



# Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

## Europe and Central Asia

Children in Europe and Central Asia are exposed to a range of emergency risks, including armed conflict, displacement, disease outbreaks and natural hazards. Ukraine<sup>1</sup> is entrenched in a protracted conflict affecting 500,000 children; Turkey<sup>2</sup> is host to 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers, including 1.7 million children; and southeastern Europe<sup>3</sup> is an active transit route for migrants and refugees seeking asylum. Given the continued ceasefire violations and regular exchange of fire over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, the prospect of a peaceful political settlement in the South Caucasus remains distant. The unresolved political status of other disputed territories, including Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, is restricting humanitarian access. Border clashes in un-demarcated territories have put young people in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan at risk of harm and displacement. Much of the region lies in an active seismic zone, with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan at risk of major earthquakes.<sup>4</sup> Countries in southeastern Europe, particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, are highly prone to floods and landslides.<sup>5</sup> Both countries experienced flooding in June 2019.

### Regional humanitarian strategy

To promote child-centred and risk-informed humanitarian response and risk reduction in Europe and Central Asia, UNICEF will intensify its collaboration with regional partners, notably United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. UNICEF will enhance preparedness and response capacities in the region, focusing on the nine higher-risk countries<sup>6</sup> and leading preparedness planning initiatives requiring multi-country approaches (e.g., to flooding). In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF will support disease outbreak preparedness planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan and North Macedonia. These initiatives will be undertaken through country programme engagement with governments and local and international actors. UNICEF will prioritize investments in regional inter-agency partnerships, including the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) and the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction (CESDRR), to promote child-centred disaster risk reduction programming and emergency preparedness initiatives. Under the regional UNICEF-International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) partnership, a training programme will be launched in three Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan) to build the capacities of local disaster authorities and national Red Crescent societies to prevent gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse and prioritize accountability to affected populations. UNICEF will support six countries – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – to integrate cash into national emergency response plans. The recently developed emergency child protection programming self-learning package will be rolled out across the region to strengthen the capacities of child protection professionals to detect and respond to child protection challenges in emergencies. UNICEF will support risk monitoring, information management, advocacy-based activities and inter-agency initiatives, including country and multi-country simulation exercises, in collaboration with regional partners such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and WHO.

### Results from 2019

As of 31 August 2019, UNICEF had US\$521,826 available against the US\$2.71 million appeal (19.2 per cent funded).<sup>7</sup> Using available funds and alternative funding sources, UNICEF was able to achieve limited results. Due to lack of funding, programme initiatives on safe schools in Central Asia and the South Caucasus and peacebuilding and social cohesion activities could not be implemented as planned. Collaboration was advanced with several key regional partners, including several United Nations agencies, IFRC, CADRI and CESDRR. The regional partnership with IFRC led to important capacity-building initiatives, including the production of training materials and resources on gender-based violence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the joint UNICEF-IFRC workshop on shock-responsive social protection. The workshop reached social protection and disaster management officials and Red Crescent National Society staff from the five Central Asian countries. In May, UNICEF led an inter-agency initiative to assess the capacities of the Almaty-based CESDRR, which resulted in a capacity development strategy to assist CESDRR to become a credible regional platform for the transfer of knowledge and good practices on emergency and disaster risk reduction in Central Asia. A self-learning package on child protection was created, and toolkits were developed to assist governments and their partners to integrate accountability to affected populations into programme design and implementation. UNICEF provided technical support to Georgia on the design of a cash-in-emergencies feasibility assessment; and supported Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to implement cash preparedness activities in line with recent feasibility studies. In close collaboration with its regional counterparts in IOM, UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF organized a two-day contingency planning exercise for the United Nations Country Team in Montenegro.

## Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US\$1.92 million to support child-centred humanitarian action, response preparedness and disaster resilience in Europe and Central Asia, at both the regional and country levels. This funding will be instrumental to strengthening regional partnerships; contributing to national capacity development using a risk-informed paradigm; and promoting stronger linkages between humanitarian action and development programming. The funding request includes a provision for flexibly using funds to support response needs in the region that are not included in a separate chapter of *Humanitarian Action for Children 2020* and that may not benefit from inter-agency humanitarian response appeals for small- or medium-scale emergencies.

Sector	2020 requirements (US\$)
Early action for new emergencies	303,000
Child-centred disaster risk reduction programming	750,000
National capacity strengthening for risk-informed response	510,000
Technical assistance for emergency preparedness	360,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,923,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Additional details are available in the UNICEF 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Additional details are available in the UNICEF 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Syrian refugees.

<sup>3</sup> Additional details are available in the UNICEF 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for the refugee and migrant response in Europe.

<sup>4</sup> All four countries score above 9.0 (out of 10) for earthquake risk, according to Index for Risk Management, 2019, <[www.inform-index.org](http://www.inform-index.org)>, accessed 9 September 2019. INFORM is supported by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the European Commission.

<sup>5</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia score 7.0 and 9.0 for flood risk, respectively, according to Index for Risk Management, 2019, <[www.inform-index.org](http://www.inform-index.org)>, accessed 9 September 2019.

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<sup>6</sup> The 2019 Index for Risk Management ([www.inform-index.org](http://www.inform-index.org)), which is supported by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the European Commission, identifies nine countries in Europe and Central Asia in the high- and medium-risk category: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine.

<sup>7</sup> Available funds include US\$260,928 received against the 2019 appeal and US\$260,898 carried forward from the previous year.

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