



Risks to Community Cohesion Between Ukrainian Refugees and Host Communities

The Czech Republic Report

WHITE PAPER | AUGUST 2023



Risks to Community Cohesion Between Ukrainian Refugees and Host Communities

The Czech Republic Report

Dr Ingrida Kerusauskaite

IFES

Žaneta Vencourová

IFES

Ruta Nimkar

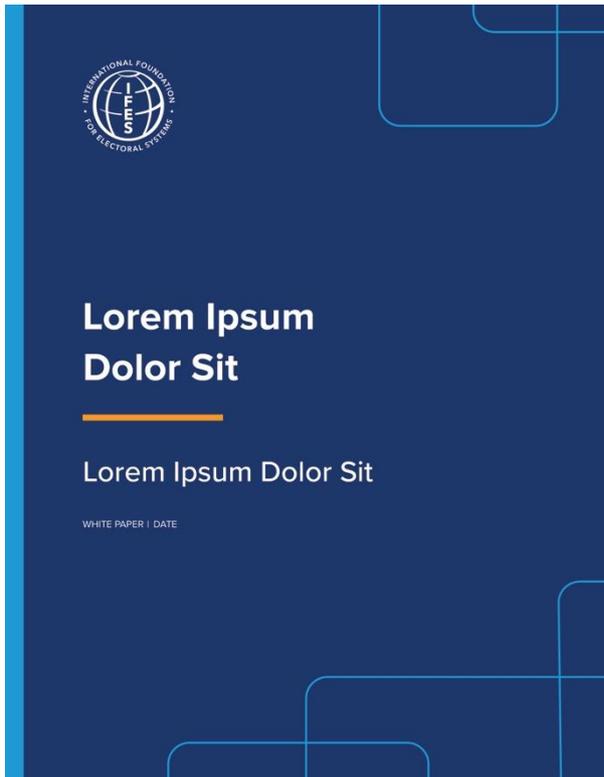
Meraki Labs

Agata Slota

Palladium

Additional research and review inputs: Leila Mulloy (Palladium), Maja Wesolowska (Palladium), Lisa Reppell (IFES), Lucinda Jones (Palladium), James Sparrow (Palladium), Fernanda Buriel (IFES)





Risks to Community Cohesion Between Ukrainian Refugees and Host Communities in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, governments, non-governmental organisations, businesses, multilateral organisations, and ordinary citizens have provided substantial support to Ukrainians fleeing Russia's 2022 invasion. However, as the war continues, the generosity shown to date might wane, including due to challenges that Czech host communities face such as a rising cost of living, shortages of affordable housing, as well as disinformation campaigns relating to refugees,

including by Russia-aligned stakeholders. This report aims to help understand the factors that might undermine cohesion between Ukrainian refugees and host communities in the Czech Republic in the medium term. It provides programmatic recommendations to local, national, and international stakeholders on what they could do to mitigate those factors. In addition, the report details the characteristics that have increased (or can increase) different Ukrainian refugees' vulnerabilities to exploitation, discrimination, and ability to access necessary services, as well as incendiary and misleading discourses about Ukrainian refugees that have appeared and have the potential to be spread further.

This material has been funded by UK aid from the UK government through the Community Cohesion in Central Europe project, under the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies or the views of IFES or Palladium.

Suggested Citation:

Kerusauskaitė, I., Vencourová, Ž, Nimkar, R. (2023). *Risks to Community Cohesion between Ukrainian Refugees and Host Communities – the Czech Republic*. Community Cohesion in Central Europe project.

About IFES

IFES advances democracy for a better future. We collaborate with civil society, public institutions and the private sector to build resilient democracies that deliver for everyone. As the global leader in the promotion and protection of democracy, our technical assistance and applied research develops trusted electoral bodies capable of conducting credible elections; effective and accountable governing institutions; civil and political processes in which all people can safely and equally participate; and innovative ways in which technology and data can positively serve elections and democracy. Since 1987, IFES has worked in more than 145 countries, from developing to mature democracies. IFES is a global, nonpartisan organization based in Arlington, Virginia, USA, and registered as a non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] under the United States tax code.

About Palladium

Palladium is a leading implementer of international development programmes. Working in over 90 countries and across a broad range of sectors, we offer donor agencies a balance of global scale and in-house technical expertise. Aid is a critical component of our shared pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, and we bring our knowledge of the private sector to bear in designing solutions that use aid to spark lasting social and economic development. In 2021, our projects touched the lives of over 42 million people. We helped raise the incomes of 552,000 individuals by a total of GBP 122,115,000, while focusing on those most in need. Our forestry and climate projects led to the protection or restoration of over one million hectares of land. We delivered 33 million relief and medical items and helped develop or strengthen 335 policies. And we catalysed GBP 651,500,000 in public and private sector investment, all with the aim of making the world a better place.

Table of Contents



Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	9
Objectives	9
Approach, Methodology, and Structure of the Report.....	10
Chapter 1. Country Overview	13
Chapter 2. Vulnerabilities to exploitation and discrimination	15
2.1 Overview	15
2.2 Legal status, welfare, and benefits	16
2.3 Healthcare.....	19
2.4 Housing.....	21
2.5 Education	22
2.6 Employment and Income	24
2.7 Community, social, and political life	26
Chapter 3. Misleading or incendiary discourses about Ukrainian refugees.....	29
3.1 Overview	29
3.2 Top five discourses	37
Discourse 1: ‘Refugees receive more financial support and better benefits than the local population’.....	37
Discourse 2: ‘Ukrainians create burdens on the housing system and take locals’ places’	42
Discourse 3: ‘Ukrainians create burdens on the healthcare system and take locals’ places’	43
Discourse 4: ‘They are crime risks and security threats’	44
Discourse 5: ‘New arrivals from Ukraine take jobs from the local population, they are willing to work for significantly lower wages, and they are destroying the labour market’	46
Chapter 4. Potential tensions	48
4.1 Overview	48

4.2 Legal status, welfare, and benefits	49
4.3 Healthcare.....	49
4.4 Housing	50
4.5 Education	51
4.6 Employment	52
4.7 Community, social, and political life	54
Chapter 5. Programmatic approach recommendations	58
5.1 Overview	58
5.2 Cross-cutting programmatic approaches	58
5.3 Legal Status, welfare, and benefits.....	61
5.4 Healthcare.....	62
5.5 Housing	63
5.6 Education	64
5.7 Employment and Income	66
Annex 1. Acronyms and abbreviations	74
Annex 2. Key Statistics – Czech Republic.....	75
Annex 3. Statistics, surveys and research reports	77

List of tables



Table 1: Characteristics that can make refugees vulnerable in the Czech Republic.....	15
Table 2: Misleading or incendiary discourses about refugees in the Czech Republic.....	33
Table 3: Potential sources of tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities.....	48
Table 4: Summary of the key discourses, underlying challenges, characteristics that can make refugees vulnerable and potential tensions between refugees and host communities in the Czech Republic	72

List of figures



Figure 1: The IFES Chain of Harm Framework	29
Figure 2: Misleading Facebook post about the differences in support to Czechs and Ukrainians	34
Figure 3: Facebook post about benefits that Ukrainians receive.....	37
Figure 4: Facebook post about the benefits that refugees receive (2)	38
Figure 5: Facebook post suggesting refugees are 'picky'	39
Figure 6: Post regarding fairness of support for Ukrainian refugees	42

Executive Summary

Background

The world was shaken by Russia's brutal escalation of hostilities and full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the ensuing human suffering. By March 2023, European countries recorded more than 8 million people displaced by the violence in Ukraine, with more than 5 million having registered for temporary protection (TP) or similar national protection schemes on the continent.¹ More than 500,000 people registered for TP in the Czech Republic – the second-largest number of Ukrainian refugees within the EU and the highest per capita.²

Ukrainian refugees have been warmly welcomed by Czech institutions and citizens. Governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, multilateral organisations, and ordinary citizens provided whatever support they could to Ukrainians fleeing the invasion. While a quick end to the war is hoped for, it is possible that the conflict will become prolonged, and therefore likely that displaced Ukrainians will continue to reside in the Czech Republic and other European countries.

The Czech Republic also faces significant challenges – rising economic pressures and relentless disinformation efforts,³ among others. There is a risk that these factors may erode currently high community cohesion in the longer term. In other crises, over time, tensions have led to increased polarisation of society and discrimination or hate crimes against minorities. Some early signs point to support for refugees beginning to erode in some countries. In Slovakia, for instance, GLOBSEC polling from December 2022 found that only 42 percent of the population viewed Ukrainian refugees positively.⁴ In September 2022 in the Czech Republic, energy protestors demanded that the government 'enter into direct gas supply contracts with Russia' and 'return Ukrainian refugees to their homes'.⁵ Looking ahead, with the invasion ongoing, the priorities of organisations that currently support Ukrainian refugees might change, resulting in a drop in funding available to support refugees and communities hosting them.

Despite these challenges, the disruption to the status quo leads to clear opportunities to improve the situation and general standards of living for both refugees and local communities.

Objectives

Several months into the war's second year, this report aims to help understand the factors that might undermine cohesion between Ukrainian refugees and host communities in the Czech Republic in the medium term and provide recommendations for what relevant organisations could do to mitigate those factors. We provide

¹ UNHCR. 2023. [Operational Data Portal](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

² UNHCR. 2023. [Operational Data Portal](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³ Council of the European Union. 2022. [EU Imposes Sanctions on State-Owned Outlets RT/Russia Today and Sputnik's Broadcasting in the EU](#). Accessed 31 March 2023.

⁴ GLOBSEC. 2022. [New report shows that the V4 population supports Ukrainian refugees with some reservations](#). Accessed 22 March 2023. There has been debate about methodological approaches to polling conducted by GLOBSEC and the [Slovak Academy of Science](#), such as noting the different scales given to participants to respond to questions (1–5 or 1–10) and how responses were collected (online or in person), even when the question posed is the same. See GLOBSEC. 2002. [New poll: Slovaks want Ukraine to win the war, Not Russia](#). Accessed 22 March 2023.

⁵ Chastand, Jean-Baptiste. Le Monde. 2022. [In the Czech Republic, the social crisis has awakened pro-Russian forces](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

recommendations for specific programmes as well as programmatic and service delivery approaches that local, national, and international stakeholders could take to increase community cohesion and reduce the likelihood of these potential tensions occurring.

Approach and methodology

The research was conducted between November 2022 and March 2023. The team first carried out desk-based research. This was followed by a research workshop in Prague on 1–2 February with 65 experts from a broad range of organisations. In total, the project engaged with 229 workshop participants across five countries. The research activities focused on (1) the characteristics that can make refugees more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and difficulty accessing services; (2) incendiary and misleading discourses about Ukrainian refugees in the country; and (3) tensions that might arise between refugees and host communities in the medium term (by September 2023). The research team followed up with a survey that asked key experts to rate the effectiveness of various programmatic responses in mitigating the five tensions that are most likely to affect community cohesion by September 2023 and to share programmatic lessons learnt that could be useful for others working in this space. The team then supplemented the findings from the workshops and surveys with additional desk-based research.

Structure of the report

The report considers the characteristics that have increased, and can increase, different Ukrainian refugees' vulnerabilities to exploitation, discrimination, and ability to access necessary services (Chapter 2); the incendiary and misleading discourses about Ukrainian refugees that have been noted and have potential to be further spread (Chapter 3); the possible tensions that might occur between Ukrainian refugees and host communities in the medium term (Chapter 4); and the various programmatic responses that could be applicable in the region to mitigate the risks at each stage of the refugees' journey (Chapter 5).

Each chapter covers six stages of Ukrainian refugees' journeys in the country: (1) entry, legal status, and registration for services; (2) healthcare; (3) housing; (4) education; (5) employment and income; and (6) community, social, and political life. This enables the report to bring out more clearly the links between misleading and incendiary discourses, the underlying challenges that such discourses exploit, the increased vulnerabilities of certain groups of Ukrainian refugees, and where tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities might emerge or become more significant, as well as to offer more targeted recommendations.

Key Findings

Economic concerns are a key driver of potential tensions

Polling has consistently shown that, since mid-2022, populations across Europe are concerned about economic factors, such as the rising cost of living. Eurobarometer's winter 2022–2023 survey reported that 34 percent of Czech respondents considered the cost of living among the two most pressing issues Europe faces, closely followed by the energy supply.⁶ The survey conducted the previous autumn also found that 91 percent of Czech

⁶ Eurobarometer. 2023. [Standard Eurobarometer 98: Winter Eurobarometer 2022-2023: Czechia](#). Accessed 12 July 2023.

respondents reported being ‘worried’ about the rising cost of living, including food and energy prices.⁷ With the increase in fuel and energy prices, discourses asking ‘What about the Czech citizens?’ or saying ‘Ukrainian refugees are draining our social system at a time when domestic citizens are being crushed by inflation’ have appeared.⁸ The narrative that rich Ukrainians siphon aid they don’t need from the needy has been present since the beginning of the Russian invasion.⁹ Disinformation actors’ narratives have evolved to blame Ukrainians for ‘robbing’ Czech citizens of much-needed resources and accused the government of being more pro-Ukrainian than pro-Czech.¹⁰

Some grievances may be partially based in truth. For example, in the Czech Republic, Ukrainian refugees were provided some social benefits that locals were not eligible for, such as subsidised public transport until the end of September 2022.¹¹ Workshop participants also pointed out that some short-term initiatives at the local level, such as churches providing free meals to Ukrainian children, were interpreted as much more substantial support to refugees than to Czech citizens.¹² Many measures to assist refugees, however, were temporary. At the same time, Czechs had access to a broader range of benefits which could add up to more than Ukrainians received.¹³ Workshop participants also noted that some respondents believed that local taxpayers paid for much of the support to refugees, although it was actually funded by the European Union and voluntary charitable donations.

To mitigate potential tensions around economic concerns, this report makes the recommendations below, with these and others detailed in Chapter 5.

- Implement phasing programmes – that is, change approaches to target support to those who are most vulnerable as the conflict continues.
- Ensure and communicate equity in the distribution of resources among Ukrainian and local populations that are in need, and publicise the additional resources (international funding and voluntary domestic donations) that the country receives to support the refugees.
- Share positive stories on social media, for example about Ukrainian and host community relationships, support and solidarity, and the contributions that Ukrainian refugees make to the country.
- Extend programmes supporting refugees to more vulnerable local communities.
- Engage with businesses and organisations to help them make the most of a more diverse workforce.

Political discourses, fuelled by disinformation and historic grievances, have the potential to stir tensions

⁷ European Commission. 2023. [EP Autumn 2022 Survey: Parlemeter](#). Accessed 10 April 2023.

⁸ See, for example, Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023; Vasilache, Mariana. 2022. [Război în Ucraina: Campanie online împotriva refugiaților ucraineni din Republica Moldova](#). Accessed 29 March 2023.

⁹ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – November 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁰ Czech Elves. 2023. [Monthly report – December+January 2023](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹¹ For example, iDNES. 2022. [Bezplatná MHD či zoo pro uprchlíky z Ukrajiny v Ostravě od října skončí](#). Accessed 10 March 2023

¹² Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹³ For the first 150 days, Ukrainian refugees are generally provided humanitarian aid of CZK 5,000; Czech citizens do not have access to benefits of this amount. The social benefit that refugees receive which corresponds to humanitarian aid is the amount of the ‘living minimum’ – for example, CZK 4,860 for an individual in a single-person household, although amounts vary by category. For information on social benefits, see the [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) website, including the [Životní a existenční minimum](#) section. Czechs can apply for other types of social benefits, such as unemployment benefits, housing allowance, and maternity allowance. See also Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc pro občany Ukrajiny a jejich zaměstnavatele](#). Accessed 12 February 2023; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc občanům Ukrajiny](#). Accessed 13 January, 2023; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Průvodce](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

Russian-aligned stakeholders have been active in spreading disinformation in the Czech Republic.¹⁴ Russia-backed narratives aim to discredit Ukraine and weaken support for Ukrainians, focusing on Ukraine as the culprit and portraying it as a pro-Western puppet.¹⁵ Within the country, a generally negative attitude toward migration¹⁶ has persisted since the beginning of a wave of migration from Afghanistan and Syria in 2015¹⁷ which some stakeholders attempt to build on to influence public opinion against Ukrainians.¹⁸

Such narratives gain traction during politically active periods. Negative narratives about Ukrainian refugees during the 2022 Czech elections put forward the viewpoint that the Czech Republic was providing too much support to Ukrainian refugees.¹⁹

To mitigate potential tensions that can arise due to political discourses, this report recommends:

- Conducting more activities to increase interactions that members of both communities enjoy (such as movie screenings or sports activities), providing opportunities for the groups to meet and get to know one another.
- Implementing strategic communications to reach target audiences and penetrate information bubbles.
- Creating additional free or affordable after-school activities for the children of both communities, which also provide an avenue for parents to become acquainted.
- Improving the training of search engines and generative artificial intelligence to help reduce bias and potential abuse.
- Organising community dialogues around topics such as fear of insecurity and war, Ukrainian history and culture, and the realities of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Producing radio and TV programming to address tensions, including 'edutainment' that uses fiction to help build inter-community understanding.
- Working with journalists to support quality journalism that does not contribute to the spread of incendiary discourses.
- Reviewing school curricula, including the teaching of history and digital literacy.

Many of the challenges are rooted in long-standing operational issues

Our research demonstrates that many of the concerns that Czech host communities expressed, and, with them, the incendiary and misleading narratives shared by actors with malicious intent as well as some parts of the population, are rooted in longstanding issues such as a strained healthcare and housing system. This includes staff shortages in the healthcare system,²⁰ uneven provision of healthcare services across urban and rural

¹⁴ Vox Ukraine – Kremlin Watchers Movement Team. 2023. [Russian Disinformation Narratives in Czech Republic in January 2023: policy brief within Kremlin Watchers Movement project](#). Accessed 11 July 2023; Gosling, Tim. Reporting Democracy. 2022. [Czech war on disinformation is still mostly talk](#). Accessed 11 July 2023.

¹⁵ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁶ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁷ Public opinion polls reflect the general negative attitude of Czechs toward refugees; despite the fact that the migration wave of 2015–2016 did not affect the Czech Republic at all, the negative attitude remains. Drbohlav, D. and Janurova, K. (2019). [Migration and Integration in Czechia: Policy Advance and the Hand Brake of Populism](#). Accessed 03 August 2023.

¹⁸ Krátka Špalková, V., Strážci-Guardians (2022) [Dva hlavní dezinformační narativy související s ruskou invazí na Ukrajinu – II](#), Accessed on: 18 March 2023

¹⁹ Ridgwell, Henry. VOA News. 2023. [Czechs Prepare to Choose New President, as Rivals Clash Over Support for Ukraine](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

²⁰ ČT 24. 2023. [V Česku chybí praktičtí. Zájem o studium oborů je velký, stát je ale dlouho nepodporoval, shodli se Válek se Šonkou](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

populations,²¹ and a sharp increase in housing prices in 2021, which led to the exclusion of lower-income and first-time buyers from the property market and drove up rent prices.²²

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees has highlighted some of these longstanding challenges; it can also accelerate their resolution, as these issues have become even more visible. In some cases, different sources of funding might become accessible to address the issues, which could improve the situation for both Ukrainians and host communities.

To mitigate potential tensions around long-standing operational challenges, this report recommends:

- Linking work focused on community cohesion with broader efforts to improve operational concerns in the country.
- Conducting conflict and context analysis to inform programming and communication campaigns and implementing specific programs to improve access to services for the local and refugee populations where needed (e.g., by providing translation services for healthcare and mobile clinics or supporting social intermediaries in the rental process, guaranteeing rent payments and minimum tenancy standards).²³

²¹ European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. 2023. [Czechia: Health System Review](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

²² Beeckman, Wouter, and Báča, P. KBC. 2022. [Czech residential real estate market, a reason for concern](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

²³ See, for example, Habitat for Humanity. n.d. [Introducing Social Rental Agencies in Poland](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

Introduction

The world was shaken by Russia's brutal escalation of hostilities and full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the ensuing human suffering. By March 2023, European countries recorded more than 8 million people displaced by the violence in Ukraine, with more than 5 million having registered for temporary protection (TP) or similar national protection schemes on the continent.²⁴ Just over 500,000 people registered for TP in the Czech Republic in that period – the second-highest number of Ukrainian refugees within the European Union (EU) and the highest per capita.²⁵

Ukrainian refugees have been warmly welcomed by Czech institutions and citizens. Governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, multilateral organisations, and ordinary citizens provided whatever support they could to Ukrainians fleeing the invasion. While a quick end to the war is hoped for, it is possible that the conflict will become prolonged, and therefore likely that displaced Ukrainians will continue to reside in the Czech Republic and other European countries.

The Czech Republic is also faces significant challenges – rising economic pressures, relentless disinformation efforts, potential policy pitfalls, and others. There is a risk that these factors may erode currently high community cohesion in the longer term. In other crises, over time, tensions have led to increased polarisation of society and discrimination or hate crimes against minorities. This in turn can decrease the resilience of a society to disinformation and to shocks more broadly and, in the worst cases, increase criminality and violence or conflict between communities and lead to human rights violations including the exploitation of vulnerable individuals and lack of access to basic services.

Some early signs point to support for Ukrainian refugees beginning to erode in some countries. In Slovakia, for instance, GLOBSEC polling from December 2022 found that only 42 percent of the population viewed Ukrainian refugees positively.²⁶ In September 2022, energy protestors in the Czech Republic demanded that the government 'enter into direct gas supply contracts with Russia' and 'return Ukrainian refugees to their homes'.²⁷

Objectives

Several months into the war's second year, this report aims to help understand the factors that might undermine cohesion between Ukrainian refugees and host communities in the Czech Republic in the medium term.

We provide recommendations for specific programmes as well as programmatic and service delivery approaches that local, national, and international stakeholders could take to increase community cohesion and reduce the likelihood of these potential tensions occurring.

²⁴ UNHCR. 2023. [Operational Data Portal](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

²⁵ UNHCR. 2023. [Operational Data Portal](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

²⁶ GLOBSEC. 2022. [New report shows that the V4 population supports Ukrainian refugees with some reservations](#). Accessed 22 March 2023. There has been debate about methodological approaches to polling conducted by GLOBSEC and the [Slovak Academy of Science](#), such as noting the different scales given to participants to respond to questions (1–5 or 1–10) and how responses were collected (online or in-person), even when the question posed is the same. See GLOBSEC. 2002. [New poll: Slovaks want Ukraine to win the war, Not Russia](#). Accessed 22 March 2023.

²⁷ Chastand, Jean-Baptiste. Le Monde. 2022. [In the Czech Republic, the social crisis has awakened pro-Russian forces](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

We understand community cohesion²⁸ as a society in which:

- All communities have a sense of belonging;
- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued;
- Similar life opportunities are available to all; and
- Strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools, and in the wider community.

This report considers community cohesion at the local, regional, and national levels.

Approach, Methodology, and Structure of the Report

The project team conducted research in five focus countries: the Czech Republic, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. In total, six research reports were produced: five country reports and a regional report. The regional report summarises the findings of the country reports and draws out the key commonalities and differences in the potential tensions that might arise between the Ukrainian refugee and host communities. This report focuses on the Czech Republic.

To conduct the research, the project engaged a diverse team: a core team responsible for the overall research framework, methodology and delivery across the five countries, country researchers in each focus country, and an advisory group of subject matter experts to provide specialist inputs. The same approach and methodology were used for each country.

The research was undertaken in two phases. The inception phase took place between November and December 2022. The research team developed the approach and methodology and conducted initial desk-based research. This research examined the key relevant stakeholders in each country, existing programmes in this space, and characteristics that can make different refugee groups vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and challenges in accessing services. Finally, the team completed an initial mapping of the tensions that might arise between the host communities and refugees in the medium term.

The research phase took place between January and March 2023. The research team organised interactive two-day workshops with key experts from government, multilateral organisations, local and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), and academia. The morning session on the first workshop day was conducted only with Ukrainian refugees, discussing the characteristics that can make refugees more vulnerable. Representatives from academia and local NGOs joined the afternoon sessions which focused on refugee journeys. The second day included a broad range of participants and focused on incendiary and misleading discourses about Ukrainian refugees in the country and tensions that might arise in the medium term. In the Czech Republic, the workshops were conducted on 1 and 2 February, with 65 experts from a broad range of organisations in the country. In total, the project engaged with 229 workshop participants across the five countries. The discussions focused on the mid-term future, with September 2023 as a focus point, to orient the discussion toward the risks that might become significant in the medium term. The research team then followed up with key experts through a survey, asking them to rate the effectiveness of various programmatic responses to mitigate

²⁸ Slight variations of this definition are used by various schools and councils in the UK and put forward by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, now called the Department for Education.

the five tensions that are most likely to affect community cohesion by September 2023 and to share programmatic lessons learnt that could be useful for others working in this space. Finally, the findings from the workshops and the surveys were supplemented by additional desk-based research.

The report is structured according to the different stages of Ukrainian refugees' journeys in the country: (1) entry, legal status, and registration for services; (2) healthcare; (3) housing; (4) education; (5) employment; and (6) community, social, and political life. This allows the report to bring out more clearly the links between misleading and incendiary discourses, the underlying challenges that such discourses exploit, the increased vulnerabilities of certain groups of Ukrainian refugees, and where tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities might emerge or become more significant, as well as to offer more targeted recommendations.

Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of the legal structures to facilitate the reception of the refugees and the support provided to refugees by various organisations.

Chapter 2 details the characteristics that have increased, and can increase, different Ukrainian refugees' vulnerabilities to exploitation, discrimination, and ability to access necessary services. This chapter draws on the desk-based research and research workshop findings.

Chapter 3 focuses on incendiary and misleading discourses about Ukrainian refugees. This section is based on IFES' Chain of Harm framework,²⁹ which maps the path by which disinformation, misinformation, and dangerous speech (DMDS) move through an information ecosystem, depicting the ways in which directed disinformation commonly amplifies hate speech or other divisive narratives to achieve its aims. This chapter draws on three sources of data: (1) findings from the in-country workshops, (2) research from third parties on misleading and incendiary discourses about Ukrainian refugees, and (3) Facebook content found via CrowdTangle.³⁰ The approach led to the development of recommendations regarding discrete intervention points where the Chain of Harm could be disrupted.

Chapter 4 summarises the tensions that might occur between Ukrainian refugees and host communities in the medium term. It presents a long list of possible tensions to highlight the possibility of malign actors relentlessly promoting related discourses and of underlying challenges worsening enough to increase tensions around the particular subject. This chapter draws on the desk-based research and research workshop findings.

Chapter 5 provides programmatic recommendations, first cross-cutting and then specific to the stages of the refugee journey, aimed at reducing potential tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities. This chapter focuses particularly on the five potential tensions identified as highest risks in the country. It draws on the survey on programmatic responses, information gathered during the workshops, and desk-based research to discuss various programmatic responses that could be applicable in the Czech Republic to mitigate the risks of those tensions. The programmatic recommendations are intentionally broad, but they include illustrative examples to enable a range of organisations – from governments and multilateral organisations to NGOs of various sizes, as well as small community initiatives, to consider and adapt in their programming.

²⁹ Reppell, Lisa, and Shein, E. IFES. 2019. [Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions](#)

³⁰ The team used the CrowdTangle research tool to triangulate the findings from the workshops and third-party research and to identify examples to incorporate in the report. See CrowdTangle. 2023. [Welcome page](#). Accessed 22 March 2023.

Annex 1 is a list of acronyms and abbreviations, and **Annex 2** presents data on the key political, economic, and demographic characteristics of the country as well as statistics on the numbers of refugees hosted, their demographic characteristics, financial support received, access to services and employment, and host population attitude polling figures.

Given that the political, economic and broader context can change very quickly after the publication of this report, **Annex 3** provides a summary of the key links to relevant statistics and reports that can be consulted for an up-to-date picture of the situation. Annex 3 also provides a list of recommended readings for deeper dives into the topics discussed in this report – Ukrainian refugees’ needs and challenges, reports on discrimination, pressures on social services, public attitude polling, disinformation discourses, programme lessons learnt and other topics.

This report has been commissioned by the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office and delivered by a consortium of Palladium and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), in collaboration with British Embassies in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova.

Chapter 1. Country Overview

In the 13 months from the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 to May 2023, more than 500,000 Ukrainian refugees registered for temporary protection according to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).³¹ This was the second-highest number of Ukrainian refugees within the EU and the highest per capita. The Czech Republic has made a sizeable effort to support Ukrainian refugees, and it is also among the most outspoken in condemning the invasion of Ukraine.³² There has been robust demonstration of support for Ukrainian refugees from the Czech government, NGOs, multilateral organisations and ordinary citizens. This broad response was taken despite the country's limited infrastructure and recent experience supporting large refugee inflows, having hosted fewer than 2,000 refugees in 2020 and 2021.³³

The government established strong legal structures to facilitate the refugees' reception and their stay in the Czech Republic. In March 2022, the Czech Republic signed the Lex Ukraine I–IV package of three government bills that outlined the implementation of the new Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainian nationals and their families and provided a national legal framework to facilitate the registration and, subsequently, integration and inclusion, of refugees (including rapid registration, access to the labour market, and social benefits).³⁴

The non-profit sector – particularly NGOs that had been working with migrants for a long time – were key actors at the beginning of the crisis. Working alongside multilateral organisations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR, and International Organisation for Migration (IOM), sector actors identified gaps where current systems and emergency responses could be improved and strengthened.³⁵ The non-profit sector's expertise and ability to pivot from affiliated areas (e.g., social work) enabled quick mobilisation of an extensive network of volunteers to handle the first wave of refugees in February and March with dignity.

However, Czech social services and systems were already stretched before the war, and pressure is increasing on the country's housing, health, and education systems. Other challenges are likely to arise as the conflict protracts and people's needs and concerns evolve, particularly in the context of continued rises in inflation (at 9.3 percent in late March 2023)³⁶ and various Russia-aligned stakeholders continuing disinformation campaigns. Incendiary and misleading narratives about refugees, such as the government preferring and prioritising foreigners, or that refugees pose security threats, can exacerbate concerns and erode community cohesion. Looking ahead, with the invasion ongoing, the priorities of organisations that currently support Ukrainian refugees might change, which might result in a drop in funding available to support refugees and communities hosting them.

Despite these challenges, the disruption to the status quo leads to clear opportunities to improve the situation for both refugees and local communities. With the right information to hand, and building on strong support throughout the Czech third sector, the government, and the public, there is an opening to support more diverse

³¹ UNHCR. 2023. [Operational Data Portal](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³² European Centre for Populism Studies. [Our people first \(again\)! The impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on the populist Radical Right in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

³³ UNHCR. 2022. [Refugee Data Finder](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

³⁴ European Commission. 2023. [European Website on Integration](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

³⁵ UNHCR. 2022. [Ukraine Situation Inter-Agency Operational Update Czech Republic July to October 2022](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³⁶ European Commission. 2023. [Economic Forecasts](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

and more cohesive communities throughout the Czech Republic. Ukrainians can also contribute positively to the Czech economy, as predicted by the Ministry of Finance's Macroeconomic Forecast for the country.³⁷

³⁷ Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic. 2022. [Macroeconomic Forecast of the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

Chapter 2. Vulnerabilities to exploitation and discrimination

2.1 Overview

Between 24 February 2022 and 20 March 2023, 499,887 refugees from Ukraine registered for TP in the Czech Republic.³⁸ Compared to other countries in the region, the Czech Republic has accepted the largest number of refugees per capita.³⁹ According to the UNHCR Refugee Response Plan situation report for the period July–October 2022, the largest groups arriving from Ukraine were women (approximately 47 percent) and children (approximately 33 percent).⁴⁰

Chapter 2 details the official refugee journey through the six identified stages: (1) registering for legal status, welfare, and benefits; (2) healthcare; (3) housing; (4) education; (5) employment and income; and (6) community, social, and political life. It then identifies some intersectional characteristics that can make people particularly vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination, and to experience challenges accessing services (summarised in Table 1). They have been selected as they have had an impact on refugees' experiences to date and are likely to affect refugees in the future, particularly if programmatic priorities change, financial support decreases and/or disinformation efforts gain more traction.

Table 1: Characteristics that can make refugees vulnerable in the Czech Republic

Journey stage	Characteristics that can make refugees vulnerable
Legal status, welfare, and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with complex cases for TP, including third country nationals (TCNs), can face challenges in registering for TP and accessing their rights. • People with low digital literacy struggle to access information on legal status, rights, and benefits. • People with disabilities, particularly mobility issues, face challenges getting to in-person appointments to complete TP registration. • People living below the poverty line or on low incomes may not have access to the resources to complete the application process and are vulnerable to exploitation. • Unaccompanied children who cross the border without a legal guardian (or any guardian) face additional challenges and are vulnerable to exploitation.
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities have access to healthcare and social services but may not be entitled to certain social benefits if they cannot confirm the disability. • People with mental health conditions or who experience trauma may struggle to obtain mental health services due to lack of information, language barriers, financial situation, or shame associated with seeking help. • Elderly refugees are more likely to have healthcare needs but face additional barriers to access. • Children with chronic or complex health needs may not be able to access specialist care due to strains on the health service and a shortage of paediatricians.

³⁸ UNHCR. 2023. [Operational Data Portal](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

³⁹ UNHCR. 2022. [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation – Inter-Agency Operational Update: Czech Republic, July – October 2022](#). Accessed 18 November 2022.

⁴⁰ UNHCR. 2022. [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation – Inter-Agency Operational Update: Czech Republic, July – October 2022](#). Accessed 18 November 2022.

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with low incomes have fewer housing options and are more likely to live in collective accommodation for extended periods. • Refugees outside Prague have fewer social housing options and may need additional assistance to move independently, particularly if on lower incomes. • Roma refugees face discrimination and prejudice and are more likely to experience poverty, making access to housing less secure. • Elderly people may have unique housing needs to support healthy aging and social inclusion.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten places may not be sufficient for children of pre-school age. • Children who do not speak Czech face challenges integrating into local schools. • Children of all ages attending online Ukrainian school face additional risks of isolation and failure to integrate. • Children of ethnic minority groups, including Roma, face exclusion from mainstream services.
Employment and income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single parents, with a disproportionate burden falling on women, lack access to affordable or available child care, making it challenging to enter employment. • Ukrainians, especially if they do not speak Czech or English, are often employed in lower-skilled roles that do not match their experience, qualifications, and abilities. • People on low incomes may have to rely on employment agencies to find work, and risk labour exploitation. • Unemployed refugees can face stigma and isolation, and experience additional mental health challenges and risks.
Community, social, and political life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities can be excluded from community life due to barriers of access or prejudice. • People experiencing mental health issues or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and trauma can struggle to integrate or participate in community life, and may be vulnerable to risky behaviours (e.g., addiction). • Elderly refugees, particularly if they live alone or in sheltered housing, can experience social isolation, loneliness, and neglect. • Roma refugees can face discrimination and prejudice, making integration particularly challenging.

2.2 Legal status, welfare, and benefits

Since 24 February 2022, refugees from Ukraine have been entitled to enter and remain in the Czech Republic without a visa for up to 90 days provided they register with the Alien and Border Police within 30 days of entry.⁴¹ Should they wish to remain in the country, refugees from Ukraine are also eligible to claim TP. In line with the European Union Directive, in March 2022 the government of the Czech Republic enacted the Lex Ukraine,⁴² granting an initial year of TP (until March 2023). The Ministry of the Interior subsequently extended the TP period to March 2024⁴³ via a new amendment to Act 65/2022 Coll. (the so-called Lex Ukraine IV⁴⁴) which incorporates the Temporary Protection Directive into Czech legislation.⁴⁵

Ukrainian citizens and direct family members of citizens of Ukraine (regardless of nationality) are eligible to apply for TP in-person at a Regional Centre for Help and Assistance to Ukraine (abbreviated to KACPU in Czech).⁴⁶ TCNs and stateless persons who were granted international protection or held a valid residence permit in Ukraine before 24 February 2022, and who are unable to return to their country or region of origin in safe conditions, are entitled to receive TP in the Czech Republic.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁴² Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁴³ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc občanům Ukrajiny](#). Accessed 13 January 2023.

⁴⁴ See [Czech Republic: Fourth amendment to the "Lex Ukraine" law package](#) for more details.

⁴⁵ European Commission. 2023. [Temporary protection](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁴⁶ Government of the Czech Republic. 2022. [Informace k prodloužení dočasné ochrany](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁴⁷ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

At a KACPU, in addition to registering for TP and with the Foreign Police, refugees receive assistance and information on rights and benefits, including how to access to healthcare, education, and housing support in the Czech Republic; where to seek specialist psychosocial help or counselling; and how to obtain employment guidance from the Labor Office of the Czech Republic.⁴⁸ To extend TP status beyond the initial year, each refugee who arrived in the Czech Republic after the Russian invasion of Ukraine was required to (1) register online no later than 31 March 2023 and (2) then, no later than the end of September 2023,⁴⁹ appear for an appointment at the office of the Ministry of the Interior, where the visa sticker will be affixed to his or her travel document.⁵⁰ During the period between the online registration and personal visit, TP is automatically extended. TP expires if a refugee has not registered by the end of March or obtained the visa sticker by the end of September 2023.⁵¹ Upon receipt of a visa sticker, Temporary Protection is extended until 31 March 2024. If a refugee does not obtain the required visa sticker by 30 September 2023, they are able to apply for TP again, if they still meet the requirements for the scheme.⁵² Guidance on the registration system, published by the Ministry of the Interior, is available in Ukrainian and Czech.⁵³

The groups discussed below have been identified by the desk-based research and the research workshops as facing particular challenges at this stage of the refugee journey.

People with complex TP cases, including TCNs: The Czech Republic has different registration systems for displaced persons fleeing Ukraine – Ukrainian citizens (including residents who arrived in the Czech Republic both before and after 24 February 2022) and TCNs. Information regarding different TP circumstances is available in Czech, English, and Ukrainian from the Ministry of the Interior.⁵⁴ However, differences in status and registration processes risk leaving some individuals unclear regarding their legal status and rights. For example, additional complexities may arise for Ukrainians who held valid residence permits in another EU country prior to February 2022 and those who held valid residence permits in the Czech Republic but did not extend their stay after 24 February 2022. The Ministry of the Interior states that these groups may not be eligible for TP in the Czech Republic. Instead, they must apply for TP in the state that granted their residence permit or apply for other provisions in the Czech Republic, such as asylum.⁵⁵

In a report on a May 2022 fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic, the Council of Europe's Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees pointed out the absence of free legal aid and state-funded counselling to support individuals with unusual or exceptional cases. The lack of this assistance left some refugees vulnerable and potentially unable to secure TP status.⁵⁶ Participants in the research workshop also expressed concerns about the legal aid and judicial review process – and restrictions on the right of appeal⁵⁷

⁴⁸ Prague City Hall. 2023. [Krajské asistenční centrum pomoci Ukrajíně v Praze](#). Accessed 10 January 2023.

⁴⁹ The application enables refugees to select a date for the appointment at the office of the Ministry of the Interior. [Dočasná ochrana](#) provides more details on the procedures.

⁵⁰ Government of the Czech Republic. 2022. [Informace k prodloužení dočasné ochrany](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁵¹ Government of the Czech Republic. 2022. [Informace k prodloužení dočasné ochrany](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁵² Government of the Czech Republic. 2022. [Informace k prodloužení dočasné ochrany](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁵³ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁵⁴ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁵⁵ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁵⁶ Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees. 2022. [Report of the fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic by Ms Leyla Kayacik](#) (4–6 May). Accessed 7 January 2023.

⁵⁷ Supreme Administrative Court. 2022. [Judgment of the Supreme Administrative Court of 12 October 2022](#) and Regional Court in Ústí nad Labem. 2022. [Judgment of the Regional Court in Ústí nad Labem from 25 July 2022](#)

in particular – noting that this can undermine public trust and confidence in the legal system.⁵⁸ In addition to the legal complexities, people fleeing war may not feel able to make long-term decisions, may be unsure of their final destination, or may find engaging with the legal process arbitrary or less important than other urgent needs. The resulting inability to secure or extend TP can add to refugees' vulnerability.

People with low digital literacy: Information on legal status, rights, and benefits is primarily available online, which may pose challenges for people with low digital literacy skills. Refugees with lower literacy levels may struggle to complete applications for TP and/or benefits. According to media reports, as of 17 March 2023, only 277,000 of approximately 500,000 Ukrainian refugees had submitted the required documentation to renew their TP beyond March 2023, and up to one in 10 experienced problems with the process and documentation requests.⁵⁹ The Refugee Aid Organisation noted that seniors and unaccompanied minors (those without a legally recognised guardian to complete their application) were particularly vulnerable.⁶⁰ They may have difficulty navigating the application process or communicating with officials, and risk losing TP status.

People with disabilities, particularly mobility issues: After registering electronically for an extension of TP, refugees are required appear in person at the Ministry of the Interior to have a visa sticker affixed to their documents. The in-person requirement may challenge people with reduced mobility and those who are resident in homes for the elderly or specialist care. The ministry has allowed individuals to send representatives who are granted power of attorney and who present a medical report for the applicant. However, this bureaucratically complex process requires significant documentation.⁶¹ The process may be particularly challenging for those who are travelling alone, without a trusted individual to act on their behalf.

People living below the poverty line or on low incomes: Data from PAQ Research⁶² shows that over 35 percent of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic live in income poverty compared to approximately 10 percent of Czechs. A high proportion of Ukrainians also relies on humanitarian allowance and housing support.⁶³ In August 2022, up 80 percent of refugees surveyed reported humanitarian cash assistance as essential to avoid extreme poverty.⁶⁴ Costs associated with applying for TP can include computer and internet access, transportation to government offices, and, potentially, legal assistance. People living on low incomes may not have the resources to complete the application process. This vulnerability can be compounded for groups that face other forms of marginalisation. These may include members of the Roma community, whose history of discrimination and persecution may make them hesitant to engage with government and non-government support services.⁶⁵ Low income also may limit the ability to meet basic needs and access opportunities, increasing social exclusion and risks of exploitation, including trafficking.⁶⁶

Children who cross the border without a legal guardian: The invasion of Ukraine separated many families, and minors were often left in the care of people other than immediate relatives. Czech government officials

⁵⁸ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁵⁹ ČT 24. 2023. [Vyplnit potřebné dokumenty nezvládají desetitisíce uprchlíků. Problémy mají senioři, handicapovaní i děti bez doprovodu.](#) Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁶⁰ ČT 24. 2023. [Vyplnit potřebné dokumenty nezvládají desetitisíce uprchlíků. Problémy mají senioři, handicapovaní i děti bez doprovodu.](#) Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁶¹ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana.](#) Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁶² PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba.](#) Accessed 25 November 2022.

⁶³ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba.](#) Accessed 25 November 2022.

⁶⁴ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba.](#) Accessed 25 November 2022.

⁶⁵ Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. 2018. [Roma On The Margins – A History of Persecution, Discrimination and Exclusion](#)

⁶⁶ UNODC. 2008. [An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action](#)

reported that, as of March 2023, approximately 30,000 child refugees in the Czech Republic were unaccompanied by legal representatives.⁶⁷ Unaccompanied children may lack access to required documentation and legal advice,⁶⁸ and they may struggle to obtain TP status without a parent or guardian to confirm their registration.⁶⁹ The situation is complicated by the fact that Ukrainian legislation gives children over age 16 the right to travel independently outside Ukraine, while in the Czech Republic those up to age 18 are legally considered children. Therefore, Ukrainian children not accompanied by a parent require state care or guardianship in the Czech Republic.⁷⁰ Moreover, partly due to separation from their families, unaccompanied children are at greater risk of physical or emotional harm and exploitation, including by smugglers and traffickers. Lack of social support, risks of exposure to poverty, living in unsafe conditions, and lack of education can make children vulnerable to abuse, neglect, deprivation, and violence.

2.3 Healthcare

In the Czech Republic, healthcare providers provide urgent care to everyone at no cost, regardless of insurance or residence status.⁷¹ Under the EU Temporary Protection Directive and the Lex Ukraine,⁷² Ukrainians who are granted TP have the right to access public healthcare. They are automatically registered in the Czech health system and, for the first 150 days of residence in the country, the government covers their health insurance payments.⁷³ To access this benefit, KACPU issues a replacement health insurance card from a partner insurance company to individuals with TP status.⁷⁴ After 150 days, refugees must organise their own payments for health insurance.⁷⁵ If they are in employment, the employer deducts the health insurance cost from salary payments. Refugees in self-employment are required to make their own health insurance payments. Those who are unemployed can apply at the Labor Office of the Czech Republic for state support for payments.⁷⁶ Ukrainian refugees without insurance can also apply for the one-off Extraordinary Immediate Assistance scheme, a means-tested emergency allowance, when there is a serious risk of injury.⁷⁷

Beyond securing and paying for health insurance, however, there are other barriers to accessing healthcare. In a September 2022 PAQ Research survey, refugees cited language barriers, patient rejection by doctors (due to capacity, language barriers, discrimination, or other factors), and gaps in information on how the healthcare system works as barriers to accessing healthcare, in addition to cost.⁷⁸

The groups discussed below have been identified by the desk-based research and the research workshops as facing particular challenges at this stage of the refugee journey.

People with disabilities: While statistics on the number of Ukrainian refugees with disabilities living in the Czech Republic were not available at the time of writing, the UNHCR reported in 2022 that persons with disabilities

⁶⁷ Ceske Noviny. 2023. [Commissioner: There are about 30,000 unaccompanied child refugees from Ukraine in the Czech Republic](#)

⁶⁸ European Union. 2021. [Briefing – Vulnerability of unaccompanied or separated child migrants](#)

⁶⁹ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁷⁰ UNICEF. 2023. [UNICEF Refugee Response in the Czech Republic: Initial Results and Priorities](#). Accessed 10 March 2023.

⁷¹ Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees. 2022. [Report of the fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic by Ms Leyla Kayaci](#) (4–6 May). Accessed 7 January 2023.

⁷² Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Dočasná ochrana](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁷³ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc pro občany Ukrajiny a jejich zaměstnavatele](#). Accessed 12 February 2023.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Health. 2022. [Ministerstvo zdravotnictví odstartovalo očkovací kampaň pro Ukrajince](#). Accessed 15 February 2023.

⁷⁵ Ministry of Health. 2022. [Ministerstvo zdravotnictví odstartovalo očkovací kampaň pro Ukrajince](#). Accessed 15 February 2023.

⁷⁶ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc pro občany Ukrajiny a jejich zaměstnavatele](#). Accessed 12 February 2023.

⁷⁷ Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees. 2022. [Report of the fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic by Ms Leyla Kayaci](#) (4–6 May). Accessed 7 January 2023.

⁷⁸ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Zdraví a služby](#). Accessed 26 November 2022.

normally constitute at least 15 percent of any displaced population and face a range of vulnerabilities including inadequate access to basic services and information.⁷⁹ Ukrainian refugees with disabilities have access to healthcare and social services in the Czech Republic under the TP scheme.⁸⁰ However, if they do not have documentary confirmation of a disability, they may not be entitled to the same social benefits and financial allowance as Czech citizens with disabilities. Workshop participants reported challenges for people with disabilities in obtaining official recognition of their documents and health conditions, noting that the complex process creates the risk of inability to access disability benefits.⁸¹ People with disabilities also may have significantly different requirements dependent on their circumstances, increasing the need for specialist support and, in some cases, adding pressure to systems that are not designed to cater to a rapid increase in demand. For example, see challenges regarding mental health care provision below. Furthermore, individuals with challenges in mobility, such as those who use wheelchairs or crutches, can face limitations in obtaining healthcare and other services, as buildings, transportation, and public spaces may not be accessible. This can make it difficult for to access essential services, such as healthcare or education.

People with mental health conditions and/or experiencing trauma or PTSD: The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that one in five people fleeing war will have a mental health condition within 10 years, with one in 10 developing a severe condition like PTSD or psychosis.⁸² According to the September 2022 PAQ Research survey, 45 percent of Ukrainian refugees surveyed reported at least moderate symptoms of depression or anxiety (four times higher than the average for the Czech population).⁸³ The same survey found that approximately 75,000 adult Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic needed professional mental health care, but only around 5,000 (3 percent) had received it.⁸⁴ Barriers to access include lack of information on available services and feelings of shame or guilt. Some groups are more likely to experience or report mental health conditions, including young people (under 30 years old), women providing full-time care for their children as single parents, and people on lower incomes. Prolonged displacement or prolonged exposure to conflict can have further negative impacts on mental health; therefore new arrivals – having been exposed to the war in Ukraine for a longer time – are likely to have more compounded and complex mental health conditions, requiring specialised medical support.

Elderly people: Approximately 4 percent of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic are elderly (over age 65).⁸⁵ This group is particularly vulnerable due to their age and potential for health conditions. Like most refugees, elderly Ukrainians are vulnerable to mental health issues, mental exhaustion, and psychological trauma caused by the situation in Ukraine and the journey to the Czech Republic.⁸⁶ Participants in research workshops added that elderly refugees can experience extreme stress as they navigate new systems in a new culture and language, and they may feel that they are burdens to their adult caregivers.⁸⁷ Elderly refugees are also more likely to experience physical disabilities or challenges to mobility, limiting options in regard to accommodation, transport, and work opportunities.⁸⁸ In many cases, elderly Ukrainians require medical support for chronic conditions which

⁷⁹ UNHCR. 2022. [Ensuring the protection of persons with disabilities fleeing from Ukraine](#)

⁸⁰ Zakony Pro Lidi. 2022. [Act No. 108/2006 Coll. Social Services Act](#). Accessed 27 March 2023

⁸¹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁸² ReliefWeb. 2022. [WHO promotes action on urgent mental health needs of Ukrainian refugees](#)

⁸³ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Duševní zdraví uprchlíků](#). Accessed 20 November 2022.

⁸⁴ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Duševní zdraví uprchlíků](#). Accessed 20 November 2022.

⁸⁵ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2022. [Situation of Refugees from Ukraine](#). Accessed 12 December 2022.

⁸⁶ UNHCR. 2023. [Older refugees](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁸⁷ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁸⁸ UNHCR. 2023. [Older refugees](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

is more difficult to access due to language barriers and the need to integrate into a foreign healthcare system. Older refugees may also require more intensive employment counselling and job placement support.⁸⁹

Children with chronic or complex health needs: Data from the Institute of Health Information and Statistics revealed that the number of paediatric general practitioners' offices in the Czech Republic decreased by more than 13 percent between 2004 and 2019, while the number of children increased by tens of thousands at the same time.⁹⁰ The refugee population adds further pressure to the healthcare system in the country. Half of the Ukrainian refugees interviewed by PAQ Research in September 2022 identified finding a doctor as a priority, with 20 percent reporting that they were unable to access a doctor when required and 9 percent reporting that they had a chronically ill child who was unable to receive appropriate treatment in the Czech Republic.⁹¹

2.4 Housing

In January 2023, UNHCR reported that national and local governments, host communities, multilateral organisations, and the private sector had played critical roles in providing temporary and longer-term accommodation to Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic.⁹² Accommodation options include emergency accommodation, collective sites, hosted accommodation, and the private rental sector. For emergency accommodation, the government – with support from multilateral organisations and NGOs – established reception centres across the country to provide immediate accommodation and access to basic services. Refugees from Ukraine who have not secured accommodation before arriving in the Czech Republic are provided emergency shelter for a maximum of 30 days and emergency accommodation for a maximum of 150 days.⁹³ After this period, refugees must either agree payment terms with the accommodation provider or find alternative accommodation.⁹⁴ The government of the Czech Republic reported that, as of January 2023, approximately 75 percent of Ukrainian refugees were living in private housing, 15 percent in state-funded accommodation, and a further 10 percent in solidarity housing (hosted by Czechs or Ukrainians).⁹⁵ According to the UNHCR, access to safe and affordable housing remains a pressing need for Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic, linking secure housing to better employment, education, and integration outcomes.⁹⁶

The groups discussed below have been identified by the desk-based research and the research workshops as facing particular challenges at this stage of the refugee journey.

People on lower incomes: Ukrainian refugees are more likely to live at or below the poverty line than Czech citizens.⁹⁷ The lower an individual's or household's income, the greater the percentage spent on rent, which in an inflationary market leaves people on low incomes even more vulnerable to sudden price rises. This also makes them vulnerable to exploitative landlords, with incidents of extortion by landlords described by workshop

⁸⁹ UNHCR. 2023. [Older refugees](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

⁹⁰ ČT 24. 2023. [V Česku chybí praktičtí. Zájem o studium oborů je velký, stát je ale dlouho nepodporoval, shodli se Válek se Šonkou](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

⁹¹ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Zdraví a služby](#). Accessed 26 November 2022.

⁹² UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#)

⁹³ See [Act No. 65/2022 Coll. Act on Certain Measures in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine Caused by the Invasion of the Russian Federation Troops](#) for more details.

⁹⁴ Česká justice. 2 November 2022. [Vnitro chce prodloužit dočasnou ochranu Ukrajinců, změkčí se podmínky pro lékaře](#). Accessed 12 January 2023; OECD. 2022. [Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries](#). Accessed 12 January 2023.

⁹⁵ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#)

⁹⁶ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#)

⁹⁷ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba](#). Accessed 25 November 2022.

participants.⁹⁸ People on lower incomes are also more likely to reside in non-residential housing, such as collective accommodation. This brings additional challenges around access to employment, education, and social assistance, all of which require an official residence address.⁹⁹ Women on lower incomes can be at higher risk of security issues, with workshop participants sharing examples of bullying and harassment.¹⁰⁰ One participant noted that collective housing has some benefits – particularly immediate peer and communal support for refugees newly arrived in the Czech Republic.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, because collective non-residential housing is rarely designed for extended stays, concerns about the quality of accommodation for people on lower incomes remain.

Refugees outside Prague: The UNHCR reports that social housing capacity outside Prague is extremely limited and that refugees resident outside the capital may require additional support (such as cash grants) to access sustainable private housing.¹⁰² Participants in the research workshop also noted that, for refugees who cannot secure independent accommodation, and where capacity in local housing and crisis shelters is exhausted, they must move to a new location or town. This can increase feelings of displacement and challenges in accessing services and maintaining or gaining employment.¹⁰³

Roma refugees: In a July 2022 study by PAQ Research,¹⁰⁴ approximately one-third of Ukrainian Roma refugees in the Czech Republic mentioned lack of material security as a significant issue. Those respondents also reported experiencing intolerance or discrimination from the general population (30 percent), Czech authorities and institutions (14 percent), and other Ukrainian refugees (9 percent).¹⁰⁵ There are no reliable data on the housing of Roma refugees, in part because many households relocate either voluntarily or forcibly. Frequent moves put Roma refugees at additional risk as it is difficult to set up support systems and access services. This contributes to inaccuracies in official data and may exacerbate Roma communities' search for secure housing in the Czech Republic.

Elderly people: Elderly refugees are already more likely to face barriers to accessing services due to language barriers, lack of employment, low income, and increased difficulty adapting to a new situation. Those who have a disability or mobility issue face additional challenges in accessing appropriate housing, such as adapted housing and affordable housing outside of collective sites. Elderly people travelling alone are also at risk of social isolation and may require additional services¹⁰⁶ to obtain decent housing, particularly if they live alone.

2.5 Education

Ukrainian children under TP have the right to education under the same conditions as Czech citizens.¹⁰⁷ Enrolment in pre-primary, primary, and secondary grades (up to age 15) is mandatory for all children in the Czech

⁹⁸ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁹⁹ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#)

¹⁰⁰ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁰¹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁰² UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#)

¹⁰³ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁰⁴ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁰⁵ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Some of these are also provided by charities such as Sue Ryder. See Sue Ryder. n.d. [Aging and dignity](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

¹⁰⁷ See [Act No. 67/2022 Coll. Law on measures in the field of education in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine caused by the invasion of the troops of the Russian Federation](#) for more details; Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. 2023. [Law no. 67/2022 Sb. Lex Ukraine and Methodological Interpretation](#). Accessed 30 March; [Metodické komentáře k zákonu Lex Ukrajina IV](#), issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport for more details.

Republic.¹⁰⁸ Children of foreigners are generally subject to compulsory pre-school and school attendance. A mandatory pre-school year in kindergarten applies to five-year-olds. According to data collected by PAQ Research in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, 70 percent of Ukrainian refugee children attended kindergartens and 90 percent attended primary schools at the end of 2022, but less than half of adolescents attended Czech secondary schools.¹⁰⁹ Most secondary school-aged students participate in online distance learning through Ukrainian schools.¹¹⁰ In addition to language requirements, secondary schooling in the Czech Republic usually lasts for one year more than in Ukraine; this may be a reason why young people aged 16 to 17 prefer online education.¹¹¹ In late 2022, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education signed a cooperation agreement creating scholarships for Ukrainian students at Czech universities to facilitate access to post-secondary education.¹¹²

In the Czech Republic, there is significant pressure on the capacity, staff, and resources of schools, including kindergartens. Indeed, according to available data, lack of capacity is the reason why 15 percent to 20 percent of preschool children, 3 percent to 5 percent of primary school pupils, and roughly 10 percent of teenagers may be excluded from education.¹¹³ Additional barriers to refugee children's school attendance include lack of opportunities to follow the Ukrainian curriculum, a desire to return to Ukraine, and parents' inability to understand the system and enrol their children.¹¹⁴ Since kindergarten attendance is optional until a child is five years old, parents may not be sufficiently informed about how the system works. According to a PAQ Research survey,¹¹⁵ the parents of 15 percent of preschool children failed to enrol their children because they did not know how to do so.

The groups discussed below have been identified by the desk-based research and the research workshops as facing particular challenges at this stage of the refugee journey.

Pre-school children: The lack of adequate kindergarten spaces is an ongoing issue in the Czech Republic which is particularly acute in the regions with the most Ukrainian refugees.¹¹⁶ Evidence from UNICEF's work on early childhood development indicates that access to quality care and education programmes helps provide children with emotional, social, cognitive, and language foundations that are linked to positive education and wellbeing outcomes throughout childhood.¹¹⁷ Therefore, limited access to pre-school care and education outside the home increases the vulnerability of younger children displaced from Ukraine. An alternative and temporary solution appears to be adaptation groups and centres – separate classes for Ukrainians – which may make children feel segregated and excluded.¹¹⁸ However, if implemented as a temporary measure, adaptation groups could have positive results. Ukrainian children who attend such groups more often enter formal education (85 percent) which can be attributed to the effectiveness of adaptation groups and parents' increased interest of parents in involving children in the system.¹¹⁹

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. 2023. [Law no. 67/2022 Sb. Lex Ukraine and Methodological Interpretation](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

¹⁰⁹ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹⁰ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹¹ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹² UNICEF. 2023. [UNICEF Refugee Response in the Czech Republic: Initial Results and Priorities](#). Accessed 10 March 2023.

¹¹³ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹⁴ European Commission. 2022. [Promoting the enrolment of child refugees in education](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹⁵ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹⁶ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹¹⁷ UNICEF. 2021. [The formative years: UNICEF's work on measuring ECD](#)

¹¹⁸ Loudová, Barbara, and Ustohaolová, J. Deník N. 2022. [Krizové řešení: Skupiny místo školy. Ukrajinským dětem ale hrozí segregace, varují experti](#). Accessed 16 December 2022.

¹¹⁹ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

Children who do not speak Czech: By the end of 2022, 39 percent of Ukrainian parents surveyed thought their children had integrated well.¹²⁰ Factors contributing to integration include command of the Czech language, type and location of housing, and parents' education level and employment.¹²¹ According to a PAQ survey, fewer than one in four children over six (22 percent) can communicate in common situations, and almost half (45 percent) know few or no Czech words.¹²² This includes children who have been in the Czech Republic for more than half a year.¹²³ Pupils who study at school for two hours or more per day and also take part in leisure activities speak Czech better and are better integrated into communities, and those who attend Czech secondary school have the best Czech language skills of all age groups.¹²⁴ This proficiency could be explained by the requirement to sit Czech-language entrance exams for secondary schools.

Roma children: Compared to the sample of all Ukrainian refugees, non-participation of Roma children in education is higher, particularly in pre-school¹²⁵ and primary education,¹²⁶ where surveys estimate up to 90 percent and 78 percent non-attendance, respectively. Furthermore, research conducted in May-June 2022 found that only 25 percent of Ukrainian Roma respondents attended online Ukrainian schools.¹²⁷ There is some evidence that Roma refugees are also less likely to take part in government-sponsored education initiatives, such as adaptation groups.¹²⁸ These factors increase the risk of challenges for Roma children in adapting to life in the Czech Republic. Housing insecurity may also contribute to greater educational challenges for Roma children.¹²⁹

2.6 Employment and Income

Ukrainian refugees who are granted TP have access to the labour market without the need to apply for a work permit. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs,¹³⁰ approximately 61 percent (approximately 237,000) of Ukrainian refugees arriving in the Czech Republic are of economically active age. A PAQ Research study from September 2022 estimated that more than 40 percent of economically active adult Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic were in paid work, with the majority working more than 30 hours per week.¹³¹ PAQ also found that parents with access to child care and kindergartens and those living in standard-quality housing were significantly more likely to work, and that college-educated Ukrainians were more likely to work remotely for employers in Ukraine.¹³² The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs estimates that up to 19 percent of in-work Ukrainian refugees work remotely for Ukrainian employers.¹³³

Barriers to accessing employment remain for many Ukrainian refugees. According to an IOM survey from August and September 2022,¹³⁴ financial support (86 percent), language courses (60 percent) and employment support (60 percent) were the three needs respondents most frequently cited to address barriers to work. The same

¹²⁰ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹²¹ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²² PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹²³ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹²⁴ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹²⁵ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁶ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁷ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁸ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁹ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹³⁰ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2022. [Situation of Refugees from Ukraine](#). Accessed 12 December 2022

¹³¹ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba](#). Accessed 25 November 2022.

¹³² PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba](#). Accessed 25 November 2022.

¹³³ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2022. [Situation of Refugees from Ukraine](#). Accessed 12 December 2022.

¹³⁴ IOM. 2022. [DTM Report](#). Accessed 20 November 2022.

survey conducted between October and November revealed changes in needs primarily for financial support (mentioned by 64 percent)¹³⁵ but also for language courses (48 percent) and employment support (58 percent).¹³⁶ These findings are broadly supported by another survey which estimated that the main reasons for unemployment were insufficient knowledge of Czech (71 percent) and child care responsibilities (35 percent).¹³⁷

The groups discussed below have been identified by the desk-based research and the research workshops as facing particular challenges at this stage of the refugee journey.

Single parents: The UNHCR estimates that 78 percent of refugees from Ukraine experienced separation during their refugee journey.¹³⁸ Familial, social, and communal networks were severely disrupted, and traditional support networks were not in place. Responsibilities associated with single parenthood can be new and challenging for separated families, falling disproportionately on women. Lack of adequate child care provision (mostly due to the lack of kindergartens or of space in kindergartens near refugees' places of work or residences) is among the key barriers to single parents entering the Czech labour market.¹³⁹ In addition, many parents do not have sufficient information about where to send their children, and the requirements.¹⁴⁰ It is especially difficult for most refugees to place children under age three in kindergartens.¹⁴¹ These factors can affect children's learning, development, and integration; they can also worsen the financial situations of refugees (and single mothers in particular). Without access to affordable and reliable child care, women may be responsible for caring for their children full-time and be unable to work, or they may be forced to take low-paying part-time jobs. This can limit their economic opportunities and perpetuate gender inequality. Furthermore, many refugee women are not entitled to maternity or parental leave, which depend on whether an applicant has paid social and health insurance.¹⁴² Women who care for their children full-time may experience increased stress and a lack of support, which can impact their mental health and wellbeing.

Ukrainians employed in low-skilled roles: According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ukrainian refugees have taken up employment more quickly than other refugee groups in Europe. However, initial evidence indicates that much of this employment is concentrated in the low-skilled sectors and that many Ukrainian refugees work in jobs at a lower level than their professional background and experience qualify them for.¹⁴³ According to PAQ Research, many economically active Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic had relatively high-level job qualifications (specialists, managers, technical workers, or officials)¹⁴⁴ in their home country. Data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs,¹⁴⁵ however, suggests that only 16 percent of economically active refugees found jobs in the fields in which they worked in Ukraine; 84 percent found work in other fields, mostly below their qualification levels, in areas that do not require specific skills.

¹³⁵ IOM. 2023. *DTM Report*. Accessed 5 February 2023.

¹³⁶ IOM. 2023. *DTM Report*. Accessed 5 February 2023.

¹³⁷ PAQ Research. 2022. *Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba*. Accessed 25 November 2022.

¹³⁸ UNHCR. 2022. *Displacement patterns, protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine – regional protection analysis 1*

¹³⁹ Deník Referendum. 2022. *Český sociální systém nezohledňuje, že z Ukrajiny prchají především ženy s dětmi*. Accessed 22 December 2022.

¹⁴⁰ PAQ Research. 2023. *Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání*. Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹⁴¹ PAQ Research. 2023. *Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání*. Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹⁴² Czech Social Security Administration. 2023. *O jaké nemocenské pojištění se zajímáte?* Accessed 20 February 2023

¹⁴³ OECD. 2023. *What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine*

¹⁴⁴ PAQ Research. 2022. *Hlas Ukrajinců: Práce*. Accessed 03 August 2023.

¹⁴⁵ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2022. *Situation of Refugees from Ukraine*. Accessed 12 December 2022.

Workshop participants commented that refugees may be less motivated to look for work in their field if they do not consider it important to their desire to return to Ukraine and if they perceive it as a temporary way to sustain themselves.¹⁴⁶ Refugees cited better knowledge of the Czech language as a factor that would improve their positions.¹⁴⁷

Refugees on low incomes and those who rely on employment agencies: Low income can limit access to opportunities such as education, job training, and networking, making it difficult for Ukrainian refugees to improve their socio-economic situation and increasing risks of exploitation. Employment agencies can provide employees with accommodation and thus represent a simpler way to obtain both work and housing.¹⁴⁸ However, agency employment may be exploitative (e.g., placing employees in informal work that does not provide guaranteed breaks, engages in irregular payment, and fails to comply with labour regulations or issue contracts to workers). The risks are particularly high for those whose employment is linked to accommodation: Many people do not report abuse because they fear reprisal.¹⁴⁹ Some Czech NGOs which provide legal and social counselling, such as LA Strada and Charity Czech Republic, report that agency exploitation has worsened as the number of refugees has grown.¹⁵⁰ Informal work is also reported among Ukrainian refugees as they are more vulnerable to exploitation due to the language barrier and lack of knowledge of a new country's procedures.¹⁵¹ Female refugees in informal work are at increased risk of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment or sexual exploitation.

Unemployed refugees: Unemployed refugees who do not register with the Labour Office as jobseekers may face some negative consequences in the future, for example in their ability to pay for health insurance, and pressure on their household income.¹⁵² By January 2023, regional branches of the Labor Office had registered 16,300 Ukrainian jobseekers, about 900 more than in the previous month. At that time 94,400 refugees from Ukraine were reported to have found work in the Czech Republic.¹⁵³

Participants in the research workshop noted that unemployed people can experience frustration, stigma, and/or depression, all of which can lead to social isolation and mental health problems which in turn create a vicious cycle and further complicate accessing employment.¹⁵⁴

2.7 Community, social, and political life

The Czech Republic has developed national policies and initiatives designed to support community cohesion. For example, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion¹⁵⁵ aims to reduce poverty and promote the social

¹⁴⁶ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁴⁷ PAQ Research. 2022. *Hlas Ukrajinců: Práce*. Accessed November 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Ukrajinci ve spárech otrockých agentur: v Česku dřou zdarma, bez pauz i smluv](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁴⁹ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Ukrajinci ve spárech otrockých agentur: v Česku dřou zdarma, bez pauz i smluv](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵⁰ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Ukrajinci ve spárech otrockých agentur: v Česku dřou zdarma, bez pauz i smluv](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵¹ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Ukrajinci ve spárech otrockých agentur: v Česku dřou zdarma, bez pauz i smluv](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵² According to § 5 letter c) Act No. 48/1997 Coll, employees must pay for health insurance for a given month if they do not have taxable incomes, are permanent residents in the territory of the Czech Republic but are not employees, do not have income from self-employment, and do not belong to a category for which the state pays insurance premiums. See [Osoba bez zdanitelných příjmů](#) for details.

¹⁵³ ČTK. 2023. [Úřad práce: Práci v Česku mělo na konci ledna 94.400 uprchlíků z Ukrajiny](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹⁵⁴ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication. 2021. [Akční plán 2021-2023 Strategie sociálního začleňování 2021-2030](#)

inclusion of marginalised groups, and the Integration Policy Concept¹⁵⁶ seeks to promote the integration of immigrants and minorities into Czech society. While there has been significant public support for Ukrainian refugees,¹⁵⁷ some negative stereotypes remain. Participants in the research workshop shared stories of reactions to Ukrainian refugees who arrived in ‘expensive cars, with makeup and painted nails’, assuming that refugees should be impoverished and not live lifestyles similar to those in the Czech Republic.¹⁵⁸

The groups discussed below have been identified by the desk-based research and the research workshops as facing particular challenges at this stage of the refugee journey.

People with disabilities: People with disabilities can face exclusion from community life in various ways, such as by struggling to access public spaces and experiencing social and economic exclusion and communication barriers. Many public spaces, including buildings and transportation systems, are not accessible, making it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to navigate and join community activities. People with disabilities may face social isolation due to stigma, discrimination, or lack of social support. Economic exclusion due to discrimination in employment or lack of access to education or training opportunities can also limit participation and contributions to society. Communication barriers can also make it difficult to interact socially, access information, or communicate needs and preferences. Despite recognition of such needs in the fields of human rights and development, refugees with disabilities may face additional challenges due to limited access to information and separation from their support networks.¹⁵⁹

People with mental health issues or PTSD and trauma: Research finds that a significant number of refugees may suffer depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.¹⁶⁰ Refugees’ personal experiences (such as the situation in Ukraine and family separation during displacement) and socio-economic situations in the Czech Republic (such as unemployment, poor housing, material deprivation, lack of language skills, and low level of children’s school participation) can affect their mental health and the severity of trauma. Stigma and prejudice also play roles; workshop participants noted the risks of addictive behaviour among people suffering from mental health problems.¹⁶¹ These issues can affect refugees’ work and private lives, and thus community life.

Elderly refugees, particularly if they live alone or in sheltered housing: Elderly refugees might be separated from their support networks, leaving them struggling to adjust to the host community and/or seek adequate support. Specific health difficulties (such as mobility issues or hearing or sight restrictions) may create additional barriers to accessing emergency protection, information, and assistance, including during resettlement and integration. Older refugees play important roles in preserving refugees’ cultural roots; they are often recognised as holding their communities’ cultural heritage, transmitting cultural knowledge, and supporting intergenerational goals. Therefore, assisting this group is important in helping refugees maintain their identity and community within the host society.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. [Integration of foreigners](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

¹⁵⁷ ČT 24. 2023. [Většina Čechů podporuje přijímání uprchlíků a má prozápadní postoje, ukázal průzkum STEM](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁵⁸ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁵⁹ OHCHR. 2022. [Ukraine: 2.7 million people with disabilities at risk, UN committee warns](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

¹⁶⁰ PAQ Research. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Duševní zdraví uprchlíků](#). Accessed 20 November 2022.

¹⁶¹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

¹⁶² UNHCR. 2023. [Older refugees](#). Accessed 23 March 2023.

Roma refugees: Members of the Roma community face experience greater discrimination and lower access to services than other refugees. In one survey, 37 percent of Roma households identified their most significant problem as trauma caused by war experiences.¹⁶³ One-third of Roma households also mentioned a lack of material security as an issue. Among other challenges, Roma refugees encounter intolerance from the general population (30 percent), Czech authorities and institutions (14 percent), and other Ukrainian refugees (9 percent). In addition, 16 percent of Roma households stated that they suffered from hunger.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ PAQ Research. 2022., [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁶⁴ PAQ Research. 2022., [Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících](#). Accessed 15 December 2022.

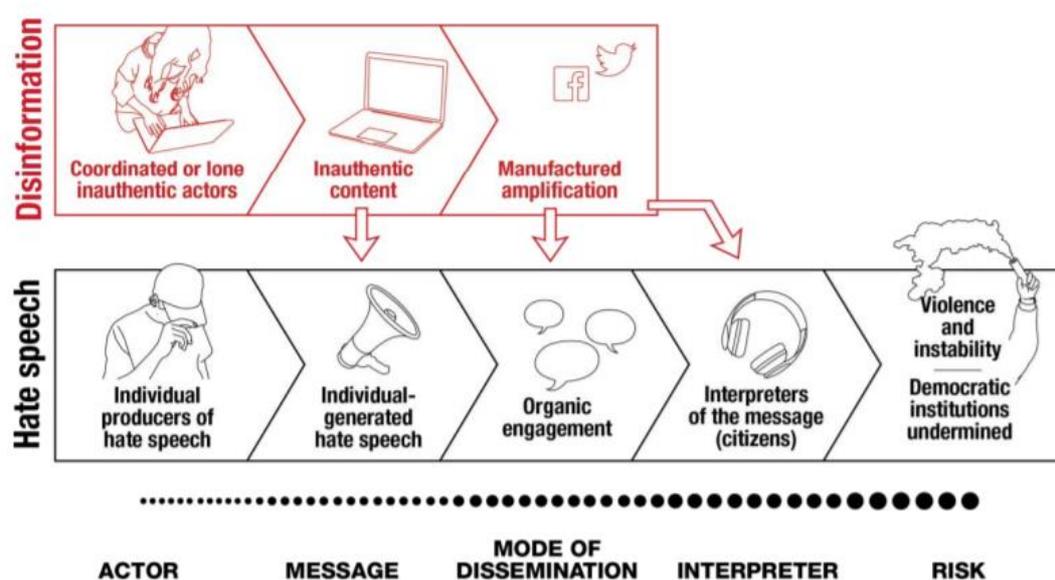
Chapter 3. Misleading or incendiary discourses about Ukrainian refugees

3.1 Overview

Chapter 3 discusses key misleading or incendiary discourses about refugees in the Czech Republic, as well as modes of dissemination, host community ‘interpreters’ and the risks of such discourses impacting local communities.

The analysis of misleading and incendiary discourses is based on the IFES Chain of Harm framework (Figure 1)¹⁶⁵ which maps the path by which disinformation, misinformation, and dangerous speech (DMDS) move through an information ecosystem, depicting the ways in which directed disinformation commonly amplifies hate speech or other divisive narratives to achieve its aims. The Chain of Harm framework allows researchers and practitioners to map DMDS along five stages, from initial actors creating DMDS to the ultimate risks that manifest. Breaking down the challenges of DMDS in this way allows researchers and practitioners to identify discrete intervention points where the Chain of Harm can be disrupted to reduce the ultimate harms that would otherwise occur.

Figure 1: The IFES Chain of Harm Framework



The five stages of the Chain of Harm – actor, message, mode of dissemination, interpreter, and risk – are used below to analyse aspects of narratives that circulate in the Czech Republic.

¹⁶⁵ IFES. 2019. *Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions*. Accessed 31 March 2023.

Actors spreading misleading or abusive messages

Russian and pro-Kremlin propaganda; Kremlin aligned sources (trolls): The Czech security community agrees that disinformation campaigns – whether spread by domestic actors or directed by foreign powers — are primarily connected, directly or indirectly, with the activities and interests of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China.¹⁶⁶ The Kremlin ecosystem’s approach is to spread ‘as many explanations or accusations as possible in order to muddy the waters and to see what sticks’,¹⁶⁷ trying to do everything possible to absolve Russia of responsibility for the invasion or for feeding disinformation narratives about refugees.¹⁶⁸ This was evident even before the full scale invasion. It applies, for example, to the deadly explosion at the Czech ammunition depot in Vrbětice in 2014, when the Kremlin disseminated manipulative and false propaganda to undermine trust in Czech state institutions.¹⁶⁹ In 2021, after the Czech government accused Russian military intelligence of causing the explosion, Russia declared hostility to the Czech Republic and called it an ‘unfriendly’ state.¹⁷⁰ Far-right and populist parties¹⁷¹ have taken anti-immigrant and anti-refugee stances; their supporters may be more likely to oppose migration and the integration of refugees. Populist parties often appeal to voters who are concerned about the impact of migration on their communities and the economy. They may present themselves as the only party willing to firmly oppose migration.¹⁷² These parties often position themselves as protectors, ‘proper patriots’, and ‘supporters of conservative values and the traditional family’.¹⁷³

Anti-migration, anti-vaccination, and anti-pandemic restriction activists and influencers:¹⁷⁴ In recent years, the same groups have spoken against migration or COVID-19 restrictions and gradually switched support for the Russian invasion and antagonism against Ukrainian refugees. According to a researcher from the Institute for Politics and Society, the change of focus regarding Ukrainian refugees was expected since some speakers and participants at demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions admitted long-time admiration for Russia and its president.¹⁷⁵ For example, one individual who began campaigning against refugees and Islam in Czech Republic during the 2015 migrant crisis in Central Europe later focused on COVID-19 and recently called for demonstrations under the slogan ‘the Czech Republic in the first place’, demanding, among other things, ‘the end of the planned dilution of the nation by Ukrainian refugees’.¹⁷⁶ Influencers in this space have often attracted followings through anti-vaccination or epidemic activities and then observed their audiences’ interest in the war

¹⁶⁶ Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice. 2022. [Analýza připravenosti České republiky čelit závažné dezinformační vlně](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

¹⁶⁷ Euvsdinfo.eu. 2022. [Nord Stream 1 & 2 Sabotage – Disinformation a la MH-17?](#). Accessed 10 March 2023.

¹⁶⁸ See, for instance, iDNES. 2022. [Trollové se aktivovali. Za raketu v Polsku může kdokoli, jen ne Rusko](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁶⁹ Euvsdinfo.eu. 2022. [NORD STREAM 1 & 2 SABOTAGE – DISINFORMATION A LA MH-17?](#). Accessed 10 March 2023.

¹⁷⁰ The Economist. 2021. [Russia puts the Czech Republic on an official enemies list](#). Accessed 20 February 2023; The Guardian. 2021. [Russia officially dubs US and Czech Republic ‘unfriendly’ states](#). Accessed 20 February 2023; Euvsdinfo.eu. 2022. [Take Some Annexation, Sprinkle With Novichock And Bake Over An Ammunition Depot](#)

¹⁷¹ Svoboda a přímá demokracie, or Freedom and Democracy (SPD) is a political party that broke away from the Dawn of Direct Democracy party. Císař, O. Štětka, V. 2016. Czech Republic. The Rise of Populism From the Fringes to the Mainstream, *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, Chapter 22, pages 285–298; Reflex. 2019. [Klausova Trikolóra představuje moderní populismus v té jeho lepší podobě](#). Accessed 29 March 2023; Císař, Ondřej, and Štětka, V. 2018. ‘Czech Republic: The Rise of Populism from the Fringes to the Mainstream’, in *Populist Political Communication in Europe*. Eds. Aalberg, Toril, et al. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

¹⁷² E15. 2023. [Problém je osamělost lidí. Ztrácejí kontakt s realitou, říká o dezinformacích v kampani expertka](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁷³ E15. 2023. [Problém je osamělost lidí. Ztrácejí kontakt s realitou, říká o dezinformacích v kampani expertka](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁷⁴ Rambousková, Michaela. 2022. [Covid už netáhne. Z dezinformátorů se stali „přátelé Ruska a míru“](#)

¹⁷⁵ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Covid už netáhne. Z dezinformátorů se stali „přátelé Ruska a míru“](#). Accessed 18 March 2023.

¹⁷⁶ Cihla, Radek, J., Štraub, J., Rumler, M., and Kaboň, R. Deník.cz. 2022. [Proti vládě, proti cenám, proti EU. V Česku opět demonstrovaly desetitisíce lidí](#). Accessed 17 March 2023. See also [Proti vládě, proti cenám, proti EU. V Česku opět demonstrovaly desetitisíce lidí; Manipulátoři](#)

in Ukraine,¹⁷⁷ refugees, and related government actions. These influencers regularly post on Facebook Live, often focusing on messages in conflict with those promoted by the government or mainstream media.¹⁷⁸

Pro-Russian groups: A small proportion (16 percent) of Czechs were pro-Russian before the Russian invasion,¹⁷⁹ and the war has not significantly altered their views. This group has been influenced by pro-Russian perspectives and disinformation and often favours a neutral foreign policy,¹⁸⁰ believing there is no point in distinguishing between allies and opponents because ‘all major powers behave badly’.¹⁸¹

The UK Government Communications Service identified a variety of reasons why actors could spread misleading or incendiary content.¹⁸² The motivations listed below could contribute to a variety of actors spreading misleading or incendiary narratives about Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic.

1. **Genuine belief in the messages**, which might resonate with strongly held personal beliefs. In some instances, actors may recognise that the messages they share are false or misleading but believe the sentiment reflects ‘the kind of thing that goes on’.
2. **Grievances:** As inflation rises, for example, some people’s standards of living are deteriorating. Others might have lost their jobs, and Ukrainian refugees might be easy scapegoats for such problems.
3. **Lack of consequences for promoting misleading messages:** Actors may take advantage of the anonymity of online spaces and gain respect within certain online communities.
4. **Personal or institutional gain** through discrediting specific individuals (such as politicians) or organisations (government institutions, businesses, NGOs, multilateral organisations, and others). The motivation may also be to **mobilise voters** in response to an imagined threat and to build support as a result of anti-refugee rhetoric.¹⁸³
5. **Contributions to polarisation**, aiming to crowd out differing opinions.
6. **Financial gain** from increased traffic to websites, paid posts by influencers, or sales of products.
7. **Geopolitical gain**, through which hostile actors aim to destabilise the finances or security of other countries. Russian trolling often aims to create a sense of chaos and confusion as to what information is true, given the large amount of conflicting information presented to audiences.¹⁸⁴

Types of message and approaches

The Czech disinformation scene is shaped by both foreign and domestic actors such as populist and extremist politicians who act as opinion leaders, celebrities, and political activists with various motivations.¹⁸⁵ They tend to portray pro-western and pro-European politicians as defenders of western interests that conflict with those of the

¹⁷⁷ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Covid už netáhne](#). Z dezinformátorů se stali „přátelé Ruska a míru.“ Accessed 18 March 2023.

¹⁷⁸ Seznam Zprávy. 2022. [Covid už netáhne](#). Z dezinformátorů se stali „přátelé Ruska a míru“. Accessed 18 March 2023.

¹⁷⁹ STEM. 2022. [Hodnocení vztahu občanů české republiky k vybraným zemím Evropy a světa během války na Ukrajině](#). Accessed 17 March 2023.

¹⁸⁰ HlídacíPes.org. 2023. [Kremelské propagandě se v Česku loni nedařilo. Směřovat na východ chce jen pět procent lidí](#). Accessed 18 March 2023.

¹⁸¹ HlídacíPes.org. 2023. [Kremelské propagandě se v Česku loni nedařilo. Směřovat na východ chce jen pět procent lidí](#). Accessed 18 March 2023.

¹⁸² Government Communication Service. 2021. [Resist 2: Counter-disinformation toolkit](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

¹⁸³ International Republican Institute. 2023. [Hostile Narrative Brief War In Ukraine](#). Accessed 29 March 2023.

¹⁸⁴ Tymińska, Ada. Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka. 2022. [Granice nienawiści. Mowa nienawiści w kontekście kryzysów humanitarnych na granicy polskiej \(2021/2022\)](#).

¹⁸⁵ See [The biggest disinformation of 2022](#) for details on specific actors spreading disinformation narratives in 2022 in the Czech Republic.

Czech Republic.¹⁸⁶ Pro-Kremlin politicians are then supported as defenders of the sovereignty and interests of the Czech Republic.

Since the start of the Russian invasion, a significant amount of disinformation in the Czech Republic has been related to the war in Ukraine, European (specifically Czech) military assistance to Ukraine, and attempts to undermine support for economic sanctions against Russia.¹⁸⁷ Russian propaganda around the ‘denazification of Ukraine’ dominates. Topics related to military aid to Ukraine, including the training of Ukrainian soldiers in the Czech Republic and provision of weapons, are framed as bringing the Czech Republic into the next world war. Ukraine is depicted as a ‘bankrupt, corrupt fascist state controlled by the Nazis’. In contrast, Russia is presented as an invincible nuclear power that continues the war ‘successfully and with respect to the civilian population’ and that is the only actor that can ensure territorial integrity and establish order in Ukraine.¹⁸⁸ The Czech disinformation scene adopts Russian narratives with the aim of discrediting Ukraine as ‘the culprit and escalator of the situation’, portraying it as a pro-western puppet. The aims of such narratives are to weaken western unity and support for Ukraine and express support for the interests of the Kremlin.¹⁸⁹ ‘Whataboutism’ aims to divert attention from serious topics and Russia’s aggression in Ukraine, for instance by diverting attention to the U.S. invasion of Iraq or the bombing of Sarajevo.¹⁹⁰

Narratives about Ukrainian refugees are often linked to the economic (and therefore the energy) crisis and the impact of anti-Russian sanctions and retaliatory measures on the Czech Republic.¹⁹¹ Refugees are portrayed as a threat to national security and order and a source of social problems because they drain resources that should be used for Czech citizens. Economic narratives play on fears of scarcity, with anti-refugee narratives arguing that refugees will take the little that should be available to Czechs.¹⁹² Narratives also accuse refugees of being ‘spoiled, lazy, and ungrateful’.¹⁹³ Two journalists add that messages intended to discredit Ukrainian refugees describe ‘the allegedly insolent and arbitrary behaviour of Ukrainians who do not even respect the police in the countries to which they arrive’.¹⁹⁴ Real incidents and imagined accounts are used to spread generalised negative impressions of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic. Stereotypes such as ‘non-adaptable’ and ‘spreaders of infectious diseases’ (including HIV/AIDS) appear, especially in connection with Roma refugees. Ukrainian refugees are often portrayed as ‘economic migrants’.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁶ HlídacíPes.org. 2023. [Kremelské propagandě se v Česku loni nedařilo. Směřovat na východ chce jen pět procent lidí](#). Accessed 18 March 2023.

¹⁸⁷ Vinš, Petr Jan. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. [Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě](#). Accessed 20 March 2023; Markova, Myroslava, and Perevoshchikov, K. Vox Ukraine. 2022. [Propaganda diary: a review of russian disinformation in European media in October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023; and European Values Center for Security Policy. 2022. [Policy brief within Kremlin Watchers Movement project](#). Accessed 15 March 2023.

¹⁸⁸ Czech Elves. 2023. [Monthly report – December+January 2023](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁸⁹ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁹⁰ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – March](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁹¹ Vinš, Petr Jan. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. [Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁹² Vinš, Jan P. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. [Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁹³ Vinš, Petr Jan. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. [Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁹⁴ Markova, Myroslava, and Perevoshchikov, K. Vox Ukraine. 2022. [Propaganda diary: a review of russian disinformation in European media in October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

¹⁹⁵ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

Furthermore, a generally negative attitude toward migration¹⁹⁶ in the Czech Republic since the beginning of the migration wave from Afghanistan and Syria in 2015,¹⁹⁷ which extends to Ukrainians, resonates with some groups in Czech society.¹⁹⁸ However, the migration debate often relates to Czechs' individual problems – such as job loss and rising prices – which the government and elites are unable to solve and which thus pose obstacles to solidarity and openness.¹⁹⁹

Table 2 summarises the discourses about refugees that were identified in the workshops and through research from third parties, and triangulated using CrowdTangle. The five discourses that are likely to have the highest potential to affect community cohesion in the medium term, taking into account the prevalence of the narratives and their likelihood of having an impact on community cohesion, are boldfaced and analysed in more detail in the following analysis.

Table 2: Misleading or incendiary discourses about refugees in the Czech Republic

Journey stage	Misleading or Incendiary Discourses about Ukrainian Refugees
Legal status, welfare, and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees receive more financial support and better benefits than the local population. • They are not refugees but economic migrants planning to stay in the country permanently. • Ukrainians are rich, drive around in fancy cars, and spend their time in malls and cafés while locals work; they're in the host country on holiday; they don't need assistance. • Ukrainians receive more support than other refugees. • Refugees from western Ukraine and less affected regions are not genuine refugees; the war hasn't really affected them; they don't deserve support. • They abuse the benefits system (e.g., cross the border just to get money).
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainians create burdens on the healthcare system and take locals' places. • They are a health and disease risk. • They misuse services (unnecessary ambulance calls and emergency room and doctor visits). • They are health tourists.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainians create burdens on the housing system and take locals' places. • Refugees have more and unfair access to housing.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainians create burdens on the educational system (schools and kindergartens) and take locals' places.
Employment and income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New arrivals from Ukraine take jobs from local populations, they are willing to work for significantly lower wages, and are destroying the labour market. • Economic challenges and the energy crisis are fuelled by hosting refugees ('they drive prices up').
Community, social, and political life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are crime risks and security threats (financially vulnerable groups like refugees are prone to criminality; organised crime comes from Ukraine). • Local men must serve in the military if support to Ukraine and Ukrainians continues. • They are ungrateful, have high expectations and demands for the support and shelter they receive, and they abuse hospitality – they leave messy apartments and are disrespectful. • Refugees are selective about the support they receive – they don't want to live in small cities, only want certain types of products. • Women come to look for husbands and citizenship.

¹⁹⁶ Public opinion polls reflect the general negative attitude of Czechs toward refugees; despite the fact that the migration wave of 2015–2016 did not affect the Czech Republic at all, the negative attitude remains. Drbohlav, D. and Janurova, K. (2019). *Migration and Integration in Czechia: Policy Advance and the Hand Brake of Populism*. Accessed 03 August 2023.

¹⁹⁷ See, for example, Glopolis. *Proč uprchlíci jítří naše emoce?* on narratives related to migration and refugees in Czech society.

¹⁹⁸ Ministry of the Interior. 2023. *Postoj české veřejnosti k uprchlíkům v průzkumech veřejného mínění CVVM v širším kontextu*. Accessed 16 March 2023.

¹⁹⁹ Glopolis. 2016. *Proč uprchlíci jítří naše emoce?* Accessed 20 March 2023.

- They are not really traumatised; they go to cafés and live a nice, normal life.
- Refugees are coming to nazify the local society.
- Local citizens are not welcoming Ukrainian refugees and refugees do not receive help on arrival; host communities no longer support Ukraine.

Modes of dissemination

Disinformation/misinformation narratives are disseminated in various ways, such as on social media and websites, and through email.

Social media and websites: Social networks are minimally regulated, relatively cheap, and fast platforms to create disinformation campaigns that can reach a large audience.²⁰⁰ As a result, social media is a common channel for disinformation. Many Facebook groups cater to audiences that harbour pro-Russian and anti-western sentiments. Common tactics include posting photos with lists of benefits that refugees supposedly receive and which often include outdated or exaggerated figures. For example, the post depicted in Figure 2 claims Ukrainians' benefits are worth more than those that Czechs receive but does not cite official figures.²⁰¹ This kind of disinformation usually originates from pro-Kremlin media outlets with a Czech web presence, such as Sputnik News, Aeronet, and První zprávy.²⁰² The websites continue longstanding anti-immigration narratives that feed fears about newcomers, even when their cultural backgrounds are relatively similar to Czechs'.²⁰³ Many disinformation topics are also seen on YouTube, Telegram, and TikTok, which target younger audiences.

Figure 2: Misleading Facebook post about the differences in support to Czechs and Ukrainians



The most common way to propagate messages to communities within target audiences is believed to be through image- and video-based content,²⁰⁴ which works on emotions and fears.²⁰⁵ Photographs and images are ideal tools to manipulate public opinion since they can be easily consumed through social media or other digital platforms, go viral, and reach a wider audience. They can evoke fear, anger, or empathy which can make them persuasive and memorable and therefore serve the purposes of those spreading disinformation narratives. The messages also can be easily taken out of context or edited in ways that change their meaning or impact. One of the common practices is using old photos as if they apply to current circumstances.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ European Values Center for Security Policy. 2022. [Policy brief within Kremlin Watchers Movement project](#). Accessed 15 March, 2023

²⁰¹ [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) data on living and subsistence support differs from the amounts shown in Figure 2, in which the amounts received by Czechs are reduced. [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) data on support is different from what is shown. For example, the first member of a household is eligible for a minimum subsistence support payment valued at CZK 4,470, which is misreported in Figure 2 as CZK 3,550.

²⁰² Czech Elves. 2023. [Monthly report – December+January 2023](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁰³ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁰⁴ EEAS. 2023. [1st EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats](#). Accessed 25 March 2023.

²⁰⁵ See the TrendLabs study [The Fake News Machine](#) for information about costs associated with the spread of disinformation and EEAS. 2023. [1st EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats](#). Accessed 25 March 2023.

²⁰⁶ Demagog.cz. 2022. [Fotografie z roku 2017 využita proti uprchlíkům z Ukrajiny](#). Accessed 19 March 2023.

Chain emails: Chain emails are amongst the channels used to spread information.²⁰⁷ According to research by Ipsos from July 2022, almost four out of 10 Czechs receive chain e-mails from acquaintances, and as many as 460,000 people in the Czech Republic may have forwarded them to others.²⁰⁸ Experts note that chain email messages may have a basis in reality but take information out of context or greatly inflate meanings.²⁰⁹ Participants in the research workshop noted that seniors (who may have lower digital literacy and lack the skills to verify information) might be particular targets for chain emails and most likely to share them.²¹⁰

Politicians, during campaigns: Populist politicians exploit themes associated with refugees to strengthen their positions by using deflection and misinterpretation and by placing information in different contexts.²¹¹

Word of mouth: Word of mouth is a common way to spread incendiary and misleading narratives about refugees,²¹² particularly when discourses relate to increasing financial pressures or ways in which refugees may impact on people's quality of life.

Host community reactions (interpreters)

Anti-immigrant sentiment in the Czech Republic is often rooted in fears about the erosion of the cultural and national identity. In the past, Czechs tolerated rather than welcomed migrants,²¹³ as responses to immigrants from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan were highly restrictive.²¹⁴ While disinformation actors might push certain narratives with their pro-Russia agendas, some 'interpreters' – people with whom the messages may resonate – might spread them because they start to believe them (as described in the discussion of actors above). For example, during the campaign period for the Czech presidential election in January and February 2023, a group of citizens began demanding cessation of hostilities in Ukraine with explicit the goal of stopping the arrival of refugees and challenges associated with their presence in the Czech Republic.²¹⁵

Research in 2019 found that only one in six Czechs were equipped with the skills to fight disinformation.²¹⁶ A 2022 survey by Ipsos showed that Czechs who finished schooling after primary education (14 percent) were least likely to check the veracity of information, even if they suspected it was disinformation, and were then most likely pass it on.²¹⁷ The survey also found that fewer than 48 percent of Czechs can easily recognise disinformation. Furthermore, research suggests that increasing media literacy does not automatically reduce resistance to misinformation because it '[does] not include building trust between journalists and the public', although greater

²⁰⁷ iROZHLAS. 2022. [Řetězové e-maily? Živého obsahu je v nich relativně málo, obsah je ale značně přifouknutý, říká odborník](#). Accessed 17 March 2023.

²⁰⁸ Ipsos. 2022. [Vnímání dezinformací v České republice a na Slovensku](#). Accessed 22 March 2023. See also [Více než třetina Čechů dostává řetězové e-maily, statisíce je přeposílají dál](#) for more details.

²⁰⁹ iROZHLAS. 2022. [Řetězové e-maily? Živého obsahu je v nich relativně málo, obsah je ale značně přifouknutý, říká odborník](#). Accessed 17 March 2023

²¹⁰ Prague research workshop, February 2-3, 2023.

²¹¹ E15. 2023. [Problém je osamělost lidí. Ztrácejí kontakt s realitou, říká o dezinformacích v kampani expertka](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²¹² Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²¹³ iDNES. 2022. [Ptát se teď „A co Češi?“ je populistické a nesolidární, říká socioložka](#). Accessed 27 March 2023

²¹⁴ iDNES. 2022. [Ptát se teď „A co Češi?“ je populistické a nesolidární, říká socioložka](#). Accessed 27 March 2023

²¹⁵ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²¹⁶ STEM. 2019. [Nová studie zkoumá vztah mediální gramotnosti, důvery v media a náchylnosti k dezinformacím](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²¹⁷ Ipsos. 2022. [Vnímání dezinformací v České republice a na Slovensku](#). Accessed 22 March 2023.

media and news literacy typically leads to a more critical examination of *all* media and, in some cases, to the choice of highly manipulative sources.²¹⁸

Certain groups who pass on misleading or incendiary narratives about refugees do so because they are concerned about a perceived or real shortage of services (e.g., healthcare or education) or financial support. They might spread disinformation or misleading information unknowingly, out of fear or a need to report what they have heard. Messages that incorporate a ‘personal touch’, with which an audience can easily identify, could resonate with particular groups. One target audience – and disseminator group – could be pensioners or clients of social services.²¹⁹ These groups may be more susceptible to certain messages, for example that their grandchildren may have greater difficulty obtaining lower-cost public housing, as a result of refugees’ impact on the housing market.²²⁰

According to the NGO Czech Elves, which monitors the disinformation scene in the Czech Republic, the war in Ukraine confirms the hypothesis that ‘a part of society that is extremely dissatisfied with the state of public affairs and is therefore highly distrustful of the authorities, for whatever reasons, is vulnerable to almost any narrative associated with criticism of the current political arrangement’.²²¹

Risks

Incendiary and misleading discourses about refugees present risks on various levels. First are risks to Ukrainian refugees, particularly in relation to discrimination and increased challenges in accessing services, jobs, and housing. These are likely to have the greatest impact on more vulnerable groups. Discourses regarding Ukrainians’ supposed wealth, and receiving better benefits than Czechs may lead to discrimination in the provision of services. Should employers believe Ukrainians do not want to work, this may increase discrimination in the job market. A perception may also grow that Ukrainians are not competent to work in certain professions. Micro-aggression and more overt aggression toward refugees may also develop due to growing frustrations regarding the perceived unfairness of Ukrainians receiving state support.

Should the economic situation in the Czech Republic worsen, discourses about refugees driving prices up, deepening economic challenges, or taking locals’ jobs could become much more prevalent, fuelling resentment toward Ukrainians. Czechs could scapegoat Ukrainian refugees for economic problems such as inflation, the rising cost of living, and housing shortages and high costs. Populists could exploit the fact that many perceive unemployment in the Czech Republic to be higher than the reality²²² to create fear and spread incendiary and misleading narratives about refugees.

²¹⁸ STEM. 2019. [Nová studie zkoumá vztah mediální gramotnosti, důvěry v media a náchylnosti k dezinformacím](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²¹⁹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²²⁰ CT 24. 2022. [Třetina mladých Čechů nedosáhne na hypotéku. Berou si další úvěry nebo staví z levnějšího materiálu](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

²²¹ HlídacíPes.org. 2023. [Kremelské propagandě se v Česku loni nedařilo. Směřovat na východ chce jen pět procent lidí](#). Accessed 18 March 2023.

²²² According to Eurostat [unemployment statistics](#), the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic in November 2022 (disaggregated by sex and age but not adjusted for season or calendar) was 2.7 percent, while the average of EU countries was 5.9 percent. The Czech Republic’s unemployment rate was thus the lowest among EU countries in November 2022, and the country maintained this trend throughout 2022.

Finally, such discourses present risks to community cohesion more broadly. They may further divide Czech society, with the appearance of apparently irreconcilable camps of ‘welcomers’ and ‘rejecters’,²²³ further radicalising attitudes within an already polarised society. Portraying refugees as security risks can reduce space for dialogue and discussion and lead to reactive and short-term measures that further isolate the refugee population.²²⁴ Tensions between polarised parts of the host society could manifest in physical and verbal abuse, protests, clashes between opposing politicians on news channels, and fiery comments and discussions on social media channels between groups with opposing values. The spread of negative narratives about Ukrainian refugees is likely to impede the integration efforts of Czech NGOs, foundations, and agencies. In addition, various narratives can exacerbate feelings of isolation amongst Ukrainians refugees, making them feel unwelcome.

3.2 Top five discourses

The top five discourses identified during the course of the desk-based research and the workshops are analysed below. Each discourse is explored in turn, covering all stages of the chain of harm, and the underlying challenges, that are particularly distinct for this narrative.

Discourse 1: ‘Refugees receive more financial support and better benefits than the local population’

Message: Anti-government messages dominate this discourse. The Czech government is accused of being ‘evil’²²⁵, ‘disintegrating’ Czech society, and giving preferential treatment to Ukrainians rather than prioritising the interests of citizens. With increased fuel and energy prices and high inflation (15.1 percent),²²⁶ discourses ask ‘what about Czech citizens?’ or say ‘Ukrainian refugees are draining our social system when citizens are crushed by inflation – money can be found for “foreigners”, while no one will help “our people”’.²²⁷ Some messages allege very positive, ‘fairy-tale’-like, circumstances for Ukrainians refugees. For example, Figure 3 says, ‘The Ukrainian passport is like a fairy tale, in Czechia, it becomes a table-be-set and gold donkey’.²²⁸ The purpose of these ironic messages is to express dissatisfaction with the supposedly unfair prioritisation of refugees, who, according to these statements, are provided everything for free. Between the lines, one can read concerns about Czechs’ sense of insecurity regarding energy costs and inflation.

Figure 3: Facebook post about benefits that Ukrainians receive



²²³ Krátka Špalková, Veronika. Strážci-Guardians. 2022. [Dva hlavní dezinformační narativy související s ruskou invazí na Ukrajinu – II](#). Accessed 18 March 2023

²²⁴ Glopolis. 2016. [Proč uprchlíci jítři naše emoce?](#) Accessed 20 March 2023.

²²⁵ Czech Elves. 2023. [Monthly report – December+January 2023](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²²⁶ The average annual inflation rate in 2022 was 15.1 percent. See [Public database CZSO and Public database CZSO and inflation rate](#).

²²⁷ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²²⁸ This refers to the Grimm’s fairy tale “The Magic Gifts”. Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

Messages under this narrative suggest that the Czech Republic and its citizens are not the priority, the government impoverishes (or ‘robs’²²⁹) its citizens, and the prime minister is pro-Ukrainian and prefers foreigners to his own people.²³⁰ Specific messages include the example in Figure 4, which says ‘The government has no right to give our hard-earned money to foreigners while not giving a damn s*t about its own people’.²³¹ Other examples include ‘the government gives money and various benefits to Ukrainians at the expense of Czechs’, ‘the Czech government works against Czechs’, ‘everything for refugees, nothing for Czechs’, and ‘it’s done, the intruders will receive 21,000 CZK per month in the Czech Republic, these “social benefits” will be paid for from our taxes’.²³²

Figure 4: Facebook post about the benefits that refugees receive (2)



The goal of narratives that target and attack government officials (for example, that the prime minister is ‘a scoundrel, a thief, and a liar’) is to discredit the role of authorities and divide society.²³³

Narratives alleging that Ukrainians are favoured at the expense of Czechs foment fears of threats to the way of life that they are used to and thus polarise society into ‘us and them’.²³⁴ This rhetoric highlights price increases and uncertain times; they aim to incite fear and erode social solidarity with those fleeing from war.²³⁵

Concerns about the ‘Ukrainianization of Czech society’ are mainly attributable to Ukrainian flags which are often displayed on Czech public holidays. Messages include ‘The Ukrainization of the Czech Republic continues. The ceremony of awarding the Memory of the Nation in the National Theatre on the anniversary of November 17 was accompanied by the Ukrainian anthem’.²³⁶

²²⁹ Czech Elves. 2023. [Monthly report – December+January 2023](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²³⁰ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – November 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023; Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²³¹ Facebook group Fiala není můj premiér, Pavel není můj prezident (Fiala is not my prime minister, Pavel is not my president). Posted 17 March 2023.

²³² Manipulátoři. 2022. [Staré texty o urpchlících byly přeneseny na Ukrajince](#). Accessed 17 March 2023.

²³³ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – November 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023; Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²³⁴ Czech Elves. 2022. [Dezinformace na Facebooku – 24.3.2022](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

²³⁵ Czech Elves. 2022. [Dezinformace na Facebooku](#). Accessed 26 March 2023; and Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – May](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²³⁶ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – November 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023; Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – October 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

The narrative that wealthy Ukrainians siphon aid they do not need from needy Czechs has circulated since the beginning of the Russian invasion.²³⁷ For example, a former senior-level politician, during his campaign in January and February 2023, spoke of rich Ukrainians in expensive cars asking for benefits in the Czech Republic, adding ‘The main problem is that the government does not care about Czech citizens. For example, single mothers’.²³⁸

Another narrative focuses on the supposed ingratitude of Ukrainian refugees who are said to throw away food or refuse luxury accommodation because it is far from Prague. For example, the post in Figure 5 states, ‘Ukrainians reject used things. I shopped for the children and myself at the second-hand store and I still do. If there is no money, I won’t be picky’.²³⁹

These narratives are accompanied by comments that refugees do not look poor enough – Ukrainian women are well-groomed, have nice clothes, and do not look ragged enough to be refugees.²⁴⁰ People prone to believe those narratives may understand the severity of the refugees’ situation but envy even some time-bound benefits, such as free or discounted zoo entrance tickets and free transportation for a limited period of time,²⁴¹ or meals that charities provide at schools.

Refugees have been criticised for enjoying holidays in the Czech Republic at the expense of Czechs and riding public transport for free: ‘They didn’t come here to work, they came here to get benefits and have a good time, but of course I’m not making light of the situation, of course, they didn’t come here for vacation, but they’re starting to take it as super paid recreation’.²⁴²

Figure 5: Facebook post suggesting refugees are ‘picky’



Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

To combat incendiary messages, fact-based information should be made as easily available online as the misleading narratives often associated with the far right.²⁴³ Repeating factual information is crucial to counter falsehoods that audiences to which typically exposed multiple times.²⁴⁴

The government and ministries should more clearly communicate the benefits and costs of hosting Ukrainian refugees, how the system works, and that some benefits are time-bound. Accurate information about the causes and effects of social and economic issues can help counteract false narratives and prevent the spread of misinformation. Public education campaigns, media outreach, and engagement with local communities can help to do so. A public discussion of the term ‘refugee’ and the refugee experience could help

²³⁷ Czech Elves. 2022. *Monthly report – November 2022*. Accessed 20 March 2023.

²³⁸ Tabery, Erik. Respekt. 2022. *Jak Babiš vytáhl na Ukrajince*. Accessed 26 March 2023; and Baroch, Pavel. HROT. 2022. *Babišovi uprchlíci v drahých autech. Proč se expremiéroví populistická karta nemusí vyplatit*. Accessed 27 March 2023.

²³⁹ Czech Elves. 2022. *Dezinformace na Facebooku – 18.3.2022*. Accessed 26 March 2023.

²⁴⁰ Krátka Špalková, Veronika. Strážci-Guardians. 2022. *Dva hlavní dezinformační narativy související s ruskou invazí na Ukrajinu – II*. Accessed 18 March 2023.

²⁴¹ For example, iDNES. 2022. *Bezplatná MHD či zoo pro uprchlíky z Ukrajiny v Ostravě od října skončí*. Accessed 10 March 2023; Dopravní podnik hlavního města Prahy (2022). *Free Transportation for citizens of Ukraine*. Accessed 03 August 2023.

²⁴² Krátka Špalková, Veronika. Strážci-Guardians. 2022. *Dva hlavní dezinformační narativy související s ruskou invazí na Ukrajinu – II*. Accessed 18 March 2023.

²⁴³ Expert Forum. 3 March 2023. *Monitorizare online august – noiembrie – Războiul din Ucraina*. Accessed 23 March 2023.

²⁴⁴ Fazio, L. K., Brashier, N. M., Payne, B. K., and Marsh, E. J. 2015. *Knowledge does not protect against illusory truth*. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144(5), 993–1002.

people understand that war refugees may not appear poor and that their struggles are not just economic.²⁴⁵

In counteracting disinformation, it is often more effective to build positive narratives than to frighten audiences.²⁴⁶ Therefore, counternarratives should focus on stories of Ukrainians contributing to the Czech economy, such as by starting businesses. Given Czechs' economic concerns, this approach should be combined with messaging that seeks to assure as well as convince, such as 'There's enough to go around' or 'We're in this together'.

Finally, more projects could focus on combatting disinformation, including for NGOs that engage on relevant topics. Fact-checking organisations such as Zvol si info, Factcheck, Demagog, Manipulators, and Czech Elves could be supported.

Mode of dissemination: In the Czech Republic, disinformation, including this narrative, is largely disseminated on social media. Chain emails, often aimed at seniors, are used to spread such narratives, and messages spread through word of mouth.

Interpreter: The topics of social benefits, social security, and people's economic status are closely connected to the concept of 'merit' which is highly valued by Czech society.²⁴⁷ This is the belief that people must earn their social and economic good and status and not receive it 'from others'. Therefore, ideas around the abuse of social benefits and excessive state support to people who do not deserve it can resonate with a wide range of audiences.²⁴⁸ Workshop participants noted that messages about social benefits and support for Ukrainians target audiences across all levels of income, education, age, or residence. However, they believed that those more likely to believe these narratives are people with lower education and income levels, those living outside of major cities, and older generations who may not confirm the sources of the social media they consume. The messages may also resonate with the Czech Roma, who are comparatively marginalised.²⁴⁹

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

Social media campaigns could target groups most likely to be swayed by narratives about economic migrants, which engage influencers for these groups. Social media, especially in the form of engaging videos and visuals, could also provide guidance on how to talk to friends and family members who express incendiary views about refugees.

As much as possible, counternarratives should targeted specific audiences and the fora with which they engage, and be tailored to their attitudes, perceptions, values, and norms. It is also important to use evocative language to capture attention, increase recall of the messages shared,²⁵⁰ and build on the target audience's values²⁵¹ – for example, aligning with the concept of 'merit' by showing that Ukrainians work hard to earn their way.

Cooperation amongst policymakers, NGOs, journalists, and experts from the state and private sectors and academia has potential to mitigate the consequences of disinformation

²⁴⁵ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²⁴⁶ iDNES. 2022., [Ruští trollové chtějí rozdělit český národ, míní expertka na dezinformace](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁴⁷ STEM. 2021. [Jedna-společnost—různé-světý](#). Accessed 17 January 2023.

²⁴⁸ STEM. 2021. [Jedna-společnost—různé-světý](#). Accessed 17 January 2023.

²⁴⁹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²⁵⁰ Brady, W., Gantman, A., and Van Bavel, J. 2020. [Attentional capture helps explain why moral and emotional content go viral](#). *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 149, 746–756.

²⁵¹ Feinberg, M., and Willer, R. 2015. [From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?](#) *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(12), 1665–1681.

and help identify ways to increase trust in the mainstream media and reduce communication barriers with elderly people. Helping seniors navigate the complex internet environment is the aim of NGOs including Život 90 and Elpida.²⁵² Such initiatives should be supported and expanded.

Promoting dialogue between different groups, including immigrants and refugees, can help foster understanding and build bridges between communities. This can be done through community events that help people to get to know each other, such as public forums, workshops, and broader activities. In the Ústí nad Labem region, for example, innovative activities were organised to strengthen understanding between Ukrainians and Czechs – dance groups, singing groups, clothes swaps, and a film screening in Czech with Ukrainian subtitles and regular breaks to allow people to talk and get to know one another.

Underlying challenges: Understanding of the value of benefits for eligible Ukrainian refugees, compared to those extended to Czechs, is poor. Ukrainian refugees received some social benefits that were higher than what locals receive – as a temporary measure. For the first 150 days, Ukrainian refugees are generally provided humanitarian aid of CZK 5,000,²⁵³ and Czech citizens did not have access to benefits in this amount.²⁵⁴ However, Czechs were eligible for other types of social benefits, such as unemployment benefits, housing allowance, and maternity allowance.²⁵⁵ After the first 150 days, humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees is equal to the support amounts²⁵⁶ that Czech citizens can receive.²⁵⁷ Some Ukrainian students received free school meals which were largely provided by charity organisations or churches – and this benefit was also temporary. Some actors may create the impression that aid to refugees is at the expense of Czech citizens.

Some vulnerable groups (for example people living on the poverty line) fear that government services and social protection schemes will be overwhelmed by the influx of refugees. Narratives claim, for example, ‘Today, the Ukrainians did not let Czech people even get a ticket with a number and wait for a clerk [allegedly happened at the Labour office in Prague 3]’.²⁵⁸ Some fears are based on operational challenges. In February 2023, the Labour Offices lacked 232 benefits workers, including 80 vacancies in Prague.²⁵⁹ Czech authorities face an onslaught of applicants and criticism for delaying benefits that many people depend on. The Ombudsman criticised the situation at the Labour Offices, citing low wages as the main reason for the number of unfilled positions.²⁶⁰ The Minister of Labour and Social Affairs also pointed to inefficient management of human resources at the Labour Offices.²⁶¹ In addition, locals or even the Ukrainian diaspora and other minority groups in the Czech Republic can perceive support to refugees as ‘positive discrimination’ – that is, better benefits to a specific group (Ukrainian refugees) – if the nature of the support is not communicated clearly enough.²⁶²

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

²⁵² European Values. [Russian Disinformation Narratives – January 2023](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁵³ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc pro občany Ukrajiny a jejich zaměstnavatele](#). Accessed 12 February 2023; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc občanům Ukrajiny](#). Accessed 13 January, 2023.

²⁵⁴ The social benefit, which corresponds to humanitarian aid, is the equivalent of the ‘living minimum’ – for example, CZK 4,860 for an individual in a single-person household (there are different categories). For details on social benefits, see the [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) website and its [Životní a existenční minimum](#) section.

²⁵⁵ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Průvodce](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁵⁶ See [Životní a existenční minimum](#) for more details.

²⁵⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc pro občany Ukrajiny a jejich zaměstnavatele](#). Accessed 12 February 2023; and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Životní a existenční minimum](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁵⁸ Czech Elves. 2022., [Monthly report – March](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁵⁹ ČT 24. 2023. [Úřadům práce chybí přes dvě stovky pracovníků, nestíhají vyřizovat příspěvky](#). Accessed 17 March 2023.

²⁶⁰ ČT 24. 2023. [Úřadům práce chybí přes dvě stovky pracovníků, nestíhají vyřizovat příspěvky](#). Accessed 17 March 2023.

²⁶¹ ČT 24. 2023. [Úřadům práce chybí přes dvě stovky pracovníků, nestíhají vyřizovat příspěvky](#). Accessed 17 March 2023.

²⁶² Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

The number of refugees dependent on the state is decreasing. In August 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs paid a humanitarian benefit to 173,000 refugees; by November the number decreased by 80,000 as more than 98,000 refugees had found jobs.²⁶³ Compared to initial Ministry of Finance estimates, the costs to support refugees are lower precisely because of quick access to the job market.²⁶⁴ Such information could be communicated to the public more clearly, having confirmed that the message is unlikely to backfire and create anger at refugees for ‘taking Czech’s jobs’.

Phasing programmes over time to focus support on the most can help alleviate concerns than refugees receive more.²⁶⁵ The Czech government is already implementing phasing; and communications could focus on highlighting this approach.

Discourse 2: ‘Ukrainians create burdens on the housing system and take locals’ places’

Message: Narratives that highlight the absence of merit in accessing certain services or support appeal to Czechs’ sense of fairness and, to some, extent envy.²⁶⁶ Messages under this narrative include ‘Czechs have to work hard to pay for housing and rent, and Ukrainians get it for free’, or ‘Ukraine refugees live for free’. The question of who is entitled to what and who gets what first resonates strongly in the Czech Republic. Messages such as ‘Ukrainian refugees are prioritised over Czechs when it comes to social or low-cost public housing’, or, similarly, ‘Ukrainian refugees are prioritised over Czechs and as a result no low-cost public housing or social housing is available for Czechs’ also exploit challenges in the real estate market. There are also arguments that refugees who arrived in expensive cars must sell them and finance their own housing: ‘They have expensive cars, so why they don’t sell them and pay for housing?’ or ‘They are wealthy, so they should pay’. The messages shown in Figure 6 ask, ‘Do you understand that they will replace the Czechs? Will they take people’s jobs, kick you out of your apartment because of them, prefer them over us? That they get everything for free? And that they will make everything more expensive?’²⁶⁷

Figure 6: Post regarding fairness of support for Ukrainian refugees



Mode of dissemination: As with Discourse 1, this narrative is mostly disseminated on social media. Chain emails are also used to spread them, as is word of mouth.

²⁶³ iROZHLAS. 2023. [V Česku pracuje 98 tisíc uprchlíků z Ukrajiny. Zaměstnaných přibývá, počet vyplácených dávek klesá](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

²⁶⁴ Deník N. 2023. [Výdaje na uprchlickou krizi činily na konci ledna 28,5 miliardy korun](#). Accessed 24 March 2023; Ministry of Finance. 2023. [Nejvyšší výdajové položky představují](#). Accessed 25 March 2023.

²⁶⁵ See Chapter 5 for more detail.

²⁶⁶ STEM. 2021. [Jedna-společnost—různé-světy](#). Accessed 17 January 2023.

²⁶⁷ Czech Elves. 2022. [Dezinformace na Facebooku – 24.3.2022](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

Interpreter: This narrative can be spread by individuals and groups, including politicians, media outlets, and ordinary citizens, including those with anti-immigrant or nationalist agendas. In the context of challenges accessing housing, news regarding the allocation of low-cost public housing²⁶⁸ can be a sensitive topic.²⁶⁹

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

Success stories and positive examples should be part of outreach activities. Participants in the Prague research workshop mentioned that a Ukrainian company renovated an older house in the city of Frýdek Místek without any state subsidies to serve vulnerable groups. Positive examples like this could be shared.

Underlying challenges: There are challenges in the housing market. Young people in particular struggle to find housing because they cannot afford a mortgage with high interest rates.²⁷⁰ Some regions, such as Prague, Central Bohemia, and South Moravia (Brno), struggle with affordable housing capacity.²⁷¹

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

Focus on the operational challenges of the lack of affordable housing, such as local development spending to develop new or renovate existing housing infrastructure; providing opportunities for people to live, work, and go to school outside of major cities; tailor and expand policies around rent control, rent subsidies, and tenants' rights; and support social intermediaries in the rental process.

Arranging for suitable housing options for refugees outside large cities, where employment opportunities and school and healthcare facility capacity are more available could incentivise refugees – particularly new arrivals – to consider options in smaller cities.

Discourse 3: 'Ukrainians create burdens on the healthcare system and take locals' places'

Message: Messages about Ukrainian refugees burdening the healthcare system claim that 'They don't have health insurance in Ukraine. Doctors and operations are paid, and that is why people go straight to the pharmacy, where they can get any medicine without a prescription. Czech politicians do not think about the wellbeing of their citizens and therefore allow a million Ukrainian migrants to come here and be treated like Czech citizens. Refugees are abusing the system and have embarked on medical tourism. This will have catastrophic consequences for the Czech healthcare system. We must not give the Ukrainians what the Czechs need'.²⁷²

Other types of messages state that refugees are responsible for the spread of diseases such as COVID-19.²⁷³ Some point to lower vaccination rates among Ukrainians and the risk this brings. This is an old narrative linked to migration in the Czech Republic.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁸ Low-cost public housing is regulated by rules issued by the Ministry of the Interior, including who is entitled to apply for this type of housing. See [PRAVIDLA přidělování obecních bytů or Žádost o pronájem obecního bytu](#).

²⁶⁹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²⁷⁰ CT 24. 2022. [Třetina mladých Čechů nedosáhne na hypotéku. Berou si další úvěry nebo staví z levnějšího materiálu](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

²⁷¹ iDNES. 2023. [Na byt v Praze či Brně už průměrná mzda nestačí. Šance zůstává v regionech](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

²⁷² Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – September](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁷³ Czech Elves. 2022. [Monthly report – November 2022](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁷⁴ Zdravotnický Deník. 2022. [Očkování uprchlíků se Česku vyplatí. Ministerstvo spustilo kampaň, kterou oslovuje Ukrajince](#). Accessed 29 March 2023.

Mode of dissemination: Like the narratives discussed above, this one is disseminated on social media and through chain emails and word of mouth.

Interpreter: In some cases, individuals or groups with anti-immigrant or nationalist agendas may spread such narratives. This narrative also resonates with individuals who may have legitimate concerns about the ability of the healthcare system to accommodate an influx of migrants and may mostly seek to ensure that their own needs and interests are taken into account.

Underlying challenges: The Czech healthcare system has struggled with personnel shortages for several years, and the situation worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁷⁵ The shortage of healthcare workers is partly due to low salaries and poor working conditions. In addition, the country's ageing population has put pressure on the healthcare system, increasing demand for services. The shortage of paediatricians and general practitioners is particularly acute, with many rural areas and smaller towns struggling to attract and retain doctors.²⁷⁶ This has led to longer waiting times for appointments and a lower quality of care in some areas.

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

A better funded and staffed healthcare system which can cater to both Czechs and Ukrainians would help mitigate this risk. It could reduce patient waiting times and dissatisfaction with burdens on the healthcare system.

Increasing the availability of telehealth options – phone or online health services – could also alleviate pressures on the Czech healthcare system. Ukrainians often reach out to doctors in Ukraine via phone or online to avoid long delays in other countries, so this would be a familiar way to access services.²⁷⁷

Recognition of medical qualifications of Ukrainian refugees should continue to be expedited, expanding a cadre of medical staff that could help address healthcare needs in the country – such as work by UNICEF in this space.²⁷⁸

Discourse 4: 'They are crime risks and security threats'

Message: Narratives describing Ukrainians as crime or security risks argue that male Ukrainian refugees are aggressive, drink, and engage in criminal behaviour, specifically toward women and girls. This narrative is rooted in the earlier migration crisis, when migrants also were often described as criminal risks.²⁷⁹ In the past, exaggerating events in nearby countries, especially Germany, was a way to call attention to security risks associated with migration. For example, information about violence and fights involving immigrants was widely

²⁷⁵ ČT 24. 2023. [V Česku chybí praktici. Zájem o studium oborů je velký, stát je ale dlouho nepodporoval, shodli se Válek se Šonkou.](#) Accessed 26 March 2023; OECD, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, European Commission. 2021. [State of Health in the EU Czechia Country Health Profile 2021.](#) Accessed 17 March 2023.

²⁷⁶ OECD, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, European Commission. 2021. [State of Health in the EU Czechia Country Health Profile 2021](#) [State of Health in the EU Czechia Country Health Profile 2021.](#) Accessed 17 March 2023.

²⁷⁷ Warsaw research workshop, 9 February 2023.

²⁷⁸ UNICEF. 2023. [UNICEF Refugee Response in the Czech Republic: Initial Results and Priorities.](#) Accessed 10 March 2023.

²⁷⁹ Vinš, Petr Jan. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. [Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě.](#) Accessed 20 March 2023; Aktuálně.cz. 2022. ["Češi jsou ve strachu z migrace fenomén." Kampaň jim vysvětluje triky dezinformátorů.](#) Accessed 17 March 2023.

circulated as ‘proof’ of the danger.²⁸⁰ This technique is applied to Ukrainian refugees as well.²⁸¹ Roma communities from Ukraine may also be singled out as crime risks.²⁸²

Mode of dissemination: As with previous narratives, this one is disseminated on social media and via chain emails and word of mouth. It can also be propagated by populist politicians.

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

Media organisations could help identify refugees who can be called on for quotes in the media or appear on TV and news shows as commentators to increase the representation of refugee voices.

Accuracy nudges – reminders that ‘most people want to share accurate information’ can be used online, for example as promoted posts on social media platforms. Such non-political and non-ideological prompts are shown to reduce the spread of misinformation.²⁸³

Interpreter: People who may be more prone to the belief that refugees are crime risks or security threats may include those who are generally more fearful or distrustful of outsiders, have experienced or perceive a loss of economic or social status and feel insecure and vulnerable.

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

Promote critical thinking skills and media literacy. Leverage communication and education to help host communities understand when they are being manipulated through disinformation. Helpful interventions include [videos on building resilience to anti-refugee narratives aimed at the public](#) that were created through a partnership between Google’s Jigsaw division and Info Interventions.

Social media campaigns could target the groups and influencers most likely to be swayed by this narrative. Social media, especially in the form of engaging videos and visuals, could also be used to provide guidance on how to talk to friends and family members who say incendiary things about refugees.

Ensure that those who work with refugees are well-trained and well-informed about issues that refugees face and are equipped to provide accurate, impartial, and non-discriminatory information.

Underlying challenges: Lack of engagement with different communities can lead to the perception that they are threats or crime risks.²⁸⁴ The Czech Republic’s relatively limited experience with foreigners also means that refugees, who by definition are from other countries, are less familiar than their compatriots. The lack of familiarity and social interaction may breed fear.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²⁸¹ Vinš, Petr Jan. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. [Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě](#). Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁸² Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023; Gregor, Miloš, and Mlejnková, P. 2021 [Facing Disinformation: Narratives and Manipulative Techniques Deployed in the Czech Republic. *Politics in Central Europe*, 17\(3\) 541–564.](#)

²⁸³ Pennycook, Gordon, McPhetres, J., Zhang, Y., Lu, J. G., and Rand, D. G. 2020. [Fighting COVID-19 misinformation on social media: Experimental evidence for a scalable accuracy-nudge intervention](#). *Psychological Science*, 31, 770-780.

²⁸⁴ Glopolis. 2016. [Proč uprchlíci jítí naše emoce?](#) Accessed 20 March 2023.

²⁸⁵ In contrast, ‘closeness’ or ‘small social distance’ between people has been shown to create perceptions of ‘positive relationships between in- and out-groups, solidarity, or a feeling of togetherness, that all result in a strong collective resilience to danger’. See Kossowska, M., et al. 2023. [The role of fear, closeness, and norms in shaping help towards war refugees](#); and Ozcurumez, Saime. 2018. [The afraid create the fear: perceptions of refugees by ‘gün’ groups in Turkey](#)

Considerations for Countering Anti-refugee Messaging:

Opportunities for Czechs and Ukrainians to interact daily should be increased. This may include after-school activities for both Ukrainian and Czech children, activities where the local and Ukrainian populations can get to know one another, and more events in the workplace (with translation provided as necessary). More educational activities and materials in the form of books, events, and theatre performances to explain the diversity of Ukrainian refugees' experiences should also be promoted.

Discourse 5: 'New arrivals from Ukraine take jobs from the local population, they are willing to work for significantly lower wages, and they are destroying the labour market'

Message: This narrative suggests that migrants are burdens on the Czech economy and that they take jobs from Czech citizens. Some claims manipulate data to frighten Czechs. A typical example is using data on the number of Ukrainians who have found work in the Czech Republic. While the government presents these figures as evidence of the integration of refugees into the labour market and Czech society, the narrative argues that the positions are not available to Czech workers. A minority of right-wing politicians claim that Czech companies are laying off Czech employees to hire refugees who will work for less.²⁸⁶ For example, one politician claimed, 'I am doing a survey among our voters. They are very worried about the Ukrainians. Some companies fire Czechs and hire refugees for lower wages. How many people lost their jobs on this basis is no longer resolved. Mainly in manual jobs, salaries are cut'.²⁸⁷ Similar messages include "in Amazon they are already laying off our people en masse and they have already accepted over 400 Ukrainians there".²⁸⁸

Other messages question the reasons why refugees have fled Ukraine – a large country, allegedly not all of which is touched by war. These messages say Ukrainians should return and build their own country rather than staying in the Czech Republic.²⁸⁹

Mode of dissemination: As with the previous narratives, this one is disseminated on social media and via chain email and word of mouth.

Interpreter: Unemployed and low-income people, as well as those experiencing sudden drops in their standard of living may be more likely to believe and further spread this narrative, as it fuels frustration and a sense of exclusion and unfairness. They may be more likely to spread the messages further.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ CNN Prima News. 2022. [Okamura: Nepřízřusobivé Ukrajince bych naložil do autobusu, odvezl na hranici a vyhostil](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

²⁸⁷ CNN Prima News. 2022. [Okamura: Nepřízřusobivé Ukrajince bych naložil do autobusu, odvezl na hranici a vyhostil](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

²⁸⁸ Demagog.cz. 2022. [Povánoční propouštění v Amazonu](#). Accessed 25 March 2023.

²⁸⁹ The head of the political party SPD stated, 'Ukraine is a huge country, there is no war in most of the territory. If it is already safe in the places where Ukrainians come from, which is happening, they should go back and build their country. Each state has the power to terminate a visa. But the government is blind and deaf and doesn't see it'. CNN Prima News. 2022. [Okamura: Nepřízřusobivé Ukrajince bych naložil do autobusu, odvezl na hranici a vyhostil](#). Accessed 24 March 2023.

²⁹⁰ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

Underlying challenges: Changes in legislation and policies that ease Ukrainians' entrance into the job market mean it can be more difficult for some Czechs, especially low-income earners, to get jobs. Labour Office data as of 31 December 2022²⁹¹ shows that the largest number of jobseekers have lower qualifications, especially those who held apprenticeships but lack high school diplomas. The highest demand for jobs in the Czech Republic is for low-skilled workers such as construction workers, forklift operators, assembly workers, truck and tractor drivers, masons, bricklayers, tilers, other production support workers, and cooks – jobs which are also suitable for workers from other countries.²⁹² Ukrainians held such jobs even before the war and are welcome employees in some industries, such as construction.²⁹³ However, some Czechs can become frustrated as fewer lower-paid jobs may be available to them. On the other hand, data show that Czechs are often not interested in these jobs.²⁹⁴ Some reasons could be low salaries and high job demands. Some Czech workers may prefer to receive unemployment benefits, which may equal or even exceed the minimum wage.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Labour Office of the Czech Republic. [Press release](#), 2023. [Nezaměstnanost v prosinci mírně vzrostla](#). Accessed 16 January 2023.

²⁹² Kurzy. 2022. [Ukrajínští uprchlíci jsou úlevou pro český pracovní trh. Mohou brzdit i inflaci](#). Accessed 16 January 2023.

²⁹³ Kurzy. 2022. [Ukrajínští uprchlíci jsou úlevou pro český pracovní trh. Mohou brzdit i inflaci](#). Accessed 16 January 2023.

²⁹⁴ Kurzy. 2022. [Ukrajínští uprchlíci jsou úlevou pro český pracovní trh. Mohou brzdit i inflaci](#). Accessed 16 January 2023.

²⁹⁵ Labour Office of the Czech Republic. 2023. [Žádost o zprostředkování zaměstnání a podporu v nezaměstnanosti](#). Accessed 25 March 2023; MONETA. 2023. [Podpora v nezaměstnanosti 2023 – Kalkulačka](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

Chapter 4. Potential tensions

4.1 Overview

Chapter 4 discusses the different phenomena, policies, and characteristics which are, or could in the future be, sources of tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities. It is important to stress that, at the time of writing these had not necessarily harmed community cohesion, but they could do so in the medium term, for example should contextual factors change or disinformation actors take intentional actions to magnify the tensions. This chapter notes the specific types of risks related to each aspect of the refugee journey, how they have manifested to date, and signs pointing to the likelihood of the tensions becoming more significant.

The five tensions that are likely to have the highest potential to affect community cohesion in the medium term, considering their propensity to occur or by potential impact, are boldfaced in Table 3. While the overall risks are generally low, ratings relate to risks to community cohesion in the Czech Republic. This means that the top five tensions might be unlikely to materialise but are likely to be higher risks than other tensions. For example, tensions around the generally lower benefits received by TCNs who are not eligible for TP are unlikely to significantly threaten community cohesion given the few such TCNs in the Czech Republic; on the other hand, economic concerns are widely felt by the host and refugee populations.

Table 3: Potential sources of tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities

Journey stage	Potential sources of tensions between Ukrainian refugees and host communities
Legal status, welfare, and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown, unclear, and bureaucratic procedures to register for TP and services; perceived lack of information on the rights and obligations of people with TP status; new procedures make Ukrainians feel unwelcome. • Differences in welcome and support to refugee or migrant groups not from Ukraine.
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pressures on a health system which already experiences challenges, including long waits. • Pressure on social services. • Differences in use of services, resulting in perceived abuse (unnecessary ambulance calls, emergency room visits, doctors' visits).
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pressures on and rising cost of housing; lack of social housing. • Ukrainian refugees, and Roma in particular, seen as undesirable tenants. • Uncertainty regarding length of stay for Ukrainian refugees in the country, leading to lack of commitment to contracts.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pressure on schools. • Additional pressure on kindergartens. • Integration issues in schools – lack of special programmes; Ukrainian children experience bullying.
Employment and income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High inflation pressures on host and refugee communities. • Low Ukrainian engagement in the labour market and entrepreneurial activities. • Tensions over distribution of scarce resources between disadvantaged local populations and Ukrainians; poverty among local populations. • Uncertainty regarding length of stay for Ukrainian refugees in the host country, leading to low job retention among refugees. • Reduced financial assistance to refugees could lead to more refugees experiencing poverty and the state (or other organisations) might need to support the vulnerable. • Potential for increased rises in unemployment. • Underemployment of refugees, including difficulties with recognition of qualifications. • Ukrainians perceived to receive higher benefits than host communities; poor communication about amounts and sources of support.

- More financial, labour access, and other support for Ukrainian refugees than other refugee groups.

Community, social, and political life

- Xenophobia and discrimination.
- Negative views of Ukrainians provoked by political discourses or parties.
- Lack of integration into the host society.
- Language barriers or not learning the local language due to lack of opportunity or difficulty of language.
- Tensions between eastern and western Ukrainians or pre- and post-invasion arrivals.
- Cultural differences and lack of understanding.
- Lack of understanding of Ukrainian trauma and consequences.
- **Fear of insecurity and war; refugees seen as making the situation worse.**
- Locals' fatigue in supporting refugees.
- Expectation of more gratitude from refugees.
- Prior conceptions of Ukrainians as economic migrants (pre-February 22).
- Stereotypes of Ukrainians as low skilled.

4.2 Legal status, welfare, and benefits

Unknown, unclear, and bureaucratic procedures to register for TP and services; perceived lack of information on the rights and obligations of people with TP status: The TP system is comprehensive, although some challenges have been seen regarding communication about benefits and packages, particularly related to education.²⁹⁶ Due to language barriers and other factors, it is possible for Ukrainians to slip through the cracks and lose their legal residence status in the Czech Republic. Workshop participants mentioned that this could be a particular risk for youth aged 16 and 17 who do not have legal guardians and might not re-register, as has been required since March 2023.²⁹⁷ As a result, this group could become more vulnerable and more easily exploited.²⁹⁸

Differences in welcome and support to refugee or migrant groups not from Ukraine: Ukrainian refugees benefit from a different regime than other groups. Specific protections and benefits were set up for Ukrainian refugees, and accessing them has been easier for refugees from Ukraine rather than other groups.²⁹⁹ The differences have not yet generated notable tensions in the Czech Republic but may cause issues in the future, particularly frustrations from different refugee groups due to differential treatment. Overall risks to community cohesion, however, are low, given the low number of refugees from other countries.

4.3 Healthcare

Additional pressures on the health system which already experiences challenges, including long waits: The Czech health system is more robust than those of some neighbouring countries but lacks sufficient resources to fully cope with the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. The country's statutory health insurance system provides near-universal coverage, broad benefits, and strong financial protection.³⁰⁰ Spending on healthcare in the Czech Republic is below EU averages and the system lacks sufficient qualified staff to perform optimally, however the

²⁹⁶ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

²⁹⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 2023. [Pomoc občanům Ukrajiny](#). Accessed 13 January, 2023

²⁹⁸ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

²⁹⁹ European Commission. 2023. [Czech Republic: "Lex Ukraine" law package enters into force](#). Accessed 5 April 2023; UNHCR. n.d. [Asylum in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 5 April 2023; and Zaru, Deena. ABC News. 2022. [Europe's unified welcome of Ukrainian refugees exposes 'double standard' for nonwhite asylum seekers: Experts](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³⁰⁰ European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. 2023. [Czechia: Health System Review](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

number of acute care beds is high.³⁰¹ A serious issue is accessibility, particularly in rural areas.³⁰² The arrival of Ukrainians has unexpectedly increased pressure on the system. Although Ukrainian refugees' subsidised access to health insurance is limited to 150 days from the date of TP provision,³⁰³ narratives have emerged about Ukrainians being treated at the expense of Czechs. There is a risk that a stretched healthcare system with longer waiting times for all could lead to increased tensions.

Differences in how services are used, resulting in perceived abuse of services: In comparing norms around health-seeking behaviours for Ukrainians and Czech populations, workshop participants shared public perceptions that Ukrainians were seen as calling doctors more frequently, summoning ambulance services more readily, and requesting more support from specialists.³⁰⁴ This perception may arise from two factors: real differences in health-seeking behaviours and the profile of refugee populations. Ukrainians in workshops in Prague agreed that some norms around doctors' visits and ambulances differed between the two populations; indeed, systemically higher use of emergency room services has been recorded not only amongst Ukrainians but a variety of refugee groups.³⁰⁵ However, some experts point out that Ukrainian refugees use health systems differently in part because of their profiles. The majority of Ukrainian refugees are female and/or children and so are likely to seek different services than the Czech population as a whole (for example, maternal and child health, vaccinations, and reproductive health services). In addition, a population that has fled war will require more mental health support services.³⁰⁶ However, increased pressures on specialist services, and perceptions of the abuse of services, could lead to heightened friction between the refugee and host populations.

4.4 Housing

Additional pressures on and the rising cost of housing; pressures on social housing: In 2021, just before the arrival of Ukrainian refugees, housing prices in the Czech Republic increased sharply relative both to the previous year and to other European countries.³⁰⁷ Prior to the arrival of refugees, analysis revealed that newcomers had difficulty engaging with the property market and that low- and middle-class Czechs faced a lack of affordable housing, resulting in high use of substandard housing.³⁰⁸ Limited affordable housing was a particular problem in cities.³⁰⁹ Prior to 2022, the housing market was buoyed by long-term economic growth trends, low mortgage rates, and demographic trends.³¹⁰ The arrival of Ukrainian refugees increased pressure on the housing market as demand increased. It also exacerbated regional differences, as refugees have been more likely to settle in cities than rural areas. This has the potential to generate resentment among those seeking accommodation as well as those who are prone to disseminate narratives about Ukrainians placing pressure on the housing market (see Chapter 3).

³⁰¹ European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. 2023. [Czechia: Health System Review](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³⁰² European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. 2023. [Czechia: Health System Review](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³⁰³ VisitUkraine.today. 2022. [Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic lost the right to free health insurance](#)

³⁰⁴ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁰⁵ Credé, Sarah H., Such, E., and Mason, S. European Journal of Public Health. 2017. [International migrants' use of emergency departments in Europe compared with non-migrants' use: a systematic review](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁰⁶ Dlouhý, M., et al. European Journal of Public Health. 2022. [Health and health care for refugees and migrants](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁰⁷ Beeckman, Wouter, and Báča, P. KBC. 2022. [Czech residential real estate market, a reason for concern](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁰⁸ OECD iLibrary. 2021. [Overview of housing affordability in cities in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁰⁹ OECD iLibrary. 2021. [Overview of housing affordability in cities in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³¹⁰ OECD iLibrary. 2021. [Overview of housing affordability in cities in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

Ukrainian refugees, and Roma in particular, are seen as undesirable tenants: Likely due in part to the tight housing market, landlords can be selective about the tenants they accept. Ukrainian refugees may be considered undesirable tenants, and some groups within the refugee community – notably Roma – experience particular discrimination.³¹¹ Mothers with children are also at risk. According to workshop participants, landlords are likely to discriminate against them due in part to tighter restrictions around the eviction of tenants that include mothers and children, and they also assume children will damage property.³¹² Discrimination in the rental market can lead to resentment on the part of the refugees.

Uncertainty regarding Ukrainian refugees' length of stay, leading to lack of commitment to contracts: Ukrainian refugees may be at a structural disadvantage in the housing market. Their return intentions are complex; regional surveys indicate that the majority plan to return to Ukraine, with many planning to do so once the war ends.³¹³ Uncertainty about return intentions translates to reluctance to sign long-term rental contracts with landlords. In a tight housing market, unwillingness to commit to longer rentals can disadvantage Ukrainian tenants and could spur resentment, as discussed above in relation to discrimination in the housing market.

4.5 Education

Additional pressure on schools: The Czech educational system is strong, with the OECD finding educational attainment rates, particularly for tertiary education, higher than OECD averages.³¹⁴ Although spending on education is comparatively low, average annual growth in education expenditures in 2021 was amongst the highest in OECD countries.³¹⁵ The number of students per teacher is low, and class sizes are reasonably small. The Czech population recognises the strength of the country's education systems and sees education as equitable.³¹⁶ The school system has made substantial efforts to include Ukrainians.³¹⁷ Such efforts have been reasonably successful, with 57 percent of Ukrainian refugee children attending primary schools by June 2022.³¹⁸ Despite this relative success, limited funding means that integration is putting stress on the system.

Additional pressure on kindergartens: The integration of Ukrainian refugees into the kindergarten system is less successful than into primary schools, with one study finding that only 25 percent of kindergarten-age children were registered in kindergartens by June 2022.³¹⁹ This is despite the fact that the Czech system requires at least one year of pre-primary education.³²⁰ Inclusion of refugee children in the primary school system may be challenging due to structural issues, including lack of systematic induction and training for teachers in early childhood education and understaffing of kindergartens.³²¹ Workshop participants suggested that problems were

³¹¹ Ryšavý, Zdeněk. Romea.cz. 2022. [Czech research finds one-third of Romani refugees from Ukraine have experienced discrimination here, most children are not in education, dual citizenship has not been "abused" by them](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³¹² Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³¹³ Vyshlinsky, Hlib, Mykhailyshyna, D., Samoiluk, M., and Tomolina, M. 2023. [Ukrainian Refugees: Who are they, where did they come from and how to return them?](#) Accessed 28 March 2023; UNHCR. 2022. [Lives on Hold: Intentions and Perspectives of Refugees from Ukraine #2 \(September 2022\)](#). Accessed 25 March 2023.

³¹⁴ OECD. 2022. Education GPS, [Czech Republic, Overview of the education system \(EAG 2022\)](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³¹⁵ OECD. 2022. Education GPS, [Czech Republic, Overview of the education system \(EAG 2022\)](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³¹⁶ CEDEFOP. 2018. [Czech Republic: public opinion survey on views of education quality](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³¹⁷ Palata, Lubos. DW. 2023. [Well integrated: Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³¹⁸ European Commission. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic: Experiences and needs of children and parents in Czech education](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³¹⁹ European Commission. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic: Experiences and needs of children and parents in Czech education](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³²⁰ European Commission. 2022. [Czech Republic Early childhood education and care](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³²¹ Stralczynská, Barbora Loudová. Seepro-r. 2017. [czech Republic ECEC Workforce Profile](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

more acute in rural areas. Shortages of kindergarten spaces could lead to the perception that Ukrainians are ‘taking Czechs’ places’, as raised by research workshop participants.³²²

Integration issues in schools: Integrating Ukrainian students into the Czech school system requires varied support. Challenges include ensuring language training is provided, supporting teachers in working with Ukrainian students, providing psychosocial support, and managing social issues associated with the bullying of Ukrainian children.³²³ Workshop participants also noted that Ukrainian children who also follow the Ukrainian online curriculum in addition to the Czech curriculum (which corresponds to 31 percent of children in primary schools and 10 percent in secondary schools),³²⁴ may be exhausted and struggle to make time to form friendships when there is a language barrier.³²⁵ The Czech school system’s concerted effort to reach out to Ukrainian students³²⁶ may support integration.³²⁷ To enrol large numbers of Ukrainian students, however, the government passed the Lex Ukraine II which empowers principals to create separate classes for Ukrainian children.³²⁸ The effects of this policy may be positive or negative: It is likely to help resolve language issues and provide tailored support, but may exacerbate integration issues in the long term if joint classes are not introduced once Ukrainians gain sufficient language skills to participate fully in classes.

4.6 Employment

High inflation pressures on the host and refugee communities: The year 2022 saw not only an inflow of Ukrainian refugees to the Czech Republic but also a significant increase in inflation – one of the highest in the EU.³²⁹ In February 2023, inflation in the country stood at 18.4 percent compared to an average of 8.5 percent across the Euro Zone.³³⁰ Despite the government’s measures to ease inflation in the country, it is estimated at 9.3 percent for 2023.³³¹ Inflation is underpinned largely by higher energy prices and global macroeconomic conditions. The effect of the war in Ukraine on Czech GDP and inflation is complex, as the country is losing manual labour – particularly male construction workers – as Ukrainians go home to fight, but is gaining workers in new sectors.³³² Women who arrive in the country are joining the labour market and contributing to GDP, although their jobs do not necessarily fit current needs.³³³ Studies and government forecasts suggest that Ukrainian migration could generate GDP growth across countries.³³⁴ Yet, despite Ukrainian workers’ potential to add to GDP growth in the Czech Republic, refugees can become scapegoats for worsening macroeconomic conditions and the rising cost of living, felt particularly by those on lower incomes.

³²² Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³²³ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³²⁴ PAQ Research. 2023. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Vzdělávání](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³²⁵ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³²⁶ McEnchroe, Thomas. Radio Prague International. 2022. [Fiala: Czech school system ready to take in Ukrainian children](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³²⁷ Palata, Lubos. DW. 2023. [Well integrated: Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³²⁸ Plevák, Ondřej. Euractiv. 2022. [Ukrainian children sign up for Czech schools](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³²⁹ Eurostat. 2023. [Annual inflation down to 8.5% in the euro area](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³³⁰ Eurostat. 2023. [Annual inflation down to 8.5% in the euro area](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³³¹ European Commission. 2023. [Economic forecast for Czechia](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

³³² Ciobanu, Claudia, and Gosling, T. Balkan Insight. 2022. [Labour Pains in Central Europe](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³³³ Ciobanu, Claudia, and Gosling, T. Balkan Insight. 2022. [Labour Pains in Central Europe](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³³⁴ Ciobanu, Claudia. Birn. 2023. [A Year of War In Ukraine: Refugees Prove Their Value In Poland and Elsewhere](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; Tucha, Olga, Spivak, I., Bondarenko, O., and Pogarska, O. National Bank of Ukraine. 2022. [Despite current challenges, the impact of forced migration from Ukraine on the economies of recipient countries in the long run will be positive, according to an NBU Staff Discussion Note](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic. 2022. [Macroeconomic Forecast of the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

Low Ukrainian engagement in the labour market and entrepreneurial activities: As discussed in Chapter 2, 40 percent of economically active Ukrainians in the Czech Republic are in paid work.³³⁵ Other Ukrainians engage in occasional and contract-based work. Some major barriers to engaging with the labour market are lack of childcare, especially given the predominance of female refugees, lack of language skills, and lack of recognition of qualifications.³³⁶ The perception of low refugee employment can lead to discourses about ‘freeloading’ and contribute to tensions.

Tensions over the distribution of scarce resources between disadvantaged local populations and Ukrainians, including poverty amongst local populations: While poverty in the Czech Republic in 2020 was relatively low at 8.6 percent,³³⁷ disparities are often associated with specific geographies, ethnicities, and demographics – the elderly, Roma, and remote regions have been systemically in worse situations.³³⁸ Workshop participants noted the risks of discourses such as ‘We should support our poor, not the Ukrainians’ gaining traction if the economic situation worsens.³³⁹ Price increases generally have a disproportionate effect on the poorest populations.

Some workshop participants suggested that competition might develop between Ukrainian refugees and more disadvantaged Czech populations; these tensions might be difficult to resolve in part because Ukrainians are concentrated in different geographic areas than other vulnerable groups, so the groups will require different types of services.³⁴⁰

Uncertainty regarding Ukrainians’ length of stay in the host country was noted to contribute to employers’ perception that refugees will not remain in employment for long. As a result, they might prioritise other applicants if they have a choice.³⁴¹ This could contribute to lower refugee employment, or underemployment, and, in turn lead to tensions about assumptions that refugees take advantage of benefits and support, along with a perceived lack of contribution to the host society.

Reduced financial assistance to refugees could lead to more refugees experiencing poverty, and the state (or other organisations) needing to step in to support the vulnerable: Poverty among Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic, even with humanitarian aid, is at 35 percent – more than triple the poverty rate amongst the Czech population.³⁴² Approximately 80 percent of the Ukrainian refugee population receives humanitarian aid and free accommodation; without this support, PAQ estimates that 84 percent would fall below the poverty line. Support has the strongest impact on families with children.³⁴³ While 40 percent of Ukrainian refugees are in employment and so have some resilience to shocks associated with reduced financial support, most rely on either assistance or unstable employment.³⁴⁴ Closer integration could help support resilience – but integration efforts take time to work, and currently three-quarters of refugees have no more than a month’s worth

³³⁵ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³³⁶ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023; see also Section 2.6.

³³⁷ The World Bank. 2020. [Multidimensional poverty headcount ratio \(% of total population\) – European Union](#). Accessed 30 March 2023. Data are compiled from official government sources or computed by World Bank staff using country-specific poverty lines.

³³⁸ Čada, Mgr. Karel, Ph.D. GAC. 2015. [Analysis of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³³⁹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁴⁰ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁴¹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁴² Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁴³ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁴⁴ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

of savings.³⁴⁵ A potential reduction in support could put the refugees in a more precarious situation which could at the same time increase the prevalence of negative discourses about them.³⁴⁶

Rising unemployment: Unemployment in the Czech Republic was 2.6 percent in January 2023 and has been below 3 percent since 2017.³⁴⁷ Current fears of rising unemployment are linked to economic concerns, as well as territorial disparities – for instance, unemployment in the Usti nad Labem region was double the national average, at 5.8 percent in February 2023.³⁴⁸

Workshop participants noted that, as the economic situation has become more strained, Ukrainian refugees might be scapegoated for Czechs' unemployment as they might be perceived as willing to work for less pay and longer hours.³⁴⁹

Underemployment of refugees, including difficulties with recognition of certifications: Ukrainians employed in the Czech Republic are often overqualified for their jobs. PAQ research found that 44 percent of Ukrainians who work for Czech employers hold 'significantly less qualified jobs' than they did in Ukraine.³⁵⁰ The uncertainty of their length of stay in the Czech Republic can contribute to refugees taking jobs below their qualifications and experience. This could lead to a missed opportunity for refugees to realise their potential and showcase their broad skills and experience.³⁵¹

Ukrainians are perceived to receive higher benefits than host communities, and communication about the amount and sources of support is poor: The Czech government established systems for support to Ukrainians shortly after refugees started arriving.³⁵² As discussed in Section 3.2, the benefits earmarked for Ukrainian refugees, particularly at the beginning of the conflict, have been a cause of discontent for some groups, and misleading narratives about the benefits that Ukrainians receive continue to circulate.

Provision of support for Ukrainian refugees is disproportionate to support for other refugee groups: Ukrainian workshop participants noted that the unprecedented support for Ukrainians, while others do not enjoy similar treatment, has the potential to generate discontent among different groups of refugees in the Czech Republic,³⁵³ although their numbers are low.

4.7 Community, social, and political life

Xenophobia and discrimination: The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance and Amnesty International have issued reports on discrimination in the country.³⁵⁴ While the Roma are the focus of the reports,

³⁴⁵ Kavanová, M. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#), PAQ Research Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁴⁶ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁴⁷ Czech Statistical Office. 2023. [Latest economic data](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁴⁸ European Commission. 2022. [Labour market information: Czechia](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁴⁹ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁵⁰ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁵¹ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁵² Council of Europe. 2022. [SRSG on Migration and Refugees publishes reports of visit to Czech and Slovak Republics](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁵³ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁵⁴ Council of Europe. 2020. [Anti-racism commission: new reports on Czech Republic and Slovakia](#). Accessed 5 April 2023; Amnesty International. n.d. [Czech Republic 2022](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

other refugees, particularly those who arrived in 2015, have also faced discrimination.³⁵⁵ There is a tendency to politicise issues around migration and displacement, as discussed in Chapter 3; workshop participants indicated that this tendency could extend to Ukrainians.³⁵⁶

Negative views of Ukrainians provoked by political discourses and parties: Elections in the Czech Republic took place in a two-round process in January 2023. The primary opposition candidate adopted a steadily more anti-refugee platform during the election period and was seen as adopting the viewpoint that the Czech Republic provided too much support to Ukrainian refugees.³⁵⁷ Right-wing parties promoted the position that ‘Czech citizens come first’, and advocated against TP for Ukrainians.³⁵⁸ Political parties and discourses that portray Ukrainians, and support for them, in a negative light have the potential to impact community cohesion, particularly around election time when campaigning peaks.

Lack of integration into host society: While the Czech Republic has welcomed Ukrainians, poor Czech language skills among children and adults can make engagement within communities challenging. Few activities are conducted together, with low engagement of Ukrainians in after-school activities, for instance.³⁵⁹ This can be a missed opportunity to build trust and connections between the communities.

Language barriers: Despite government efforts to support Ukrainian refugees in learning Czech, barriers persist. One study found that 20 percent of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic could not visit a doctor due to the language barrier, even though they needed medical attention.³⁶⁰ Another study found that 65 percent of Czech children knew no Czech or only basic words and phrases.³⁶¹ Only one-third of this study’s respondents attended language classes, either online or in person; most tried to study independently.³⁶² Reasons for lack of engagement in language courses include lack of child care and lack of awareness of courses.³⁶³

Cultural differences and lack of understanding: Cultural similarities can positively influence attitudes toward and acceptance of Ukrainian refugees.³⁶⁴ However, given Czechs’ concerns regarding refugees’ impact on livelihoods and services, such as their being competitors on the labour market or abusing the social system, cultural proximity may not suffice to create acceptance within some segments of Czech society.

Tensions between Ukrainians: Workshop participants noted discourses about Ukrainians from the western regions of Ukraine not being seen as genuine refugees – for example, that they rented their flats to internally

³⁵⁵ European Commission. 2018. [The Wages of Fear: Attitudes Towards Refugees and Migrants in Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁵⁶ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁵⁷ Ridgwell, Henry. VOA News. 2023. [Czechs Prepare to Choose New President, as Rivals Clash Over Support for Ukraine](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁵⁸ Švec, Michael. Veridica. 2022. [Czech Republic: Ukrainian refugees as a political topic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁵⁹ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶⁰ Vlasenko, Roman. GLOBSEC. 2023. [Overcoming the language barrier for Ukrainian refugees](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶¹ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶² Kavanová, Martina, et al. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶³ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶⁴ Albada, Katja, Hansen, N., and Otten, S. 2021. [When cultures clash: Links between perceived cultural distance in values and attitudes towards migrants](#). *British Journal of Social Psychology* Oct;60(4):1350–1378.

displaced people from the east of Ukraine and came to the Czech Republic to claim financial support or as economic migrants rather than refugees.³⁶⁵ Such discourses have the potential to divide communities.

Integration issues associated with lack of understanding of Ukrainian trauma and its consequences:

People deal with trauma differently, and its impacts can be debilitating. A PAQ study found that depression and anxiety amongst Ukrainian refugees are common.³⁶⁶ As an example, a workshop participant active in Ukrainian civil society started to support Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic to manage trauma, but the work worsened her own trauma and stress.³⁶⁷ Issues can be exacerbated because of lack of awareness; the same study found that fewer than one in three people experiencing symptoms would acknowledge that they may be suffering from mental illness.³⁶⁸ Lack of understanding of trauma can lead to friction between local populations who might perceive some types of behaviour as 'lazy' or 'ungrateful', while in reality it might be due to strong trauma. Traumatized people, in turn, might perceive insistence on finding work immediately or participating in 'fun' community activities as irritating and diminishing their experience.

Fear of insecurity and war: Workshop participants identified fear of increased insecurity and war as a major tension; one study found that fear of war increased from 21 percent in 2021 to 32 percent in 2023.³⁶⁹ Political parties can use fear of war to generate anti-refugee discourses. In the Czech Republic, some nationalist groups advocate for peace at the cost of concessions to Russia. The leader of one group explicitly stated that 'even a bad peace is better than war', drawing on underlying insecurities amongst the population to promote a message that may affect the integration of Ukrainian refugees.³⁷⁰

Locals' fatigue in supporting refugees: Strong support for refugees has continued for more than a year. However, workshop participants suggested that fatigue in hosting Ukrainians is starting to set in. This feeling contrasts to the narrative promoted by the Czech government that integration is successful.³⁷¹ The proportion of Czechs who 'refuse to accept Ukrainian refugees' grew from 13 percent in spring 2022 to 27 percent in December 2022.³⁷² Media outlets have started to report on refugee support fatigue.³⁷³

Expectation of more gratitude from refugees: As discussed in Chapter 3, frustration can arise due to refugees' perceived ingratitude. Such tensions may reflect a misunderstanding of refugees' needs or situations, including psychosocial issues and health needs. Workshop participants felt that any negative experiences with Ukrainian refugees were significantly more likely to be shared widely than positive ones, contributing to a negative impression of refugees amongst some groups of Czechs.³⁷⁴

Prior conceptions of Ukrainians as economic migrants and stereotypes of Ukrainians as low-skilled:

Before February 2022, Ukrainians in the Czech Republic were seen as filling a labour shortage – particularly in

³⁶⁵ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁶⁶ Kavanová, Martina. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Education, Housing, Employment, Poverty, Mental Health](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶⁷ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁶⁸ Kavanová, Martina, et al. PAQ Research. 2022. [Voice of Ukrainians: Mental Health/ Research among refugees](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁶⁹ BrnoDaily. 2023. [One Third of Czechs Report Fear of War, While Pandemic Concern Drops Dramatically](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷⁰ Švec, Michael. Veridica. 2022. [Czech Republic: Ukrainian refugees as a political topic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷¹ Palata, Lubos. DW. 2023. [Well integrated: Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷² Centrum pro vyzkum verejného mnení (2022) [Česká veřejnost ke konfliktu na Ukrajině – podzim 2022](#). Accessed 5 April 2023; and Švec, Michael. Veridica. [Czech Republic: Ukrainian refugees as a political topic](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷³ Ciobanu, Claudia, and Gosling, T. Balkan Insight. 2022. [Labour Pains in Central Europe](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷⁴ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

low-skilled manual labour sectors.³⁷⁵ Earlier perceptions of Ukrainians as low-skilled labour may generate two types of challenges in the current context. First, the country is losing Ukrainian manual labour as men return to Ukraine to fight while women have entered the labour market, but in different sectors.³⁷⁶ Second, there is an assumption that more Ukrainians plan to remain in the Czech Republic because of the Ukrainian diaspora that has been present since before the war. During workshops, discussions arose about perceptions that Ukrainians arrived in the Czech Republic with the intention of using Czech resources and, in the case of Ukrainian women, marrying Czechs who were better off.³⁷⁷ Perceptions and portrayals of Ukrainians as economic migrants can undermine genuine concern for their plight and weaken support for their cause, thereby negatively impacting community cohesion.

³⁷⁵ Euractiv. 2022. [Poland, Czech Republic struggle to replace the Ukrainian workers](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷⁶ Ciobanu, Claudia, and Gosling, T. Balkan Insight. 2022. [Labour Pains in Central Europe](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁷⁷ Ciobanu, Claudia, and Gosling, T. Balkan Insight. 2022. [Labour Pains in Central Europe](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

Chapter 5. Programmatic approach recommendations

5.1 Overview

This report has focused on medium-term risks to community cohesion. While we present a range of overarching recommendations to facilitate the Ukrainian and host communities getting to know one another better and developing strong relationships and trust, other recommendations are more operational. Our research demonstrates that many of the concerns that host communities expressed – and, with them, incendiary and misleading narratives shared by actors with malicious intent as well as some segments of the Czech population – are rooted in longstanding issues such as the strained healthcare and housing systems, which the arrival of Ukrainian refugees has highlighted. Indeed, their arrival could speed the resolution of some of these issues, which have become even more visible and, because in some cases different sources of funding might become available to address them. This could improve the situation for both Ukrainians and host communities.

The research team selected the potential approaches discussed below based on desk-based research and a survey circulated to key experts. The survey focused on the key five tensions in each country, the potential effectiveness of the proposed mitigation approaches, and lessons learnt from existing programmatic interventions in each country.

5.2 Cross-cutting programmatic approaches

Some best practice programmatic approaches can be integrated across different programme interventions and funding streams to better understand and reduce potential tensions between Ukrainian refugees and Czech communities.

Conduct conflict and context analysis: A cornerstone of cohesive and conflict-sensitive programming is a solid conflict and context analysis. The importance of conducting such analysis has been pointed out by actors including the United Nations, INGOs that specialise in peacebuilding, and the World Bank.³⁷⁸ To be effective, conflict and context analyses need to include various points of view. It is generally considered important to include the points of view of women and marginalised and stigmatised groups. Analyses, which could be done at various levels – from the intervention or project level to sector-wide – should outline current political, economic, and social factors, as well as historical contexts and conditions that may contribute to conflict. In the context of the Czech Republic, some factors to take into account include (1) the medium-term macroeconomic context, including volatility in housing prices and inflation rates; (2) the relative strength of public services, such as the strength of the education system and the contrasting weakness of the health system; (3) who stands to gain or lose from various changes; and (4) internal dynamics around social exclusion, and the ways in which responses to refugees can affect populations that were disadvantaged before the arrival of the Ukrainian refugees.

³⁷⁸ Saferworld. n.d. [Conflict Analysis, Chapter 2](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; United Nations. 2016. [UN Conflict Analysis Practice Note](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; World Bank. n.d. [Conflict Analysis](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

Share positive stories through social media: Social media is used as a tool to disseminate incendiary and misleading discourses about Ukrainian refugees (see Chapter 3).³⁷⁹ This use corresponds with wider literature showing that social media can be an effective conduit for misinformation and disinformation.³⁸⁰ In part to counter this tendency, sharing positive stories via social media would support the creation of a counter-movement to mobilise communities to come together. There is evidence that counter-messaging can be effective, particularly when coupled with local in-person activities and activism.³⁸¹ Dynamics around the sharing of stories, including which ones to share, by whom, and through what outlets, should be planned around the most effective ways to penetrate information bubbles. Findings from business research show that sharing positive stories can improve morale;³⁸² there is also evidence that social cohesion, or ‘glue,’ can form around social media messages and stories.³⁸³ Positive stories and messages can and should be developed around Ukrainians’ contributions to the Czech economy and society, as well as Czechs’ hospitality toward Ukrainians. Positive messages should be developed within the context of a strong context analysis. For example, one workshop participant pointed out that what was meant to be a positive story about medical support to Ukrainian refugees received hundreds of negative comments within hours, stating that local citizens were suffering in order for Ukrainians to receive treatment.³⁸⁴ Building stories on a solid understanding of local sensitivities and message testing to ensure optimal framing can help minimise similar situations and backlash.

Implement strategic communications to reach target audiences and penetrate information bubbles: A range of tools can counteract misleading and incendiary discourses, supporting proactive efforts to ‘pre-bunk’, or increase resilience to, misleading content. Approaches can include awareness raising campaigns and resilience and network building.³⁸⁵ Reactive efforts to debunk could use counter-narratives, crisis communication, and policy responses.³⁸⁶ These should be tailored and targeted to specific audiences and their interests, values, language, norms, and beliefs. While providing accurate information to audiences is important – for example, by engaging dedicated fact-checkers – disseminating facts is not usually sufficient to change attitudes and behaviours around sensitive issues.³⁸⁷ An Overseas Development Institute report on understanding public attitudes toward refugees and migrants suggests that communications should highlight that the situation is manageable and emphasise shared values.³⁸⁸ Therefore, fact-checking, while particularly important in the context of policy debates and strategy, should be accompanied by other strategies to resonate with diverse groups, including (1) framing messaging to align with the target audiences’ moral values, which has been proven to shift attitudes on highly sensitive and often politicised topics;³⁸⁹ (2) appealing to emotions, which are strong drivers of decisions and behaviours and which make content more likely to be accessed and remembered;³⁹⁰ and (3) shifting social norms or using normative messaging regarding the expectations of behaviour, or the frequency of a behaviour, to

³⁷⁹ See also, as an example: Walter, Jan D. DW. 2023. [Fact Check: How propaganda denigrates Ukrainian refugees](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁸⁰ Bunse, Simone. 2021. [Social media: A tool for peace or conflict?](#) Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁸¹ Bunse, Simone. 2021. [Social media: A tool for peace or conflict?](#) Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁸² Cecchi-Dimeglio, Paola. MIT Sloan Management Review. 2020. [Why sharing good news matters](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

³⁸³ Duffy, Andrew, and Ling, R. Journalism Studies. 2020. [The Gift of News: Phatic News Sharing on Social Media for Social Cohesion](#), Journalism Studies. Accessed 26 March 2023.

³⁸⁴ Warsaw research workshop, 9 February 2023.

³⁸⁵ Government Communication Service. 2021. [Resist 2: Counter-disinformation toolkit](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁸⁶ Government Communication Service. 2021. [Resist 2: Counter-disinformation toolkit](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁸⁷ Dempster, H. and Hargrave, K. Overseas Development Institute. 2017. [Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants](#).

³⁸⁸ Dempster, H. and Hargrave, K. Overseas Development Institute. 2017. [Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants](#).

³⁸⁹ Feinberg, Matthew, and Willer, R. 2015. [From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?](#) Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 41(12), 1665–1681.

³⁹⁰ Brady, W. J., Gantman, A., and Van Bavel, J. 2020. [Attentional capture helps explain why moral and emotional content go viral](#). *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 149, 746-756. 3

promote behaviours.³⁹¹ When accurate information is used to counter falsehoods, it should be repeated multiple times within targeted fora. Repeated statements are shown to be easier to process and therefore are perceived to be more truthful, even by those with prior knowledge of the facts.³⁹² Repeating facts is crucial because they are countering falsehoods to which the audiences have been exposed multiple times. Research indicates that both misinformation and disinformation can be promoted through specific hubs – media outlets used by local and foreign actors to influence public opinion.³⁹³ After false information is disseminated, it can be taken up by individuals who do not actively question it, since there is a global bias toward believing that fake news is something that affects other people.³⁹⁴ Finally, it is crucial that the target audience consider the messenger credible, and as much care should be taken in selecting the messenger as the message.³⁹⁵ In the Czech Republic in particular, there are active efforts to counter disinformation and engage in positive strategic communications. The Czech Elves, for example, is a citizen’s group that focusses specifically in this area.³⁹⁶

Organise joint activities that allow the refugee and Czech host populations to get to know each other:

Work, family life, and the broader challenges discussed in Section 4.7 may prevent the Czech and refugee communities from interacting. All types of stakeholders can organise activities to bring them together socially and build informal networks – governments, municipalities, NGOs, and citizens’ groups. Such activities have been noted to reduce prejudice.³⁹⁷ In the Czech Republic, a workshop participant described a community’s film screenings with short ‘chat to your neighbour’ intervals designed to help attendees get to know each other, with the movie providing a basis for conversation.³⁹⁸ Some NGOs in Slovakia noted that activities designed to bring Ukrainian and host community youth together were poorly attended. However, one NGO’s activities usually attract equal numbers of local and refugee children. The NGO does not advertise them as opportunities to meet Ukrainians; rather it focuses on games or activities that the children enjoy. The NGO advertises to Ukrainian and Slovak youth separately, using posters in both languages.³⁹⁹

Offer additional free or affordable after-school activities: Support for free or highly subsidised after-school activities has multiple benefits. First, after-school activities can help bridge the gap between the school day and the work day, allowing mothers to work without seeking child care or incurring additional costs. Second, after-school activities create opportunities for Ukrainian and Czech students to meet, get to know each other, and build trust and mutual understanding. Third, they could include language classes, which Ukrainian students need. Such activities can also facilitate the organic learning of a language if Ukrainian and Czech children engage in joint activities. Fourth, after-school activities could be beneficial for young people’s mental and physical health.⁴⁰⁰ Participants in project workshops in all five countries studied noted that teenagers are particularly vulnerable to social isolation and poor mental health; some pointed out potential risks of youth engaging in harmful behaviours if they do not take part in hobbies or activities. After school-activities may be particularly suitable in the Czech Republic, given the relative strength of the country’s education system.

³⁹¹ Petit, Vincent, and Zalk, T. N. UNICEF and PENN SoNG. 2019. [Everybody Wants to Belong: A Practical Guide to Tackling and Leveraging Social Norms in Behaviour Change Programming](#)

³⁹² Fazio, L. K., Brashier, N. M., Payne, B. K., and Marsh, E. J. 2015. [Knowledge does not protect against illusory truth](#). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. 144(5), 993–1002.

³⁹³ Citizens' Association Why Not. 2019. [Disinformation in the online sphere: The case of BiH](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

³⁹⁴ Ipsos. 2018. [Fake news, filter bubbles, post-truth and trust](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

³⁹⁵ RAN C&N Academy. 19 December 2019. [Effective Narratives: Updating the GAMMMMA+ model](#)

³⁹⁶ Centre for European Policy Analysis. 2021. [Czech elves battle in the disinformation forest](#)

³⁹⁷ Pettigrew Thomas F., and Tropp, L. R. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2006. [A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

³⁹⁸ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

³⁹⁹ Bratislava research workshop, 7–8 March 2023.

⁴⁰⁰ Nabors, et al. 2022. [A University and Community-Based Partnership: After-School Mentoring Activities to Support Positive Mental Health for Children Who Are Refugees](#).

Train search engines and generative artificial intelligence to recognise bias and potential abuse: Digital advances, including social media platforms, enable messages and disinformation to spread much more rapidly, creating echo chambers that can reinforce confirmation bias.⁴⁰¹ Research shows that false information can spread more quickly than facts, perhaps due to the degree of novelty and emotional reactions that false stories can evoke.⁴⁰² However, some technologies, such as ChatGPT, have built-in safeguards to limit the spread of harmful rumours. When asked to generate negative headlines about Ukrainian refugees, ChatGPT instead provided recommendations for how to approach news stories about refugees ‘with empathy and sensitivity, and to give a voice to those who are often marginalized and underrepresented in the media’.⁴⁰³ The technology also appeared to have built-in mechanisms to recognise false assumptions, as demonstrated below. Search engines could use similar notices, for example to seek to minimise the spread of falsehoods about refugees.

Request: Why do Ukrainian refugees in Poland not want to integrate?

GPT-3: I'm sorry, but I cannot provide an answer to this question as it is based on a false assumption. The majority of Ukrainian refugees in Poland do want to integrate and establish a new life in their host country. Like any other refugees, they face significant challenges in terms of language, culture, and finding employment, which can make integration difficult. However, many Ukrainian refugees actively seek out language classes, job training, and other resources to help them integrate successfully.

5.3 Legal Status, welfare, and benefits

Broadly, changes to registration processes and procedures should be communicated simply and clearly to refugees via a range of media. Digital literacy support could help vulnerable groups understand and use online services. Processes and procedures for Ukrainians that streamline the complexity and length of time required to prove they qualify under the refugee definition could be provided to other refugees fleeing war and persecution who are eligible under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Specific recommendations put forward by this report include the following.

Continue to implement phasing programmes that focus on the most vulnerable, and communicate this approach more clearly: Phasing programmes involve changing targeting approaches to support more vulnerable people, as would be done for longer-term conflicts. Phasing is an underlying principle of ‘nexus’ programming that brings together humanitarian, development, and peace actors and links relief, rehabilitation,

⁴⁰¹ OECD. 2022. *Disinformation and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: Threats and governance responses*. Accessed 31 March 2023.

⁴⁰² Vosoughi, Soroush, Roy, D., and Aral, S. Science. 2018. *The spread of true and false news online*. Accessed 31 March 2023

⁴⁰³ General guidelines for how to do so were also provided:

‘1. Avoid sensationalism: Avoid using inflammatory language or sensational headlines that can stigmatize refugees or perpetuate stereotypes.

‘2. Use person-centered language: When reporting on refugees, refer to them as individuals rather than as a monolithic group. Use person-centered language that acknowledges their humanity and individual experiences.

‘3. Provide context: Provide context for why refugees are fleeing their home countries and the challenges they face in their host countries. This can help readers understand the complexities of the issue and challenge any misconceptions or misperceptions.

‘4. Interview refugees and stakeholders: Seek out perspectives from refugees themselves as well as experts and stakeholders in the field. This can help humanize the issue and provide more nuanced and accurate reporting.

‘5. Highlight stories of resilience and hope: Highlight stories of refugees who have overcome challenges and made positive contributions to their host communities. This can help counter negative stereotypes and give a more balanced perspective of refugees' experiences.

‘Remember that every person has inherent dignity and deserves to be treated with respect and compassion’.

and development programming. Shortcuts associated with quick assistance – notably, status-based targeting with little analysis of needs (for example, providing the same assistance to all people granted TP) – are likely to be used during the initial phases of a crisis. However, over time, it is possible to change the structure of support to ensure equitability and access. This might involve extending more support to those who are most vulnerable and need additional assistance (e.g., the disabled or unemployed), in line with national benefit systems. Phasing programmes can help manage potential tensions associated with resentment of refugees who receive support while poor host populations struggle.⁴⁰⁴ The Czech government recognises some of the benefits associated with phasing. For example, the government’s cash support lasts only six months, and health care coverage has been amended to cover only 150 days except in the case of specific vulnerabilities.⁴⁰⁵ These changes help to demonstrate that refugees who receive benefits are in need, and that determinations of their needs are in line with evaluations of citizens’ eligibility for benefits. In the Czech Republic, where concerns have been expressed about the degree to which Ukrainians are in need, clearer communications on needs-based targeting is likely to be effective in mitigating tensions.

Link humanitarian cash to social protection: Concerns about inequities between Ukrainian refugees and Czech citizens can be mitigated in part by linking the humanitarian system to the government benefits system.⁴⁰⁶ A range of tools was developed to do just this in response to COVID-19.⁴⁰⁷ One well-documented key weakness in linking humanitarian cash and social protection, however, is coordination.⁴⁰⁸ In the Czech Republic, several contributory benefit schemes are in place (including for healthcare and housing) and are widely accepted amongst the local population. Channelling humanitarian support through these systems (expanding the system horizontally to include both Czechs and Ukrainian refugees) helps alleviate concerns about inequality, as all will be subject to the same type of means testing and will receive benefits through the same systems.

Utilise inclusive beneficiary accountability and feedback mechanisms: Beneficiary accountability and feedback mechanisms developed and implemented by INGOs, the UN system, and other stakeholders should focus on inclusivity to ensure that any complaints from either the host community and refugees are registered, for instance within the education system. Such mechanisms could be linked to a wider effort to regularly monitor tensions at the community level.⁴⁰⁹

5.4 Healthcare

This report identifies perceived additional pressure on the Czech healthcare system as one of the five most pressing concerns for refugee community cohesion.⁴¹⁰ Overarching recommendations to mitigate potential tensions related to the Czech health service revolve around addressing long-term structural challenges related to an overstretched system and health financing,⁴¹¹ both of which predate the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in the country. The inflow of Ukrainians could be seen as further stressing an already weak healthcare system. It may

⁴⁰⁴ Discussed in more detail in Section 3.2 and Section 4.6.

⁴⁰⁵ As discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

⁴⁰⁶ CALP Network. 2020. [State of the World’s Cash 2020](#). Accessed 17 April 2023.

⁴⁰⁷ SPACE. 2020. [Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash and Food Responses to COVID-19: Needs, Coverage, and Gaps](#). Accessed 17 April 2023.

⁴⁰⁸ SPACE. 2020. [Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash and Food Responses to COVID-19: Needs, Coverage, and Gaps](#). Accessed 17 April 2023.

⁴⁰⁹ International Alert. 2020. Donbas: [Taking stock of Peacebuilding](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

Safer World. 2019. [Dip Beyond Box Ticking](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴¹⁰ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁴¹¹ Discussed in Section 4.3.

be possible to mitigate some of these tensions by channelling international funding to broader ongoing efforts to reform or improve the system.⁴¹² In the short term, this report makes the recommendations below.

Streamline staffing processes to involve skilled Ukrainians in the health sector: A gap in the Czech healthcare system is the shortage of trained medical professionals (see Section 4.2). Programmes that identify Ukrainians with appropriate health sector qualifications and skills, support them with language or other needed training, and place them in the Czech health system could be beneficial. Such programmes would likely involve outreach to identify qualified Ukrainians, processes to speed recognition of skills and qualifications, tailored language training, and placement in Czech hospitals and clinics. UNICEF is conducting some similar programming in partnership with the Institute for Post Graduate Medical Education in Prague and the Centre for Nursing and Other Healthcare Professionals in Brno to support Ukrainian healthcare professionals to obtain required accreditations.⁴¹³

Increase the number of interpreters: Evidence shows that poor health outcomes, including low vaccination rates, are driven in part by a lack of interpreters in healthcare settings.⁴¹⁴ Indeed, the presence of interpreters is a best practice for the provision of healthcare to refugees, supporting cultural sensitivity and helping to ensure that refugees understand both their health issues and the procedures and systems they engage with. Investment in interpreters could reduce the strain on Czech doctors by making it easier for them to communicate with their patients.

5.5 Housing

One of the five most likely tensions identified by this report relates to pressures on the Czech Republic's housing system. This encompasses a stretched rental market and rising house prices which are a challenge for lower-income Czechs and first-time buyers. The country also faces a shortfall of social housing and the decreasing availability of existing stock.⁴¹⁵ At an overarching level, expanding rent control policies and investing in local development could ease systemic pressures on the Czech housing system. Such policies could support both lower income Czech communities and Ukrainian refugees by reducing the pressure emanating from the housing sector, which has potential drive undermine community cohesion and exacerbate tensions. The government is making efforts to invest in housing; to the degree possible, housing aid to Ukrainians should be coordinated with these programmes and efforts.⁴¹⁶ Similarly, providing targeted rent subsidies and improving tenants' rights could

⁴¹² Channeling international support to health care through national systems can help alleviate pressure on the social services system in a way that also mitigates tensions between the host and refugee communities. In the Czech Republic, the international community is providing support for healthcare: for example, the European Investment Bank is providing €200 million to the government. Similar on-budget support could be considered in different countries. Such an approach would target systemic improvement of the healthcare system and could support an integrated approach that improves outcomes for both Ukrainian refugees and host country citizens. European Investment Bank. 6 February 2023. [EIB and Czech Republic take steps to mitigate the impact of the Ukraine war](#). Accessed 29 March 2023.

⁴¹³ UNICEF. 2023. [UNICEF Refugee Response in the Czech Republic: Initial Results and Priorities](#). Accessed 10 March 2023

⁴¹⁴ Ganczak, Maria, et al. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2022. [Health System Barriers to Child Mandatory and Optional Vaccination among Ukrainian Migrants in Poland in the Context of MMR and HPV Vaccines-A Qualitative Study](#)

⁴¹⁵ OECD. Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Policy Briefs. 2020. [Social housing: A key part of past and future housing policy](#). Accessed 26 March 2023.

⁴¹⁶ International actors can support housing availability and system resilience by (1) dedicating funding to support national actors to coordinate; (2) channelling housing and rent support through the government housing allowance and subsidies systems (i.e., using mechanisms associated with linking cash and social protection and adapting them to the housing market); and (3) supporting and investing in new housing developments. All activities should take place in line with, and ideally directly through, existing government mechanisms to enhance housing infrastructure and access to housing. See OECD. 2021. [Housing Affordability in the Czech Republic: Chapter 2](#); Housing 2030. 2023. [Slovak State Housing Policy](#); and Spirkova, Daniela. 2018. [Housing Policy in the Slovak Republic](#).

reduce vulnerabilities of both communities. In addition, this report specifically recommends the shorter-term programmatic approaches discussed below.

Provide viable opportunities for people to live, work, and go to school outside of major cities: Choosing whether to live in large or smaller cities or in rural areas often poses a dilemma for refugees. Larger cities have more employment opportunities, more options for education, and often greater proximity to healthcare facilities, but smaller cities have more affordable housing options. One workshop participant in Poland cited a pilot project offering relocation to smaller villages or towns, with both housing and employment offers and funding to renovate old homes.⁴¹⁷ This kind of scheme could be expanded to the Czech Republic to ease housing pressures in cities. Good practice also exists around companies (including in the private sector) providing well-rounded support to refugees. For example, PepsiCo provided support to 900 Ukrainian PepsiCo associates and their families to relocate to Romania, arranged for the employees to continue working for PepsiCo after relocation, recruited other Ukrainian refugees, arranged housing, and established the PepsiCo learning centre – a Ukrainian school for refugee children, employing Ukrainian teachers.⁴¹⁸ Such holistic multi-sectoral models that enable Ukrainians to participate meaningfully in work could be explored, and policies could help address the barriers that companies might face in moving operations from Ukraine to host countries.

Support social intermediaries in rental processes: A social rental agency model could be piloted. In this model, a non-profit intermediary would negotiate between property owners and people in need of housing.⁴¹⁹ The intermediary would guarantee rent payments and minimum tenancy standards to owners who in turn would discount rents and guarantee stable, affordable, and quality accommodation to tenants. The intermediary could help mitigate challenges and issues associated with discrimination against Ukrainian tenants and could support the management of concerns and issues related to Ukrainian refugees' short-term housing needs. Habitat for Humanity founded the Social Rental Agency in Poland, which provides such housing and employment services.⁴²⁰ The approach could be leveraged to support the provision of housing to refugee groups, particularly those that are more likely to experience discrimination and stigma, such as Roma. Social intermediaries can act as interlocutors between Ukrainian tenants and landlords to mitigate stigma; they may also be able to act as guarantors to protect against risks associated with short-term tenancies.

5.6 Education

The Czech education system is strong, and education expenditures have increased sharply in recent years.⁴²¹ The system's strong reputation contributes to the greater engagement of Ukrainians in the Czech school system than in the other countries featured in this study (Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia). However, there are concerns that funding might not be sufficient to maintain the system's high standards given the sudden increase in pupils from Ukraine. Investment in kindergartens and early childhood education would be useful in the Czech Republic as it would enable parents to find jobs and work standard hours and would encourage contact between host communities and Ukrainian children and their parents. This would lay a foundation for longer-term positive perceptions. To enable this development, this report recommends the following.

⁴¹⁷ Warsaw research workshop, 9 February 2023.

⁴¹⁸ PepsiCo. 2022. [The story behind PepsiCo's school for displaced Ukrainian children](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁴¹⁹ Habitat for Humanity n.d. [Introducing Social Rental Agencies in Poland](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁴²⁰ Habitat for Humanity n.d. [Introducing Social Rental Agencies in Poland](#). Accessed 27 March 2023.

⁴²¹ OECD. 2022. Education GPS/ [Czech Republic, Overview of the education system \(EAG 2022\)](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

Provide language support for Ukrainian children: Language classes have been identified as an area of concern, particularly at pre-school level.⁴²² In most schools or kindergartens, Ukrainian students receive less than one hour of practice per day.⁴²³ Language classes have not been identified as a key need for students enrolled in the Ukrainian online system – but lack of language skills could create challenges with integration in the medium to long term.

Embed mental health support into the education system: Mental health issues are prevalent and likely to be undertreated among Ukrainian refugees.⁴²⁴ Integrating more mental health services into the school system could provide mental health support to children and identify parents who also need support (and it could be possible to provide support to parents at school). As the time spent in displacement extends, and given that children’s mental health situation is particularly fragile, embedding mental health services in schools is highly promising.

Train teachers and educational staff to better support Ukrainian students: Training teachers to support Ukrainian refugees could help mitigate conflict, manage and provide support for psychosocial issues, and tailor pedagogical methods to language learners. There are some indications, primarily from a project conducted by International Alert in Lebanon focusing on Syrian refugees, that training for social services workers (teachers, health workers, and others) can generate positive community cohesion benefits.⁴²⁵ Training includes analysis of the context with social services workers, development and implementation of tailored capacity development programmes, accompanying service providers in their work, and raising awareness around the impacts of refugees’ psychosocial issues and health requirements.⁴²⁶ The results of this programme were demonstrable: shorter waiting times, more willingness on the part of refugees to discuss issues and problems, and the return of host community members to service centres that they had left.⁴²⁷

Provide spaces in schools, libraries, and community centres for refugee children to follow the Ukrainian curriculum online in a social setting: Continuing education in a Ukrainian online school is the preferred option for many children, although it carries risks of social isolation. Making spaces available in schools, libraries, or community centres could facilitate social interaction and bonding among Ukrainian and local students. This approach could also enable parents to work more easily. Individual and pilot programmes of this sort exist, along with resources that could be easily adapted. For example, UNICEF, in collaboration with municipalities and local civil society organisations, opened six Spilno Hubs around Poland ‘to provide comprehensive and longer term support on integration, mental health, legal assistance, protection and educational and social activities to the most vulnerable refugee children and families who have fled war in Ukraine’ and ‘to provide a safe space to connect with the local community’.⁴²⁸

⁴²² Prokop, Daniel, et al. European Commission. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Zkušenosti a potřeby dětí a rodičů v českém vzdělávání](#). Accessed 13 July 2023.

⁴²³ Prokop, Daniel, et al. European Commission. 2022. [Hlas Ukrajinců: Zkušenosti a potřeby dětí a rodičů v českém vzdělávání](#). Accessed 13 July 2023.

⁴²⁴ See Section 2.3.

⁴²⁵ International Alert. 2020. [Model on integrating conflict sensitivity and social stability into services provision](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴²⁶ International Alert. 2020. [Model on integrating conflict sensitivity and social stability into services provision](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴²⁷ International Alert. 2020. [Model on integrating conflict sensitivity and social stability into services provision](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴²⁸ UNICEF. 2023. [UNICEF launches six Spilno Hubs in five months to support Ukrainian refugees and integration of local communities](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

5.7 Employment and Income

High inflation and the rising cost of living have impacted the Czech Republic, with inflation reaching 18.4 percent – 9.9 percent over of the EU average – in February 2023.⁴²⁹ Whilst inflation has since eased, the cost of living remains high, and the Czech public still names this as an area of concern.⁴³⁰ Unemployment in the country has historically been low, but economic concerns and misleading and incendiary narratives can translate into concerns about rising unemployment.⁴³¹ Approaches to alleviate these potential tensions are broad-ranging. They might include higher-level macroeconomic approaches and further engagement with multilateral organisations (such as the World Bank) for support on imports, exports, and inflation management; approaches to ensure and communicate equity in the distribution of resources among the Ukrainian and local populations that are in need; or boosting labour market participation and entrepreneurship. Shorter-term recommendations are explored in more detail below at the national and regional policy levels and the community level.

National and regional policy to support Ukrainians to find decent employment in the short term could include:

Establish employment creation programmes with flexible work structures: Several efforts have been made to establish employment creation programmes to support peacebuilding and conflict mitigation initiatives.⁴³² Such programmes could address areas with labour shortfalls, such as healthcare and construction. Flexible work structures could include work-from-home arrangements and flexible work hours so, for instance, mothers can pick up their children from school. It will be critical to tailor employment opportunities to the skills of the target populations.⁴³³ One programme in the Czech Republic, for example, integrated language courses into employment placement programmes.⁴³⁴ A good practice could also be taken from Turkey and Jordan, where employment creation programmes systematically included host and refugee communities, with host community beneficiaries often representing 50 percent of those supported.⁴³⁵ In the Czech Republic there is already a clear recognition that employment of Ukrainians can benefit the economy. According to some news sources, an expansion of labour market supply could improve productivity.⁴³⁶

Introduce and publicise incentives to start businesses: A more favourable environment to start businesses could reduce potential challenges associated with unemployment and contribute to economic growth. Literature on best practices for supporting small business start-ups suggests focusing funding on innovation labs rather than investing directly in small businesses.⁴³⁷ Multilateral organisations' learnings recommend (1) profiling migrants' and refugees' skills, their complementarity to host community skills, and associated entrepreneurship

⁴²⁹ Eurostat. 2023. [Annual inflation down to 8.5% in the euro area](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

⁴³⁰ Eurobarometer (2023). [Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023](#). Accessed 03 August 2023.

⁴³¹ See Section 4.6.

⁴³² Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. 2016. [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴³³ International Alert. 2019. [Consolidating peace through inclusive access to livelihoods in Nepal](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; International Alert n.d. [Practice note 2: Integrating conflict analysis into peace-conducive economic development programming](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴³⁴ Deutsche Welle. 2023. [Well integrated: Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic](#)

⁴³⁵ Meraki Labs. 2022. [Gender Analysis of Programming in Jordan for Caritas](#).

⁴³⁶ Gosling, Tim. 2022. [Czech Republic eyes refugee labor boost from Ukraine](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

⁴³⁷ For example, Newman, Arielle Badger, and Christensen, L. J. 2021. [Doing it Right, but Getting it Wrong](#); Bizri, Rima M. 2017. [Refugee Entrepreneurship: A Social Capital Perspective](#); Meister, Alexander Dominik, and Mauer, R. 2019. [Understanding refugee entrepreneurship incubation – an embeddedness perspective](#); and Fong, Rowena, et al. 2007. [Pathways to self-sufficiency: Successful entrepreneurship for refugees](#)

possibilities; (2) clarifying and simplifying the regulatory environment for refugee businesses, including by removing restrictions on ownership of property, access to finance, and the right to work; (3) strengthening synergies amongst education initiatives (e.g., vocational training) and entrepreneurship opportunities; and (4) developing digital ‘bazaars’ to support the export of products and exchange of information.⁴³⁸ Business start-up programmes could also consider conflict sensitivity training for entrepreneurs and encourage joint Czech-Ukrainian initiatives.⁴³⁹ To date, initiatives to support Ukrainians in the Czech Republic have focused on job search platforms, but there are indications from other countries that supporting new businesses could be profitable and support integration.⁴⁴⁰

Implement strategic communications to reach target audiences around employment conditions: A range of strategic communications approaches focus on reaching target audiences to counteract misleading and incendiary discourses. In the Czech Republic, a particular form of misinformation has developed around employment: that Ukrainians are taking Czech’s jobs. This is despite the fact that unemployment is very low and that the market faces structural labour shortages (see section 4.6). In addition, over time, Ukrainian minorities have contributed to increased GDP in the Czech Republic, filling jobs that would otherwise remain unoccupied.⁴⁴¹ Communications around the labour market, including positive stories about actual unemployment rates and the Czech Republic’s situation relative to the region, could be useful.

Streamline procedures to recognise qualifications: Ukrainians have skills that could be useful in the host country labour market. In particular, staff with health qualifications would be greatly valued. Ukrainians with other high-level qualifications could contribute to the labour market, supporting both economic growth and the wellbeing of refugees. Many Ukrainians work in jobs below their qualification level, largely due to the complexities of recognising qualifications, as discussed in Section 4.6. Streamlining and fast-tracking procedures to enable refugees and other immigrants with in-demand skills to enter the Czech labour market more quickly would be beneficial. Some programmes are being piloted to support qualification recognition,⁴⁴² but additional resources and focus could also be beneficial.

At the community level, NGOs, private sector firms, and community groups could support interventions that include:

Engage with businesses and organisations to make the most of a more diverse workforce: For decades, business research has observed that a diverse workforce boosts creativity and innovation, enhances problem-solving and understanding of consumers’ diverse needs, leads to better decisions, and can have reputational benefits and reduce prejudice.⁴⁴³ These benefits in turn can boost the economy.⁴⁴⁴ The Ukrainian population, and

⁴³⁸ European Commission. 2018. [Policy Guide on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees](#). Accessed 2 April 2023.

⁴³⁹ International Alert. 2020. [Business and Peace: It Takes Two to Tango](#); International Alert. 2019. [Economic Development and Peace Practice Note Series](#)

⁴⁴⁰ CzechInvest. 2022. [CzechInvest and partners launch the Jobs4ua.cz platform for employing Ukrainian workers](#), Accessed 5 April 2023; and Sylvers, Eric, and Papachristou, L. 2022. [From Pizzerias to Tech Startups, Ukrainian Refugees Trickle Into Europe’s Labor Market](#)

⁴⁴¹ Euractiv. 2022. [Poland, Czech Republic struggle to replace the Ukrainian workers](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁴² See Section 5.4.

⁴⁴³ For example, Brodock, Kate, and Massam, G. 2016. [How and Why to Hire a Diverse Workforce: What You Need to Know](#); Rosenzweig, Philip. 1998. [Managing the New Global Workforce: Fostering Diversity, Forging Consistency](#); Ely, Robin J., and Thomas, D. A. 2020. [Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case](#); Kuk-Kyoung, and Christensen, R. K. 2020. [Realizing the performance benefits of workforce diversity in the US federal government: The moderating role of diversity climate](#)

⁴⁴⁴ For example, Brunow, Stephan, and Brenzel, H. 2012. [The effect of a culturally diverse labour supply on regional income in the EU](#); Shaban, Abdul, and Khan, S. 2022. [Cultural diversity, human capital, and regional economic growth in India](#)

particularly Ukrainian professionals, can help catalyse such benefits for Czech businesses. To take full advantage of the benefits of a more diverse workforce or candidate pool, it would be useful to train businesses on working in diverse environments and identifying and addressing potential bias in recruitment. This might also include working to reduce challenges that skilled Ukrainians face in accessing employment, such as through language training and workplace activities that engage both Ukrainian and Czech staff. Finally, assuring smooth processes for recognising qualifications will help enable skilled Ukrainians to find appropriate positions and maximise their contributions to economic growth.

Offer community facilitators and peer support groups for parents: It can be challenging for refugee parents arriving in a host country to engage in work. The provision of community facilitators could ease entry into the labour market. One option is for facilitators to meet with groups of refugees to discuss common issues and solutions or to provide individual coaching and mentorship. Groups could be set up for parents to discuss challenges associated with leaving children at home. Lessons could be learnt from current programmes. For example, in Romania, the WHO has recruited and deployed cultural mediators who raise awareness of health systems among refugee communities,⁴⁴⁵ building on the recognised profession of cultural mediation. The programme could offer lessons and possibilities for greater effectiveness for other countries and sectors, including employment.

Increase daycare provision, possibly by employers: A high proportion of Ukrainian refugees are women, many of whom have child care responsibilities. In the Czech Republic, child care challenges have been identified as a blockage to women's participation in the labour market (see Chapter 2). Provision of daycare could support refugees' engagement in the labour market. Possibilities include (1) subsidising child care for refugee children, (2) supporting the start-up of daycare centres by Ukrainian refugees, which would support both businesses and daycare needs, and (3) encouraging businesses to provide daycare, together with conflict sensitivity training.

Offer Czech-language courses: Lack of language skills has been identified as a barrier to employment and engagement in the labour market for Ukrainian refugees⁴⁴⁶ which increased provision of Czech-language courses could address. Universities and the private sector are making efforts to ensure that Ukrainians have access to language courses, but these could be expanded further.⁴⁴⁷

Increase job advertising in Ukrainian, or offer language and job counselling support programmes to enable refugees to respond to advertisements and interview for jobs: Tailored support for accessing job advertisements for Ukrainian refugees could help their entry into the labour market. Some platforms exist, such as Jobs4ua.cz which launched in March 2022, to provide reliable job offers to Ukrainian workers.⁴⁴⁸ Information should be available in Ukrainian (as is the case for Jobs4ua.cz), and widely promoted among Ukrainian refugee communities. Linkages with employers are also needed to ensure that there are sufficient jobs to support long-term credibility. In Romania, over 9,000 refugees registered on an online platform to seek work, but only 2,200 employers were on the platform.⁴⁴⁹ Tailoring the platform and outreach to different population segments among both employers and jobseekers could support the effectiveness of job advertisement programmes. In addition,

⁴⁴⁵ WHO. 2023. [The crucial role of cultural mediators in Romania's Ukrainian refugee response.](#)

⁴⁴⁶ See Chapter 2.

⁴⁴⁷ VSE. 2022. [Czech language lessons for Ukrainian refugees.](#) Accessed 5 April 2023; and Palata, Lubos. DW. 2023. [Well integrated: Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic.](#) Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁴⁸ CzechInvest. 2022. [CzechInvest and partners launch the Jobs4ua.cz platform for employing Ukrainian workers.](#) Accessed 5 April 2023.

⁴⁴⁹ Romania Insider. 2023. [Jobs for Ukraine: 9,000 users active on recruitment platform launched in Romania for Ukrainian refugees](#)

counselling support programmes for Ukrainians looking to respond to job advertisements and undergo interviews could also assist refugees' entry into the labour market. In Romania, one workshop participant described an employer in the private sector that hosts workshops to help Ukrainian refugees find job opportunities and supports them with interview practice, which can be daunting in an unfamiliar language.⁴⁵⁰ Such support could be expanded in the Czech Republic.

Provide education about decent labour conditions, including agency contract risks: International Alert's studies on business and conflict in East Africa and Nepal⁴⁵¹ point out the importance of appropriate use of outcome-based contracts⁴⁵² to minimise exploitation and of analysing the effect of investments on different communities before making final business decisions. Pre-investment considerations (e.g., before a factory is built) should include conflict analysis, considering matters such as how the investment will affect host and refugee communities and who the suppliers will be. Workshop participants noted that Ukrainian refugees have been exposed to risks associated with output-based contracts which they felt pressured to accept to avoid financial insecurity.⁴⁵³ Education for business leaders and refugees about decent labour conditions and contract types, risks, and mitigation could reduce vulnerabilities.

5.8 Community, social, and political life

The fear of insecurity and war emerged as one of the top five risks to cohesion between the Ukrainian refugee and host communities in the Czech Republic.⁴⁵⁴ Other potential tensions under community, social and political life in the Czech Republic are discussed in Section 4.7. The approaches below, in addition to the cross-cutting measures suggested at the start of this chapter, could be particularly useful.

Foster community dialogues: Community dialogue programming refers to targeted efforts to bring different elements of a community together to exchange information, experiences, and stories around specific topics.⁴⁵⁵ Dialogues may be organised around sources of tension such as fear of insecurity and war, distribution of resources between disadvantaged host community populations and refugees, and the realities of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The goal is to develop mutual understanding and mitigate emerging issues. Community dialogue programmes have been used across geographies including the Balkans, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia.⁴⁵⁶ Benefits include the ability to scale up over time, leverage local resources, and put forward practical small-scale solutions; cost-effectiveness; and relevance to local contexts. Challenges include the possibility of sabotage, lack of sustained funding, and reliance on volunteers.⁴⁵⁷ The literature indicates a slight but positive

⁴⁵⁰ Bucharest research workshop, 15–16 February 2023.

⁴⁵¹ International Alert. 2020. [Business and peace Dossier: It takes two to tango](#). Accessed 29 March 2023; International Alert. 2019. [Consolidating peace through inclusive access to livelihoods in Nepal](#). Accessed 28 March 2023; International Alert. 2022. [Mobilising the Private Sector for Peace: The role of private sector actors in peace and conflict dynamics in Kenya and Somalia A peace and conflict analysis](#). Accessed 29 March 2023; and International Alert. n.d. [Practice note 2: Integrating conflict analysis into peace-conducive economic development programming](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁵² Outcome-based contracts pay a set amount for a job done. The per-hour or per-day payment might be very low, often below minimum wage, if a contract is drawn up in an exploitative manner and workers are not aware of how long a task is likely to take.

⁴⁵³ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁴⁵⁴ Prague research workshop, 1–2 February 2023.

⁴⁵⁵ Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. 2016. [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁵⁶ Bolton, Laura. 2020. [Lessons from conflict resolution interventions](#). Accessed 29 March 2023; Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. 2016. [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁵⁷ Bolton, Laura. 2020. [Lessons from conflict resolution interventions](#). Accessed 29 March 2023; Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. 2016. [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

relationship between the presence of community dialogues and mitigation of local tensions.⁴⁵⁸ Dialogues can be accompanied by community efforts to develop and engage in longer-term activities that encourage interaction between Ukrainians and local populations.

Establish an infrastructure to support refugees' dialogue with local and national governments: A significant amount of literature discusses infrastructures for peace; these can take place in bottom-up fashion⁴⁵⁹ or through top-down mechanisms. Such infrastructure could allow for clearer and more open discussion amongst representatives of disadvantaged local groups such as the Roma and rural communities, and refugees. Top-down mechanisms are those in which formal structures for discussion and engagement are built between a host country government and a displaced community, often involving local and national institutions. The advantages of a top-down approach are that a government agency has a clear mandate for conflict resolution, accountability mechanisms can be established, and media coverage and strategic communications can take place around established peacebuilding efforts. The disadvantages include reliance on the willingness of the national government and the possibility that the process might become excessively bureaucratic.⁴⁶⁰

Work with the media to avoid spreading incendiary messages: Quality journalism that does not contribute to the spread of incendiary discourses should be supported, including by providing journalists evidence of what works and what does not to debunk misinformation, as this is not always obvious. For example, directly countering fake news by repeating it brings it to the attention of audiences again – and can therefore reinforce acceptance.⁴⁶¹ Countering disinformation also requires strong collaboration between multiple actors in a variety of actions – mapping and tracking disinformation actors, providing intelligence reports, and conducting information literacy activities. It is possible to build or leverage coalitions among media, civil society, and government entities that would allow access to disinformation tracking mechanisms and promote information sharing amongst different types of actors (specifically, mapping and analysis by civil society, academia, and government actors that influence policy).

Increase opportunities for Ukrainians and host community members to meet and help each other learn languages: Increasing the availability of language classes and 'conversation cafés' for informal language exchange could help break down the language barrier. 'Conversation cafés' for Ukrainian and host communities could support further engagement between the two communities.

Address tensions through radio and TV programming: Radio and TV dramas have been used as peacebuilding tools over decades and in many contexts. In general, there is evidence that such dramas can affect attitudes and counteract negative messages,⁴⁶² although they do not significantly affect deep-seated beliefs. Challenges associated with setting up radio and TV drama programmes relate to the willingness and interests of media owners; lack of audiences for peace stories compared to those on violence and conflict; resource

⁴⁵⁸ Bolton, Laura. 2020. [Lessons from conflict resolution interventions](#). Accessed 29 March 2023; Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. 2016. [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁵⁹ For example, through community dialogues.

⁴⁶⁰ Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. Department for International Development. 2016. [Evidence Synthesis: What interventions have been effective in preventing or mitigating armed violence in developing and middle-income countries?](#) Accessed 29 March 2023.

⁴⁶¹ Pennycook, Gordon, Cannon, T. D., and Rand, D. G. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. 2018. [Prior exposure increases perceived accuracy of fake news](#)

⁴⁶² Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. (2016). [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

constraints; legal and regulatory restrictions; and lack of media outreach.⁴⁶³ Stabilisation funding might be used to be used to overcome some of these hurdles. Radio and TV dramas and mass campaigns can be aired in collaboration with governments, academic institutions, and civil society. This joint engagement could focus on addressing stereotypes of Ukrainians and emphasising their experience as refugees, not economic migrants.

Review school curricula, including in history and digital literacy: Various organisations have recognised the role of history education in helping students to better understand the past, approach information critically, and reduce risks of prejudice and discrimination.⁴⁶⁴ In addition, critical analysis skills – including those developed through mainstream education curricula – could help prevent polarisation, misinformation, and prejudice. Apart from the curricula themselves, history and social sciences education can be used effectively to improve critical thinking and source analysis. A 2021 publication by the OECD that examined digital literacy among young people found that only 54 percent of students reported receiving training at school to identify bias in information sources.⁴⁶⁵ However, the European Commission has recognised the role of education, particularly in source literacy, in combatting misinformation.⁴⁶⁶

Table 4 summarises the incendiary and misleading discourses, underlying challenges, characteristics that can make Ukrainian refugees vulnerable, and tensions at each stage of the refugees' journey.

⁴⁶³ Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. (2016). [Rapid Evidence Assessment for Conflict Prevention](#). Accessed 28 March 2023.

⁴⁶⁴ UNESCO. 2020. [A future we can all live with: how education can address and eradicate racism](#); Brookings Institute. 2022. [Learning to live together: how education can help fight systemic racism](#)

⁴⁶⁵ OECD. 2021. [Twenty-first century readers: developing literacy skills in a digital world](#)

⁴⁶⁶ European Commission. 2022. [Commission steps up action to tackle disinformation and promote digital literacy among young people](#)

Table 4: Summary of the key discourses, underlying challenges, characteristics that can make refugees vulnerable and potential tensions between refugees and host communities in the Czech Republic

Journey stage	Discourses about Ukrainian refugees	Underlying challenges	Characteristics that can make Ukrainian refugees vulnerable at the stage of the journey	Potential tensions
Entry, legal status, and registration for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are not refugees but economic migrants who plan to stay in the host countries permanently. • Ukrainians are rich, drive fancy cars, and spend time in malls and cafés while locals work; they're in the host country on holiday; they don't need assistance. • Refugees receive more financial support and benefits than the local population. • Ukrainians are supported more than other refugees. • Refugees from western Ukraine and less affected regions are not genuine refugees, the war hasn't really affected them, and they don't deserve support. • They abuse the benefits system (e.g., cross the border just to get money). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for in-person interviews can make access challenging for some. • Documentation requirements can create a double burden for TCNs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with complex cases for TP including TCNs. • People with low digital literacy. • People with disabilities, particularly mobility issues. • People on low incomes, • Unaccompanied children who cross the border without a legal guardian (or any guardian). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown, unclear, and bureaucratic procedures to register for TP and services; perceived lack of information on the rights and obligations of people with TP status; Ukrainians made to feel unwelcome by new procedures. • Differences in welcome and support to refugee or migrant groups not from Ukraine.
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainians create burdens on the healthcare system and take locals' places. • They are a health and disease risk • They misuse services (unnecessary ambulance calls, emergency room visits, doctors' visits). • They are health tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretched healthcare system. • Language barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities. • People with mental health conditions or who experience trauma. • Elderly people. • Children with chronic or complex health needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pressures on a health system which already experiences challenges, including long waits. • Pressure on social services. • Differences in how services are used, resulting in perceived abuse (unnecessary ambulance calls, emergency room visits, doctors' visits).
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees have more and unfair access to housing. • Ukrainians create burdens on the housing system and take locals' places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of housing, including social housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income people. • Refugees outside Prague. • Roma refugees face discrimination and prejudice and are more likely to experience poverty, making access to housing less secure. • Elderly people may have unique housing needs to support healthy ageing and social inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pressures on and rising cost of housing; lack of social housing. • Ukrainian refugees, and Roma in particular, are seen as undesirable tenants. • Uncertainty regarding length of stay for Ukrainian refugees in host country, leading to lack of commitment to contracts.

<p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainians create burdens on the educational system – schools and kindergartens – and take locals' places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of pre-school places. • Language barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-school children. • Children who do not speak Czech. • Children attending online Ukrainian school. • Roma children. • Unvaccinated children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pressures on schools. • Additional pressures on kindergartens. • Integration issues in schools – lack of special programmes, bullying of Ukrainian children.
<p>Employment and Income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New arrivals from Ukraine take jobs from local population, are willing to work for significantly lower wages, and are destroying the labour market. • Economic challenges and the energy crisis are fuelled by hosting refugees ('they drive prices up'). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities concentrated in larger cities. • Challenges having qualifications recognised. • Language barrier. • Challenges accessing child care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single parents, with a disproportionate burden on women. • Ukrainians who do not speak either Czech or English. • People on low incomes. • Unemployed refugees can face stigma and isolation, and experience additional mental health challenges and risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High inflation pressures on host and refugee communities. • Low Ukrainian engagement in the labour market and entrepreneurial activities. • Tensions over distribution of scarce resources between disadvantaged local population and Ukrainians; poverty among local population. • Uncertainty regarding length of stay for Ukrainian refugees, leading to low job retention amongst refugees. • Reduction in financial assistance to refugees could lead to more poverty. • Rising unemployment. • Underemployment of refugees, including difficulties with recognition of qualifications. • Ukrainians are perceived to receive higher benefits than host communities, including poorer Czechs. • There is more financial, labour access, and other support for Ukrainian refugees than other refugee groups.
<p>Community, social, and political life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are crime risks and security threats. • Local men will be required to serve in the military if support to Ukraine and Ukrainians continues. • They are ungrateful, have high expectations and demands for the support and shelter they receive and they abuse hospitality – they leave messy apartments and are disrespectful. • Refugees are selective about the types of support that they receive –don't want to live in small cities, only want certain types of products. • Women come to look for husbands and citizenship. • They are not really traumatised; they go to cafés and live a nice, normal life. • Refugees are coming to nazify local society. • Local citizens are not welcoming Ukrainian refugees and refugees are not receiving help on arrival; host communities no longer support Ukraine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers contribute to lack of integration. • Lack of provision for mental health and psychosocial needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities can be excluded from community life due to barriers of access and/or prejudice. • People with mental health issues and/or PTSD and trauma can struggle to integrate or participate in community life. • Elderly refugees, particularly if living alone or in sheltered housing, can face social isolation. • Roma refugees can face discrimination and prejudice, making integration particularly challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xenophobia and discrimination. • Negative views of Ukrainians provoked by political discourses and parties. • Lack of integration into host society. • Language barrier, not learning local language due to lack of opportunity or difficulty of language. • Tensions between western and eastern Ukrainians and pre- and post-war arrivals. • Cultural differences and lack of understanding. • Lack of understanding of Ukrainian trauma and its consequences. • Fear of insecurity and war; refugees seen as making the situation worse. • Locals' fatigue with supporting refugees. • Expectation of more gratitude from refugees. • Prior conceptions of Ukrainians as economic migrants; stereotypes of Ukrainians as low-skilled'.

Annex 1. Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
ChatGPT	Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DMDS	Disinformation, Misinformation, and Dangerous Speech
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical office of the European Union
GBP	British Pound Sterling
GDP	Gross domestic product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KACPU	Krajských asistenčních centrech pomoci Ukrajině (Regional Centre for Help and Assistance to Ukraine)
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Plus
MMR	Combination of vaccines against measles, rubella and mumps
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
TCN	Third-Country National
TP	Temporary Protection
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex 2. Key Statistics – Czech Republic

Type	Characteristic	The Czech Republic statistics
Economic factors	GDP/per capita purchasing power parity in USD for 2021 in thousands	44.3 ⁴⁶⁷
	Inflation (February 2023)	18.4% ⁴⁶⁸
	Official development assistance eligible?	No ⁴⁶⁹
	Regional Refugee Response Plan funding requested for 2022 (USD million)	42.6 ⁴⁷⁰
	Regional Refugee Response Plan funding requested for 2023 (USD million)	81.6 ⁴⁷¹
Political factors	Political party in power	Coalition SPOLU ⁴⁷²
	Next presidential election	2028 ⁴⁷³
	Next parliamentary election	2025 ⁴⁷⁴
	Next local election	2026 ⁴⁷⁵
Country demography	Total population (million)	10.7 ⁴⁷⁶
	Poverty rates (2020)	8.6% ⁴⁷⁷
	Unemployment rate (December 2022)	2.3% ⁴⁷⁸
	Size of Russian minority or citizens living in country before 2022	38,033 (2018) ⁴⁷⁹
	Size of Ukrainian minority/Ukrainians living in country before 2022	131,302 (2018) ⁴⁸⁰
Number of refugees hosted ⁴⁸¹	Refugees from Ukraine recorded in country as of March 2023 (UNHCR)	503,698 ⁴⁸²
	Ukrainian refugees hosted as a % of total population	4.5% ⁴⁸³
	Total refugees hosted in 2022	388,274 ⁴⁸⁴
	Total refugees hosted in 2021	1,909 ⁴⁸⁵
	Total refugees hosted in 2020	1,919 ⁴⁸⁶
	Total refugees hosted in 2019	2,054 ⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁶⁷ The World Bank. 2021. [GDP per capita, PPP \(current international \\$\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁶⁸ Eurostat. 2023. [Annual inflation down to 8.5% in the euro area](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

⁴⁶⁹ OECD. [DAC List of ODA Recipients | Effective for reporting on 2022 and 2023 flows](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷⁰ UNHCR. 2022. [Ukraine Situation: Recalibration – Regional Refugee Response Plan \(March – December 2022\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷¹ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷² Kudrnáč, Aleš, and Petrušek, I. 2022. [European Consortium For Policial Research. 2022. Czech Republic: Political Developments and Data in 2021](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷³ Musil, Peter, and Lizec, J. 2023. [CNN Prima News. 2023. Kdy budou prezidentské, parlamentní, komunální, krajské či evropské volby? Přehled termínů](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷⁴ Penize.cz. 2021. [Kdy budou další volby? Tady jsou termíny](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷⁵ Novinky.cz. 2023. [Volby v ČR: Kdy budou ty příští a jaké nás v dalších letech čekají](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷⁶ The World Bank. 2021. [Population, total – European Union](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷⁷ The World Bank. 2020. [Multidimensional poverty headcount ratio \(% of total population\) – European Union](#). Accessed 30 March 2023. Data are compiled from official government sources or computed by World Bank staff using country-specific poverty lines.

⁴⁷⁸ Eurostat | Euroindicators. 2023. [December 2022 Euro area unemployment at 6.6%, EU at 6.1%](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁷⁹ Directorate of the Alien Police Service. 2018. [Foreigners, total by citizenship as at 31 December 2018](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸⁰ Directorate of the Alien Police Service. 2018. [Foreigners, total by citizenship as at 31 December 2018](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸¹ UNHCR. 2022. [Refugee Data Finder](#). Accessed 17 March 2023

⁴⁸² UNHCR. 2023. [Refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸³ usembassy.gov. [UNHCR data. 2023. Refugees from Ukraine in Europe \(January 2023 Snapshot\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸⁴ UNHCR. 2022. [Refugee Data Finder](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸⁵ UNHCR. 2022. [Refugee Data Finder](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸⁶ UNHCR. 2022. [Refugee Data Finder](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸⁷ UNHCR. 2022. [Refugee Data Finder](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

	% women and children	80% ⁴⁸⁸
Ukrainian refugee demographics	% refugee households with at least one member with a disability	44% ⁴⁸⁹
	% refugee households with at least one elderly member	9% ⁴⁹⁰
	Funds received upon arrival/registration; and each month for the first six months in country	Humanitarian aid: CZK 5,000 (£187.20 GBP, 233.66 USD) ⁴⁹¹
Support received by Ukrainian refugees	Total funds received per adult per month (from month seven)	CZK 4,620 (£172.98, \$215.90 USD) ⁴⁹²
	Total funds received per child per month (from month seven)	CZK 3,320 (£124,30, \$155.15 USD) ⁴⁹³
	Total funds received by hosts	CZK 3,000 (£112,32, \$140.19 USD) per accommodated person per calendar month ⁴⁹⁴
Access to services	Employment rate	98,000 individuals (November 2022) ⁴⁹⁵
	Number of total Ukrainian children in country enrolled in school	57,366 ⁴⁹⁶
Housing used by refugees	% hosted in large cities	72% (September 2022) ⁴⁹⁷
	% hosted by local family (as of January 2023)	10% ⁴⁹⁸
	% rental (paid) accommodation	75% ⁴⁹⁹
	% hosted in refugee centres	15% ⁵⁰⁰
Host population attitude polling	% of host population who believe Russia is not responsible for starting the war (it's NATO/Ukraine)	18% ⁵⁰¹
	% of host population positive toward Ukrainian refugees (spring 2022)	75% ⁵⁰²
	% of host population positive toward Ukrainian refugees (winter 2022)	73% ⁵⁰³

⁴⁸⁸ UNHCR. 2022. [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation – Inter-Agency Operational Update: Czech Republic, July – October 2022](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁸⁹ IOM UN Migration. 2022. [Czechia Refugees from Ukraine and TCNs](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁰ UNHCR. 2022. [Czech Republic: Intention Survey August 2022](#). Accessed 5 April 2023.

⁴⁹¹ The amount of the monthly humanitarian benefit depends on the month in which the refugee applies for the benefit after being granted TP. For the first six months, it is CZK 5,000 per month per person, including children. Starting in the seventh month, the amount changes based on income, property, social conditions, and the age of the recipient. For children under age 18, the allowance is CZK 3,320 per month (the same as the living minimum for a dependent child aged 15 to 26). For those over age 18, the allowance is CZK 4,620 (corresponding to the living minimum according to the Czech social system). Source: Labor Office of the Czech Republic, [Úřad práce ČR](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹² Labor Office of the Czech Republic, [Úřad práce ČR](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹³ Labor Office of the Czech Republic, [Úřad práce ČR](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁴ Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí České republiky, [Application for Humanitarian aid](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁵ iROZHLAS.cz. 2022. [V Česku pracuje 98 tisíc uprchlíků z Ukrajiny. Zaměstnaných přibývá, počet vyplácených dávek klesá](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁶ Plevák, Ondřej. Euractiv.cz. 2022. [Ukrainian children sign up for Czech schools](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁷ IOM UN Migration Czechia. [Ukraine Response | 2022 Czechia Refugees from Ukraine and TCNs](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁸ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁴⁹⁹ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁵⁰⁰ UNHCR. 2023. [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁵⁰¹ Szicherle, Patrik, and Kazaz, J. GLOBSEC Centre for Democracy & Resilience. 2022. [Perception of Ukrainian refugees in the V4](#). Accessed 1 March 2023.

⁵⁰² Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění. 2022. [Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků z Ukrajiny – jaro 2022](#). Accessed 30 March 2023.

⁵⁰³ Szicherle, Patrik, and Kazaz, J. GLOBSEC Centre for Democracy & Resilience. 2022. [Perception of Ukrainian refugees in the V4](#). Accessed 1 March 2023.

Annex 3. Statistics, surveys and research reports

The sources listed below provide up-to-date statistics and deeper dives into the specific subject matter areas.

Subject area	Source	Type ⁵⁰⁴	Language	Notes
Statistics				
Number of Ukrainian refugees	UNHCR. 2023. Operational Data Portal. Czech Republic	MLR	ENG	
Demographics of Ukrainians under TP	IOM. 2022. Ukraine Returns Report October 2022	MLR	ENG	
	IOM. 2022. Ukraine Internal Displacement Report October 2022	MLR	ENG	
	UNHCR Operational Data Portal. 2023. Ukraine Situation/Czech Republic Temporary protection	MLR	ENG	
Support for Ukrainians under TP	European Commission. 2022. Czech Republic: "Lex Ukraine" law package enters into force	MLR	ENG	Lex Ukraine topic on temporary protection directive – legislative act overview
	European Commission. 2022. Czech Republic: Amendment to the laws "Lex Ukraine II" enters into force	MLR	ENG	
Access to social services	OECD. 2022. Rights and support for Ukrainian refugees in receiving countries	MLR	ENG	
Accommodation for Ukrainians under TP	PAQ Research. 2022. Hlas Ukrajinců: Chudoba	PD	CZ	The refugees' experience of employment in the Czech Republic
Public attitude polling	GLOBSEC. 2022. Trends 2022 Czechia	NGO	ENG	Czech attitudes on topics such as EU and NATO membership, as well as confidence in institutions
	European Commission. 2022. Czech Republic: Majority of Czechs in favour of welcoming new arrivals from Ukraine	MLR	ENG	
	Dražanová, Lenka, and Andrew Geddes, A. Asile Project. 2022. Forum on the EU Temporary Protection Responses to the Ukraine War. Attitudes	NGO/AR	ENG	

⁵⁰⁴ Abbreviations: AR = Academic research; CZ = Czech; ENG = English; MLR = Multilateral report; MR = Media report; NG = National government; NGO = NGO report; PD = Polling data

	towards Ukrainian refugees and governmental responses in 8 European countries				
Donor support	European Commission. 2022. The Blue Line and the Czech Red Cross Prague. Czech Republic: Social assistance helpline for citizens of Ukraine	MLR	ENG		
Deeper dives					
Ukrainian refugees' needs; analyses of vulnerabilities	UNHCR. 2023. Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (January-December 2023)	MLR	ENG		
	PAQ Research. 2022. Hlas Ukrajinců: Šetření o romských ukrajinských uprchlících	PD	CZ		Research on Roma refugees from Ukraine and their experience in the Czech Republic
	UNHCR. 2022. Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation Czech Republic	MLR	ENG		
	UNHCR. 2022. Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine – Regional Protection Analysis # 1	MLR	ENG		
	UNHCR. 2022. Ensuring the protection of persons with disabilities fleeing from Ukraine	MLR	ENG		Closer analysis of barriers facing people with disabilities fleeing the war
	UNHCR. 2023. Older Refugees	MLR	ENG		Handbook on the needs of older refugees
Examples of discrimination	Amnesty International. 2022. Czech Republic 2022		ENG		Discussion of discrimination in its broadest sense and target groups in the Czech Republic
Pressures on social services	UNICEF. 2023. UNICEF Refugee Response in the Czech Republic: Initial Results and Priorities	MLR	ENG		
Profile of host communities	GLOBSEC. 2022. Voices of Central and Eastern Europe Czechia Fact Sheet	NGO	ENG		Data on conspiracy theories that Czechs are prone to believe in
	GLOBSEC. 2020. Prague Security Studies Institute. Voices of Central and Eastern Europe: Perceptions of democracy & governance in 10 EU countries, Perception of	NGO	ENG		

	democracy and conspiracies in Czechia			
Public attitudes	Zachová, Aneta. Euractiv. 2022. Czech's divided over support for Ukraine	MR	ENG	
Tensions between host and refugee communities	Havlík, Vlastimil, and Kluknavská, A. 2023. European Centre for Populism Studies. Our people first (again)! The impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on the populist Radical Right in the Czech Republic	NGO/AR	ENG	
Disinformation discourses	Reppell, Lisa, and Shein, E., IFES. 2019. Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions	NGO	ENG	Documentation of good practice
	Gregor, Miloš, and Mlejnková, P. 2021. Facing Disinformation: Narratives and Manipulative Techniques Deployed in the Czech Republic. Politics in Central Europe	AR	ENG	
	Vinš, Petr Jan. Prague Security Studies Institute. 2022. Dezinformační narativy o válce na Ukrajině v ČR a ve střední a východní Evropě	AR	CZ	Disinformation narratives about the war in Ukraine in the Czech Republic and Central Europe
	Kremlin Watchers Movement. 2022. Policy Brief Within Kremlin Watchers Movement Project	NGO	ENG	
	Markova, Myroslava, and Perevoschchykov, K. 2022. Propaganda diary: a review of Russian disinformation in European media in October 2022	MR	ENG	
	International Republican Institute. 2023. Hostile Narrative Brief: War in Ukraine. A Year of Aggression.	NGO	ENG	
Good practice examples	Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees. 2022. Report of the fact-	NGO	ENG	

finding mission to the Czech Republic by Ms Leyla Kayacik (4–6 May)				
GLOBSEC. 2022. Perception of Ukrainian refugees in the V4: Support with some reservations	NGO	ENG		
Government Communication Service. 2021. Resist 2: Counter Disinformation Toolkit.	NG	ENG		
Bunse, Simone. 2021. Social media: A tool for peace or conflict?	NGO/AR	ENG		The potential of social media and how it can be used to better comprehend conflict dynamics and fight extremism
Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Addressing Anti-Semitism, Intolerance and Discrimination through Education: Workshop for Policymakers, Teacher Trainers and Educators in Romania	MLR	ENG		
Cramer, Christopher, Goodhand, J., and Morris, R. Department for International Development. 2016. Evidence Synthesis: What interventions have been effective in preventing or mitigating armed violence in developing and middle-income countries?	NGO/AR	ENG		



HQ | 2011 Crystal Drive | Arlington, VA 22202 | USA

 www.IFES.org