



## Regular Debate Study Guide

### **The Ukrainian Refugees Crisis, setting: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Standing Committee**

#### **Summary:**

*“The protection and humanitarian needs are enormous, and continue to grow. And while critically urgent, humanitarian aid alone cannot give them what they really need – and that is peace.”*

(Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, March 2022)

Since the beginning of the international armed conflict in Ukraine, around 7.5 million of Ukrainians refugees have been recorded across Europe and around 7 million of people had to flee from combat zones for safer areas in the country. This is the largest movement of people in Europe since the second World War, and it is a major humanitarian challenge for the actors involved.

As winter is coming, solution strategies to this mounting humanitarian crisis is more than needed. The involvement of the state, local civil society and international organizations is required to provide a long-term, sustainable solution for the Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons. The needs of the refugees are multiple and depends a lot on the local situation; those of them who are living in an area still affected by the conflict may need a way of exit, access to basic needs, a shelter to sleep or health assistance; where those who are returning home may have their houses destroyed, no public services or struggle to find a job. Therefore, the humanitarian aid the UNHCR need to provide must be a combination of long-term and short-term solutions.

In the light of the worrying situation in Ukraine, with the annexation of regions occupied by Russian armed troops, and the continuing fights, the members of the UNHCR must come together to redefine the UNHCR Response Plan to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The UNHCR identified four priorities in its Response Plan:

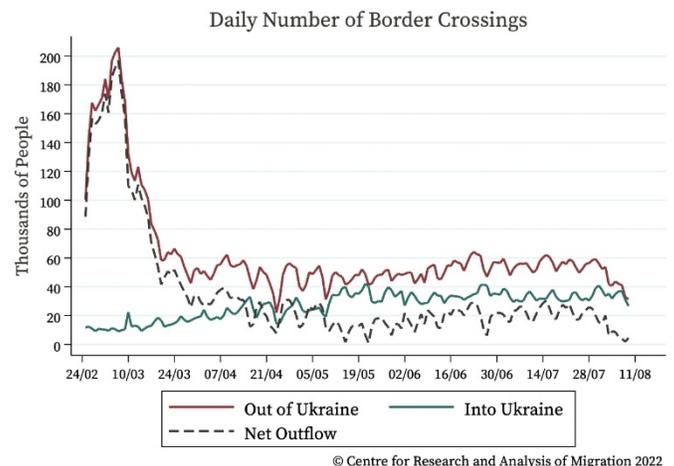
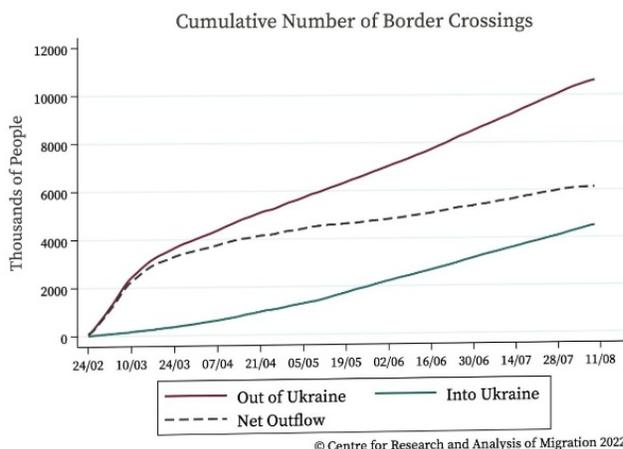
1. Support host countries to ensure that all refugees from Ukraine have access to safety and international protection, in line with their situation, and in compliance with the principle of non-refoulement;
2. Support host countries to provide timely and life-saving humanitarian assistance to refugees fleeing Ukraine and third-country nationals having left Ukraine, of whom a sizeable number would need international protection, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable women, girls, boys and men;
3. Facilitate the identification of appropriate solutions for all and the promotion of social and economic opportunities while ensuring conducive and equal conditions for the refugees and TCNs fleeing from Ukraine from the onset through a whole-of-society approach; and
4. Ensure effective coordination of partners at country and regional level in support of hosting countries' efforts.

During this meeting of the European Council of the UNHCR, you are representing your country and have to find a mutual agreement on the collective actions to face this crisis.

### Background/Information on the topic

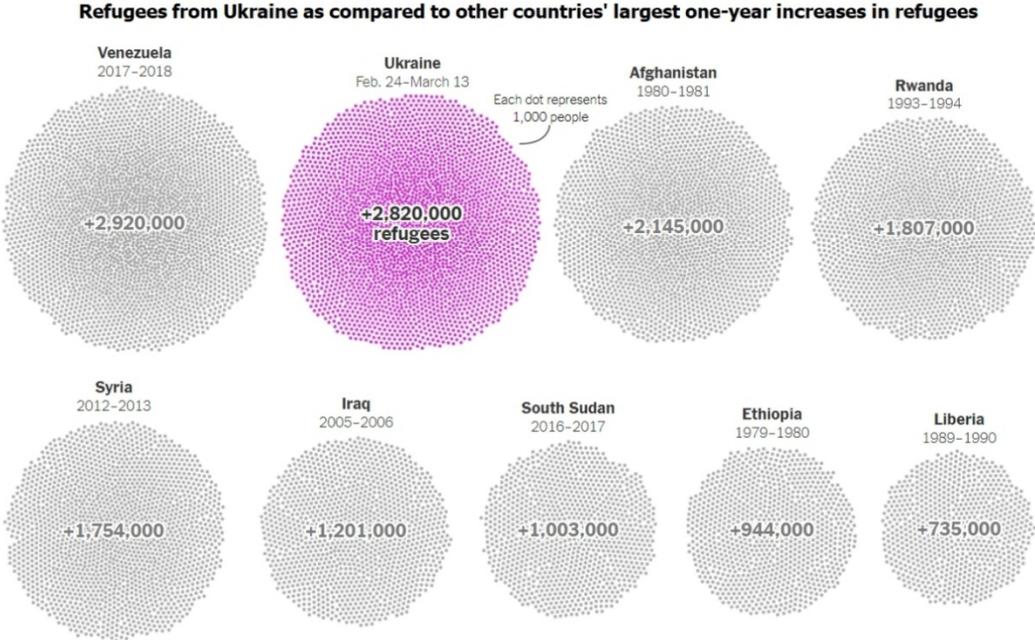
Most of the Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons are women and children. One of the reason for this is that men between the age of eighteen and sixty are prohibited from leaving the country, due to the Martial law introduced on the day of the invasion. Women and children account to around 90% of the Ukrainian refugees and two third of the internally displaced persons.

The particularity of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, compared to similar situations is that the number of moves in and out is particularly high, a part of the population who fled the war, came back to the country before leaving again. The majority of the country does not want to settle abroad and wishes to come back



as soon as possible. The number of border crossings continuously raised since the beginning of the war in February, both out of Ukraine and into Ukraine (See Figure 1).

Concerning the destination of fleeing refugees, it is without surprise that the neighbouring countries are ones that are welcoming a significant part of the Ukrainian refugees. As of the end of September 2022, according to the UNHCR, the country in which the most refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine is Russia (with 2'772010 refugees), followed by Poland (1'409'139 refugees), Germany (997'895 refugees), Czech Republic (439'043 refugees) and Italy (170'646 refugees). These numbers and the rapidity in which the war caused the people to flee the country makes the Ukrainian refugee crisis almost unprecedented in the recent history. As the following charts show in three weeks the increase of refugees in Ukraine is larger than the one-year increases in refugees of almost every country that have been hit by a refugee crisis. Hence, the Ukrainian refugee crisis is very challenging for the UNHCR because hosting countries must provide



Source: United National High Commissioner for Refugees (U.N.H.C.R.) Note: Totals include people seeking asylum and Venezuelans displaced abroad, since 1975. Count of refugees from Ukraine from Russian invasion through March 13, 2022.

for the needs of millions of refugees very quickly.

Regarding the needs of Ukrainian refugees, these are multiple and varies in their order of priority. The first priority, mostly for the ones with few resources, are food, health services, and a shelter for the time before finding affordable accommodations. With a lasting conflict and a high proportion of children among the refugees, the access to efficient educational structure is also of important priority. The risk of gender-based violence, due to the high proportion of women refugees in a situation of vulnerability, is also something to be kept under surveillance. Last but not least, Internally Displaced Persons live financial struggles following the loss of their jobs and the high costs of the exile.

Despite many efforts put in the humanitarian response to the crisis, some problems remain unsolved. First, human, financial and material resources available cannot match the needs of the Internally Displaced Persons and of the refugees. Cases of discrimination are also very frequent, against the LGBTQ community in the shelters or against those who are infringing the martial law by trying to flee from their home (many of them fear to register to the IDPs database, leaving them without governmental assistance).

### **In which direction the debate should go**

In this meeting of the UNHCR, you must collaborate with the other delegation to decide on a new response plan to help the refugees who fled Ukraine in their hosting countries or the Internally displaced person. The response plan should be aimed at providing solutions both for urging matters then for long-term matters. The time before the destroyed areas are rebuilt will be long. The response plan should take into account the demographics of the refugees, the vulnerability of minorities and the challenges coming ahead as winter approaches.

### **More information on the UNHCR**

Created in 1950, the UNHCR is the UN Refugee Agency, aimed at saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. UNHCR is governed by the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The UNHCR Executive Committee approves the agency's biennial programmes and the corresponding budget. These are presented by the High Commissioner, who is appointed by the UN General Assembly. In October 1995, the Executive Committee also established a Standing Committee to replace sub-committees on international protection and on administrative and financial matters. At its periodic meetings, the Standing Committee examines thematic issues included by the plenary in its programme of work, reviews UNHCR's activities and programmes in the different regions (as well as its global programmes), adopts appropriate decisions and conclusions on issues included by the plenary in its programme of work, and discusses other issues that it deems of concern. (UNHCR, 2022)

You will have the opportunity to learn more about the work of the UNHCR, as we will receive Alex Mundt, Senior Policy Advisor (Europe) at UNHCR in the middle of the debate blocks.

### **Some Tips for the Debate:**

Firstly, we strongly recommend researching about the theme of the debate in preparation of it, and not limiting yourself to this study guide. Do not let yourself be intimidated by the topic. Good research will ensure that you can flexibly adapt to the flow of debate. **This debate will end in the writing of a resolution.** Whilst we value good knowledge of the debate topic, we are not asking you to research for a term paper either, so we leave it up to you to know when you are all set!

Secondly, manage your time! Your speaking time will be limited, and it is crucial to communicate all the relevant information efficiently. This can be greatly improved by remembering not to hesitate too much during your speech, as valuable time is lost this way.

Thirdly, attempt to react to the inputs of other delegates as this will foster discussion, making the debate interesting and rich. If you prepare your inputs whilst others are speaking, remember to be flexible and adapt yourself quickly. It can therefore be useful to take a few notes, if a fellow delegate makes a statement which could help and strengthen your position, or which on the other hand infuriates you or your country's position. Also try to represent your country in a realistic way.

And lastly, remember the rules of procedure. As this is a simulation of UN debates, rules apply and must be respected. We will give you a short introduction to these rules prior to the debate, but we kindly remind you to familiarize yourself with them beforehand.

Remember that the most important thing is not necessarily to be serious and grave, but to enjoy your time as much as possible! This is what our club is ultimately about, and we would love for you to enjoy MUN as much as we do. So don't stress, but enjoy yourself!

**Please prepare a 1 minute opening statement for the debate in order to give your fellow delegates an overview about your country's position!**

### **Additional Information:**

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

<https://cream-migration.org/ukraine-detail.htm?article=3573>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/17/learning/whats-going-on-in-this-graph-march-23-2022.html>

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/ukraine/b94-responding-ukraines-displacement-crisis-speed>

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

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/ukraines-regional-displacement-crisis>