COVID-19 hospitals (activity in predetermined shifts, quality food at the workplace, isolated accommodation on request, etc.);</p> <p>26. Maintaining open and effective communication with employees on a day-to-day basis, based on an institutional environment of respect, trust and appreciation towards the medical staff, implementing the "Guide regarding the application of the patient communication and counseling procedure" (General Department of Medical and Social Assistance, Order 116-b of 17.04.2020);</p> <p>27. For the remote monitoring of patients with mild forms of COVID-19 who are being treated at home, by family doctors, the IT platform JIRA Software was launched for tracking and reporting the health status of patients (remote monitoring of patients with mild forms mild cases of infection with COVID-19, receiving treatment at home).</p>
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Ungheni

1. City Profile

- Ungheni is a municipality located in the central-west part of the Republic of Moldova and has a border with Romania.
- The district which includes the municipality of Ungheni has a population of 117,000 based on census in 2014.
- Ungheni's economy is dominated by agricultural-related activities with almost 50 percent of total land area is dedicated to this.
- In 2019, the economic output of Ungheni Region is about USD6.2 billion which is 67.5 percent higher than USD3.2 billion it registered in 2010 (Figure 24).

- Main agriculture products include cereal vegetables, fruits, wine, raising cattle, husbandry and poultry. There are sawmills, wineries, meat processing plants and ceramic factories in Ungheni. Lastly, more than 30 percent constitutes forest and aquatic resources.



2. Covid-19 response measure

Covid-19 cases and death

Year	Number of confirmed cases	Number of reported deaths
2020	1070	29
2021	1990	63
2022	1477	2

Source: Provided by the city during the survey

3. Ukrainian refugee crisis response

Refugee Situation in Ungheni

Description	Number
Refugees who crossed into the city to date	4852
Refugees who moved on to final destination	4512
Refugees who stayed in the city	340
<i>Men</i>	52
<i>Women</i>	151
<i>Accompanied children</i>	137

Source of Finance for Ukrainian Refugees Crisis Response

Description	Percentage	Brief description
City funds	10 %	payment for kindergarten
National/State funds	15%	Financial, material and informational support for families who have hosted the refugees
Private sector through a special fund (s)	10 %	food, hygienic products and accommodation
Civil society (donations)	30 %	food, cloths, hygienic products and volunteer activities
City-to-City support, including from cities outside the country	45 %	Material support (furniture, household appliances, textiles, medical products and basic necessities) from sister cities of Ungheni (Cluj Napoca, Romania, Winston Salem, USA), and from Program EU4Moldova: focal regions

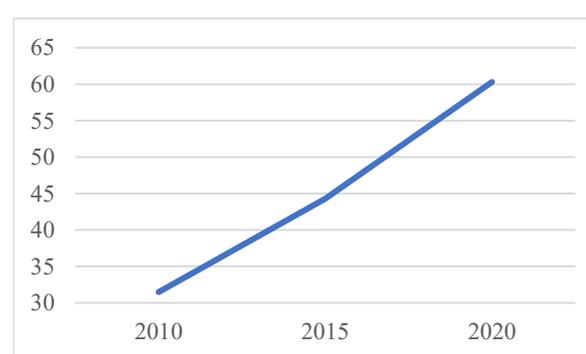
Romania

Bucharest

1. City Profile

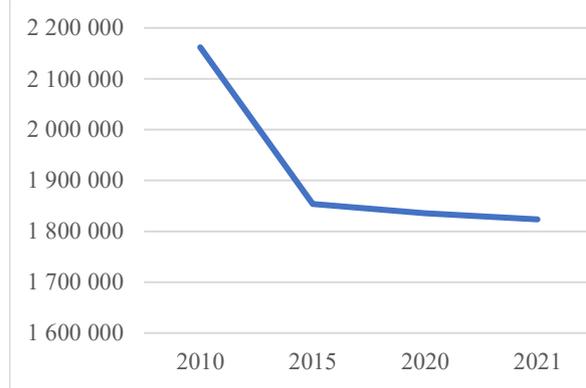
- Bucharest is the capital and the largest city in Romania. It is located on the banks Dâmbovița River of at the southeast part of the country.
- Bucharest is Romania's political, financial, industrial and cultural centre. The population in 2021 is 1.8 million. This is 16 percent lower than the 2010 population, which is 2.16 million (Figure25).
- Bucharest constitutes less than 10 percent of the total population but it generates one-fourth of the total GDP of Romania.
- GDP almost doubled from EUR 31 billion in 2010 to EUR 60 billion in 2020 (Figure 26). Unemployment rate in 2021 is 2.9 percent, which is significantly lower than 5.9 percent registered in the whole country.

Figure 26. Bucharest GDP Size 2010-2020, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

Figure 25. Population Trend of Bucharest 2010-2021



Source: Provided by the city during the survey

- Construction, real estate, retail, tourism and information technology are some of the most important economic sectors. Most of Romanian large companies have their headquarters in the city.
- The country's parliament is an important landmark in Bucharest. It is one of the largest parliaments building in the world. As an important cultural hub, other important landmarks are museums, libraries and performing arts buildings. These landmarks boost the city's tourism sector. In fact, Bucharest has one of the highest growths of the number of tourists who stayed at least one night.¹¹

Housing Situation in Bucharest

Conventional Dwellings in Budapest

Year	Conventional dwellings★ (Number)	
2010	TOTAL	795397
	Public property	17280
	Private property	778117
	0,97%	
2015	TOTAL	854879
	Public property	7800
	Private property	847079
	0,990%	
2020	TOTAL	888857
	Public property	7142
	Private property	881715
	0,991%	

2. Covid-19 response measure

Emergency relief and response measures

Measures	Brief description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary pausing of rent payments for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions 	<p>Small and medium-sized businesses that rent their business premises from the Municipality of Budapest were exempt from paying rent fees from March to June 2020. Lease rates for micro and small enterprises, NGOs and trade unions were reduced by 25% in the period from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2020. SMEs who decided on retaining their employees not only received an extension but also received significant discounts on rent payment in proportion to the decline in sales, but only by up to 90 percent.</p>

¹¹ Global Index of Urban Destinations. See: <http://business-review.eu/news/mastercard-study-bucharest-is-the-european-city-with-the-highest-growth-of-tourists-148885>

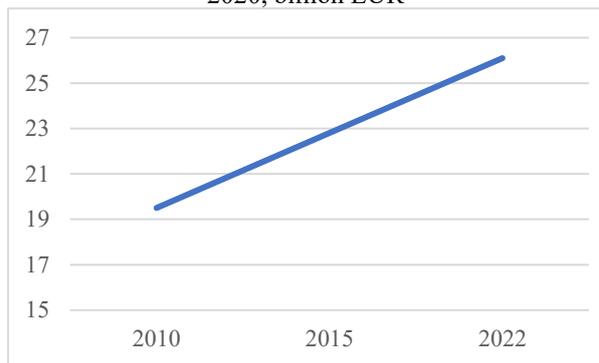
<p>• Tax reduction for affected local businesses, social and cultural institutions</p>	<p>As part of its coronavirus crisis relief, the Hungarian government halved the local business tax for companies with annual turnover of under 4 billion forints (EUR 11.1m) and fewer than 250 people on payroll.</p>
<p>• Support schemes for the elderly and other vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Until 31 December 2020, tenants of social houses owned by capital could have claimed a rental fee decrease proportional to their income if their income has decreased due to the pandemic.</p>
<p>• Other measures/initiatives, please specify</p>	<p>At the meeting of the Municipal Reconciliation Council (FŐÉT) in June 2020, the representatives of the employers' and employees' agreed that the Municipality of Budapest should respond to the social and economic situation caused by the pandemic. For this goal, they reached an agreement with the City Administration to help citizens who have lost their jobs, to aid distressed micro-enterprises, and support small and medium-sized businesses under the jointly developed new public health Start Program, Elderly Care Start Program, Digital Start Program pilot projects in Budapest. Pilot projects were accompanied by forms of training that would help those working in the public service to have a chance to return to the primary labour market after the program was completed. To this end, the Municipal Job Search Office has been extended by bringing the employment services closer to those in need, along with other social and human services.</p>

Slovakia

Bratislava

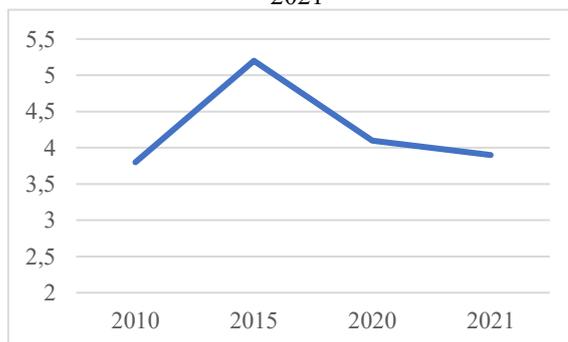
- Bratislava is the capital and the largest city of Slovakia. Located in the southwestern part of the country at the confluence of Danube and Morava rivers.
- Bratislava borders Austria to its west and Hungary to its south. Due to its border with these two countries, the city functions as a natural crossroad between east and west Europe.
- Its location contributes to the booming transport, tourism and other related sector. In fact, Bratislava's economy is dominated by service sector, which accounts to an estimated 75 percent of the total gross value added.
- Important economy sectors are telecommunication and information technology, construction, real estate and retail sectors. Aside from services sector, industrial sector is a major contributor to economy.
- Many international companies, including several car and electronic plants are located in Bratislava.
- Bratislava absorbs 60 percent of the total foreign direct investments flowing into the country.
- Bratislava economy 33 percent from 2010 to 2022, while unemployed workforce continued to decline from 5.2 percent in 2015 to 3.9 percent in 2021 (Figure 27 and 28, respectively).
- The city is also the political and cultural centre of the country. The parliament, ministries, presidency and supreme court are all located in Bratislava. Many of the historical buildings including Grassalkovich Palace, Bratislava Castle and several cathedral and museums are located in the city's old town.

Figure 27. Trend of GDP Growth of Bratislava, 2010-2020, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

Figure 28. Unemployment Rate of Bratislava 2010-2021

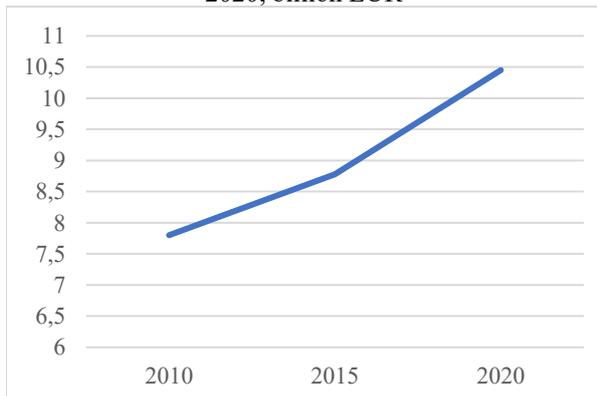


Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

Trnava

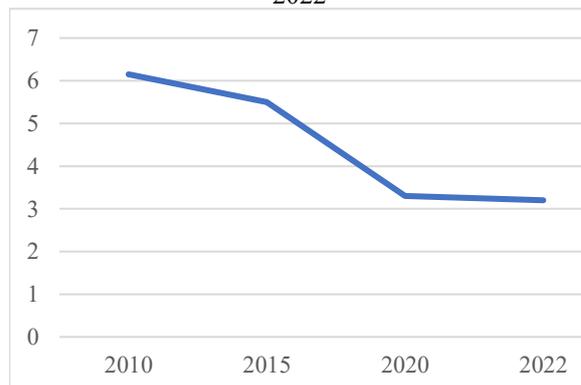
- Trnava, the capital of the Trnava region, is located in the western part of Slovakia, east of Bratislava, the country's capital.
- In 2021, it has a total population of 63 194 and is the third largest in Slovakia. The city's economy is dominated by automotive and electrical manufacturing industries since PSA Peugeot Citröen and Samsung established production in region in 2003 and 2008, respectively.
- Trnava also relies on tourism sector. It is often called the "Rome of Slovakia" or "Little Rome" due to numerous churches in the city.

Figure 29. Trend of GDP Growth of Trnava, 2010-2020, billion EUR



Source: Eurostat

Figure 30. Unemployment Rate of Trnava 2010-2022



Source: Eurostat