

Annual Report 2022

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Europe

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Ukrainian refugees arrived at the Lviv train station in Ukraine on February 15, 2023. (Paula Bronstein/HIAS)

COVER: Aryna Gura, 9, held Dora, a beloved companion to many people in a shelter in Lviv, Ukraine on February 12, 2023. (Paula Bronstein/HIAS)



Assistants helped a woman in a wheelchair disembark from a train carrying Ukrainian refugees at the Lviv train station in Ukraine on February 14, 2023. (Paula Bronstein/HIAS)

Foreword

As 2021 drew to a close, one might have started to hope that 2022 would be a very different year and easier than the one dominated by the pandemic and the Afghanistan refugee crisis. But quickly, those hopes were destroyed. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 initiated a major conflict that resulted in the largest displacement crisis in Europe since World War II. By the end of the year, more than 14 million people had been displaced, with more than seven million forced to flee the country, while the UN estimated that around 17.7 million Ukrainians were in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

HIAS Europe responded by opening three offices in bordering countries — Moldova, Poland, and Romania — providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and crucial protection services to the most vulnerable displaced persons, including women and children. We created partnerships with numerous local organizations, mobilising HIAS' expertise from around the world to strengthen their capacity to assist refugees. In total, we reached over 280,000 displaced Ukrainians in 2022.

In Belgium, but also throughout Europe, the Jewish community rose to the challenge and emerged as a major partner for HIAS Europe. Welcome Circles were launched in partnership with Jewish communities in ten European countries, starting a community integration programme that welcomed and integrated hundreds of Ukrainian refugees, assisting with accommodation, language classes, finding jobs, accessing health care, education, and other benefits.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was perhaps the defining event of 2022, however, it was just one of many factors that increased the number of displaced people globally to a record 108.4 million, alongside food insecurity, climate change-related natural disasters, and protracted conflicts.

While Ukraine absorbed much media, political, and donor attention in 2022, HIAS Europe continued to respond to major humanitarian crises in other regions.

In South and Central America, migrants and refugees continued to attempt perilous journeys, facing high risks of gender-based violence, gang violence, and human trafficking. While Chad experienced severe rainfall affecting 1.3 million people, Kenya, and the Horn of Africa more broadly, was struck by its worst drought in the past 40 years. In all these locations, HIAS Europe responded with crucial humanitarian programming.

In 2023, much work remains to be done to mitigate the plight of displaced people around the world. But, with a dedicated staff of more than 1,700, and a solid partnership with Jewish communities around the world, HIAS is well-positioned to continue to make a difference.

Ruth Ringer, Board Chair

Ilan Cohn, Director



LEGEND

- HIAS country offices with HIAS Europe programmes
- HIAS country offices

Introduction

HIAS Europe stands for a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and opportunity.

Drawing on our Jewish values and history, as well as on humanitarian principles, HIAS provides vital services to refugees and asylum seekers around the world and advocates for their fundamental rights so they can rebuild their lives.

This report lays out the impact of HIAS Europe's key activities in 2022:

1. Providing humanitarian assistance to displaced people in 16 countries globally.
2. Supporting Jewish communities to mobilise in favour of refugees across Europe.
3. Advocating for principled EU policies on forced migration and humanitarian crises.

HIAS Europe Impact in 2022

Global humanitarian assistance to refugees

96,000+ 

offered legal counselling, advice, and training

 7,000+

reached through GBV protection and prevention activities

4,500+ 

offered training and support for sustenance, employment, and entrepreneurship

 4,000+

provided with mental health support, counselling, and training

Ukraine crisis response in 2022



280,000

reached through emergency response activities in Ukraine, Poland, Moldova, and Romania

251

Ukrainians relocated from Poland and Moldova to Europe, Canada, and the US



324




Ukrainian refugees in Europe integrated with the assistance of 112 Jewish volunteers.

Humanitarian programming reach

Humanitarian programmes support in countries around the world.

16 

Aruba, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, Panama, Poland, Peru, Romania, and Ukraine



HIAS communications officer Angela Garcia visited residents in the La Isla neighborhood in Barranquilla, Colombia on July 5, 2022. (Federico Rios Escobar for HIAS).

Humanitarian Action Around the World

In 2022, HIAS Europe supported projects from field offices in thirteen countries — Aruba, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Ukraine — focusing on four key areas:

Legal Protection: Ensuring that displaced people know their rights, have access to services, and can navigate legal systems that lead to permanent status and security.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS): Promoting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities affected by humanitarian crises and conflicts so that they can rebuild their lives.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response: Reducing the risk of GBV, increasing support for survivors, and partnering with women-led organisations that promote and protect the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQ persons.

Economic inclusion (EI): Ensuring that refugees have safe opportunities to earn a sustainable income and rebuild their lives.

After the war broke out in Ukraine in February, HIAS Europe also began emergency response activities in the region, supplying immediate help in the form of cash, housing support, and other services.



A European Emergency

The Russia-Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, sparked the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. By December, there were more than 6 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine, and nearly 5 million refugees from Ukraine had registered for temporary protection or similar national protection plans across Europe.

The war caused the humanitarian situation inside Ukraine to deteriorate rapidly due to massive displacement, extensive infrastructure damage, constrained humanitarian access, economic instability, psychological distress, and grave human rights violations.

HIAS has been working for the last 20 years to protect refugees leaving Ukraine, as well as asylum seekers and internally displaced Ukrainians, but since 2013 it has partnered with Right to Protection (R2P), a Ukrainian organisation mainly staffed by formerly displaced people, aiding in Eastern Ukraine.

In response to this crisis, HIAS Europe and R2P scaled up assistance inside Ukraine, expanding into Kyiv, Lviv, and Chernivtsi, and provided mobile teams to assist people across the country. In the early days of the war, HIAS Europe, via R2P's specialists, distributed emergency supplies and helped people with documentation. By the end of the year, the joint effort had provided legal assistance to 77,390 people and emergency assistance to 27,213 individuals.

HIAS also established new offices in Moldova, Romania, and Poland to provide essential protection services and life-saving humanitarian aid to displaced individuals, mostly women and children, predominantly through building the capacity of local partners.

Ukrainian civilians crossed the Ukraine-Poland border at the Krakovets border crossing on March 30, 2022. (AG for HIAS)

HIAS Europe engaged European Jewish communities throughout the continent to respond to the Ukraine crisis. It offered financial assistance to Jewish communities in Poland, Moldova, and Romania, allowing them to open their doors and welcome their new neighbours. The Jewish community of Warsaw provided short-term housing to refugees, and 3,000 people in Moldova received emergency accommodation with the help of the Jewish community there.

HIAS Europe advocated for European nations to open their doors to the influx of refugees and continued to urge host countries to give these new arrivals the agency to make their own decisions about their future. HIAS Europe worked with HIAS staff in Moldova, Poland, Hungary, and Romania to help Ukrainians relocate to Western Europe. HIAS Europe also assisted other Western European countries seeking to support newly arrived refugees by partnering with local communities, municipalities, the private sector, governmental institutions, and other governmental and NGOs.

HIAS Europe performed an essential role during the dire early moments of the war, whether it was getting mental health counselling or gender-based violence protection services and referrals to refugees in Poland or helping more than 30,000 people in Moldova get hot meals. At the same time, HIAS Europe recognized the importance of more long-term solutions. For example, the HIAS Graduation Model, piloted in Constanta and Bucharest in Romania, allowed refugees there to get the financial support and coaching they needed to transition into permanent employment.



Ukrainian refugees at Arena Lviv, a transit area for refugees where R2P offered social services and legal consultations, on April 1, 2022. (AG for HIAS)



HIAS provided gender-based violence prevention and mental health support sessions for people displaced by the severe flooding in N'Djamena, Chad on November 28, 2022. (HIAS Chad)

A Forgotten Crisis in Africa

More than half a million. That is the number of refugees, mostly from Darfur, Sudan, that HIAS serves in 13 camps and one site in Chad, where food insecurity, climate change, high poverty rates, and structural development challenges are issues for displaced populations and host communities alike.

In 2022, Chad's heaviest rainy season in over 30 years caused catastrophic floods which affected 1.3 million people. The flooding left large sections of the capital, N'Djamena, underwater and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. This disaster has only exacerbated an acute hunger crisis in the country. As many as 2 million people in Chad — more than 10% of the population — are food insecure.

In Koundoul and Ngueli Pont, HIAS Chad provided mental health services and referred cases for medical and/or legal services. As one of the main humanitarian aid partners of UNHCR and the World Food Program in eastern Chad, HIAS, with support from HIAS Europe, distributed food, sandbags, tents, tarpaulins, blankets, plastic sheeting, and mosquito nets.

During the flooding crisis, HIAS was still able to conduct gender-based violence (GBV) workshops. Implementing GBV prevention and response programs is a major initiative for HIAS Chad. Last year, HIAS Europe helped finance monthly allowances of 254 community mobilizers and 40 refugee community members who act as security guards at women's centres in refugee camps, as well as the training for 280 refugee teachers on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse.

High Risks in the Americas

In 2022, an increasing number of Haitians, Venezuelans, and Cubans attempted the perilous journey through the Darién Gap, a stretch of jungle between Colombia and Panama. Refugees and migrants risk their lives to traverse this hazardous combination of mountains and swamps in an attempt to get to the United States. Many have died trying — and thousands have been exposed to sexual violence and other abuses.

The Darién Gap has seen migratory flows for decades. But in recent years, the numbers have grown significantly, and last year nearly a quarter of a million people made the crossing. Many were Venezuelans who left their homeland in search of a better life and have encountered difficulties in neighbouring countries such as Colombia, which now hosts 2.5 million Venezuelans.

With assistance from HIAS Europe, staff members on the ground in the region gave legal assistance to refugees and migrants and assessed changing conditions. In the Darién Gap, HIAS Panama adapted its programming to meet the immediate needs of survivors, strengthening front line support and referrals for women and girls in transit and where comprehensive case management is not possible. Working in collaboration with HIAS Colombia, they expanded programming to better serve remote border communities. HIAS Panama also addressed protection gaps and implemented a GBV response project with the support of UNICEF in Lajas Blancas and San Vicente, both temporary migration shelters.

The situation in the Darién Gap has affected HIAS operations across the region, not only in Panama and Colombia but also in Costa Rica and Ecuador. In 2023, the total number of migrants crossing the Darién Gap could soar to as many as 400,000.



HIAS Panama Country Director Roberto Mera and HIAS LAC Deputy Regional Director Ignasi Calbo visited the Darién Gap in Panama in October 2021 to assess the situation on the ground. (HIAS Panama)



Community Engagement

HIAS Europe works across the EU to encourage and facilitate European Jewish communities' engagement with refugees. Through the provision of resources, training, and coalition-building activities, HIAS connects the experiences of European Jews and asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, with the goal to foster mutual trust and understanding. HIAS also provides frameworks for Jewish activists and communities to mobilise in favour of refugee rights, debunk stereotypes and counter harmful biases towards refugees and asylum seekers.

Right to Protection (R2P) lawyer Victoria Klokol offered a hug to a Ukrainian refugee after a consult at the registration office for refugees in Lviv, Ukraine, on March 30, 2022. (AG for HIAS)

Welcome Circles

Community-based reception and inclusion of Ukrainians

“ Partnerships with people who organise as a community to welcome refugees, like the Welcome Circles set up by HIAS — which help find safe housing, schools, and jobs — can form the foundation for a new European model for welcoming refugees.

— Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs

In the early days of the Ukraine crisis, HIAS Europe started assisting Jewish communities in Eastern Europe establishing temporary accommodation centres for those crossing the border from Ukraine. However, as reception centres became overwhelmed, a need emerged to coordinate relocation efforts to Western European countries.

To address this need, HIAS adapted its successful Welcome Circles model, which was originally launched in 2021 to assist Afghan refugees, to help Ukrainian refugees. This community sponsorship model helps refugees integrate into their new communities and achieve self-sufficiency within six months.

By the end of 2022, the European Welcome Circles initiative had helped Ukrainian refugees in ten different countries find accommodation, enrol in language classes, continue their education, find employment, and overcome bureaucratic challenges. The project was recognized as a best-practice example in the European Commission's Safe Homes Guidance.

- 324 Ukrainian refugees received integration support.
- 112 volunteers were recruited to serve refugees in 11 Welcome Circles.
- Emergency grants were distributed to three Jewish communities in Slovakia, Moldova, and Poland that supported 3,240 individuals with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

- 251 individuals were relocated from Poland and Moldova to Europe, Canada, and the US.
- Four trainings for a total of 106 participants were organised to help community sponsors improve the quality of support provided, ensure safeguarding measures, and support volunteers in addressing inclusion barriers.
- HIAS Europe supported the organisation of a Passover Seder in Belgium for 40 Ukrainian refugees and distributed 4,000 Russian Language Haggadot across Eastern Europe.

Gishur Project

The EU-funded Gishur project, in collaboration with CEJI and Paideia, empowered Jewish leaders to challenge xenophobia and promote inclusion through dialogue with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

In 2022 the project:

- Produced interfaith resources to facilitate structured encounters between Jews and non-Jewish migrants based on prompts inspired by three Jewish holidays. They were translated into seven languages and used in seven interfaith events in Lithuania, Poland, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, and Romania, for a total of 294 participants.
- Organised two three-day workshops in Stockholm and Berlin to train a total of 23 Jewish community leaders, rabbis, and activists to apply the resources in their respective community settings.



Resettled in rural Kerry, Ireland, Tania Teslyeva (right) watched as her seamstress mother Natalia used the sewing machine provided for her by the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, August 29, 2022. (Tom McEnany for HIAS)

- Convened 23 Jewish activists from around Europe at a two-day advocacy seminar, partly organized at the European Parliament in Brussels. As part of the workshop, the European Jewish Network Against Xenophobia and for Inclusion was launched.
- In November, a training session in Brussels for 13 partners representatives to discuss and compare the implementation of the project in the different local contexts.
- The eight Jewish congregations began cultivating and formalizing partnerships with diverse stakeholders, from local religious representatives to anti-discrimination organizations, to antisemitism coordinators.
- Half of the congregations began inviting schools to visit their respective synagogues.

Neighbours Project

The Neighbours project is funded by the EU and implemented in partnership with the European Union of Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) and eight progressive Jewish congregations in six EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. The project aims to combat antisemitism and xenophobia in Europe by promoting understanding among Jewish, refugee, and asylum-seeker communities.

Activities in 2022 included:

- In May, an introductory seminar for ten partners to introduce them to the project's educational component and start thinking through the coalition building work.

Afghanistan Response

In 2022, HIAS Europe wrapped up its programme supporting the integration of Afghan refugees, by providing two scholarships for Afghani youth hosted by the Italian Jewish community (UCEI) in conjunction with Comunita' Sant'Egidio.



Shaping European Policies

In 2022, HIAS Europe reinforced its commitment to EU-wide advocacy in favour of refugee and humanitarian protection, including working as part of coalitions with other NGOs and faith communities.

Protection risks facing people forced to flee Ukraine were a key focus during 2022.

To mark World Refugee Day 2022, Lutheran World Federation joined with interfaith partners Islamic Relief Worldwide and HIAS on June 20-21 in Geneva, Switzerland. (M. Reraux/LWS)



Mark Hetfield, HIAS President and CEO, spoke at an international conference entitled 'Welcoming the Stranger, Shaping the Future' June 20-21, 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. (M. Renaux/LWS)

European Advocacy

In 2022, advocacy topics included:

- **The EU-wide recognition of Ukrainian drivers' licenses:** this advocacy resulted in a new law allowing Ukrainians to keep their national driving licenses.
- **The recognition of Ukrainian digital ID documents:** HIAS and R2P advocacy asks were debated at the European Parliament and led to an agreement between the EU and Ukraine on the translation of documents.
- A research project interviewing 468 **non-Ukrainian asylum seekers and refugees forced to flee Ukraine, or trapped inside the country:** this resulted in two reports to be published in 2023. Recommendations were presented in a private briefing to UNHCR, as well as at a public hearing of the European Parliament Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, as well as at the Migration Policy Centre-European University Institute policy dialogue.
- **Scaling-up community sponsorship frameworks in the EU:** in multiple meetings with the Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, HIAS provided inputs on the European Commission's Safe Homes Guidance and shared best practices and learnings from HIAS experiences of community-based reception and inclusion around the world.
- **Expanding refugee resettlement across the EU:** ahead of the EU High-Level Resettlement Forum, HIAS Europe published a statement urging EU states to make ambitious resettlement pledges.

Financial Report

Balance Sheet 2022

ASSETS

Fixed Assets	9,004
Financial Assets	9,000

Current Assets

Income Receivable	476,333
Advance Grant Payments	729
Cash at Bank	1,399,111

Total Assets **1,894,177**

LIABILITIES

Capital and Reserves	605,332
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Current Liabilities

Deferred Income	574,066
Payments Due to Suppliers	56,269
Accrued Staff Costs	31,168
Amounts Owed to Partners	627,342

Total Liabilities **1,894,177**

Profit and Loss 2022

Balance Brought Forward	820,681
Revenue 2022	4,914,747
Expenses 2022	5,130,097
Surplus Carried Forward	605,331

REVENUE

Unrestricted Funding from HIAS, Inc.	2,041,725
Restricted Grant Funding & Donations	2,788,875
Revaluation USD Reserves	82,191
Other Income	1,956

Total Revenue **4,914,747**

EXPENDITURE

Donations to HIAS Country Offices and Other Beneficiaries	4,251,195
Staff Costs	478,324
Services and Other Goods	382,738
Asset Depreciation	2,149
Bank Charges and Currency Exchange	15,691

Total Expenses **5,130,097**

All figures are in € Euro

How You Can Help

Donate

Visit: **Donate Europe**
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Volunteer

For more information, send us an email at:
hiaseurope@hias.org

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Leadership

Ilan Cohn (Director); Board Members: Ruth Ringer (Chair of the Board); Bill Echikson, Donatella Soria, Jonathan Faull, Yohan Benizri

Choose Love, European Council of Jewish Communities, Alfred Landecker Foundation, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Javne Fund (Ronald S. Lauder Foundation), The Shapiro Foundation, Islamic Relief Fund, Caritas, Church of Sweden.

Donors

Institutional Donors: HIAS Inc, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, German Federal Agency for Civic Education, Save the Children Spain, International Rescue Committee, Open Society Foundations, Dutch Council for Refugees,

Private donors: Thank you also to the numerous private donors, including many members of the Belgian Jewish community, who donated money for emergency response activities in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.