



Grade 1 children returning to the Naim Frashëri Primary School in Pristina, Kosovo, receive hygiene kits as part of the #Back2School campaign to benefit students and teachers.

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for every child

## Humanitarian Action for Children

# Europe and Central Asia

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Countries in Europe and Central Asia, which are prone to multiple risks (i.e., natural disasters, civil unrest, conflict and displacements), have been significantly impacted by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. To date, the region has recorded nearly 1.2 million cases and 26,500 deaths.<sup>2</sup>
- Given the significant impacts that the pandemic is having on the health, social and economic well-being of children, dedicated efforts, capacities and resources are needed to build resilience and enhance preparedness and response.
- The UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office will support governments and partners to enhance capacities for child-focused disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and early emergency response. UNICEF will also provide targeted, multi-sector support to address and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on children and families.
- UNICEF is requesting US\$7.7 million for disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response; and US\$64.3 million to respond to COVID-19. Nineteen countries are directly covered by this regional appeal.<sup>1</sup>

## IN NEED<sup>3</sup>



**3.1 million** children need essential health and nutrition services<sup>4</sup>



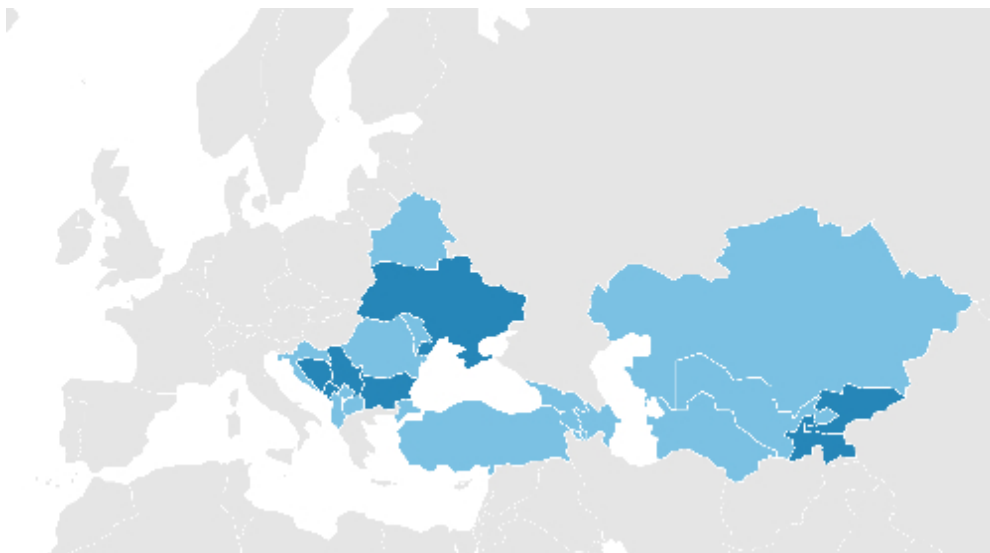
**45 million** children are affected by school closures<sup>5</sup>



**6 million** additional children are living in poor households<sup>6</sup>



**3.7 million** children are prone to high earthquake risk<sup>7</sup>



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal. The countries in dark blue have corresponding standalone appeals or are covered under crisis appeals.

## FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

**US\$ 72 million**

2017

2021

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Children in Europe and Central Asia are exposed to multiple risks: natural hazards, displacement, civil unrest, armed conflict, climate-induced disasters and disease outbreaks. Earthquakes are a common and dominant threat. Much of the region is in an active seismic zone: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are among the 10 countries with the highest levels of earthquake risk globally<sup>8</sup> and earthquakes have recently impacted Albania (2019, 6.4 magnitude, 2,000 injured, 14,000 displaced)<sup>9</sup> and Turkey (2020, 6.8 magnitude, 1,607 injured).<sup>10</sup> Europe and Central Asia is also prone to flooding, landslides and mudslides, all of which are exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation. In May, Uzbekistan faced a major flood triggered by a catastrophic dam collapse (90,000 displaced).<sup>11</sup> In June, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine were impacted by torrential flooding, and Kyrgyzstan experienced severe mudflows. Protracted conflict in eastern Ukraine is affecting 500,000 children.<sup>12</sup> Turkey hosts the world's largest refugee population, including 1.6 million children.<sup>13</sup> Southeast Europe remains a transit route for migrants and refugees.<sup>14</sup> The unresolved status of disputed territories such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria limits humanitarian access. The conflict in Afghanistan may lead to new refugee flows into Tajikistan, while border clashes in undemarcated territories put people in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan at risk of displacement and service disruption. Protests have erupted in eastern Europe, primarily in response to electoral outcomes and COVID-19-related socio-economic hardships.<sup>15</sup> Countries in the region continue to report measles cases, with Kazakhstan, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan reporting the highest number of cases between July 2019 and July 2020.<sup>16</sup> Given the range of risks facing women and children, particularly the most vulnerable, these populations are increasingly facing poor health care, inadequate nutrition, school dropout, violence, exploitation and abuse.

## HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

The UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office will continue to work with governments to enhance capacities for child-focused disaster risk reduction and risk-informed emergency preparedness and response to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience. Informed by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF will focus on reducing hazard risks and the impacts of climate change. In Central Asia, UNICEF's continued partnerships with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction will strengthen capacities for earthquake preparedness, including through supply pre-positioning, the promotion of humanitarian cash transfers and training for Red Crescent and national and local first-line responders. UNICEF will continue to co-facilitate the regional Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative to strengthen inter-agency collaboration on preparedness and disaster risk reduction; participate in the Issue-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change; and work with country offices and key municipalities, particularly in high-risk countries, to better understand the impact of disasters and climate change on children and advocate for stronger national policies and action. To facilitate enhanced emergency preparedness, planning and response, UNICEF will strengthen country office risk monitoring and preparedness planning capacities, focusing on skills development, including through training and simulation exercises; roll out UNICEF's global handbook on accountability to affected populations; support countries to integrate cash into national emergency response plans; and maintain regional mechanisms for surge support and emergency supply procurement and an early action emergency fund to facilitate immediate response to emerging humanitarian crises. These initiatives will also contribute to linking humanitarian and development programming. Risk monitoring, information management, advocacy-based activities and inter-agency initiatives, including country and multi-country simulation exercises, will continue, in collaboration with partners.

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



The school closures that accompanied national lockdowns left tens of millions of children vulnerable across Europe and Central Asia.

LearnIn, launched by UNICEF, is empowering teachers to reach students with high-quality learning methodologies.

Reaching hundreds of educators in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia and elsewhere, the digital initiative has delivered practical, timely tools, including an emergency manual for teachers; and convened national discussions between teachers and policymakers, including on the development of digital learning strategies.

With these and other results, it is clear that LearnIn is pointing the way towards continued learning during – and beyond – the pandemic.

[Read more about this story here](#)

In Serbia, UNICEF and partners have used the LearnIn tool to facilitate remote learning and design innovative solutions that support parents and educators.

# COVID-19 REGIONAL RESPONSE

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo,<sup>17</sup> Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey,<sup>18</sup> Turkmenistan, Ukraine<sup>19</sup> and Uzbekistan<sup>20</sup>

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (COVID-19)

COVID-19 has spread widely across Europe and Central Asia.<sup>21</sup> After containment measures were relaxed followed a decline in cases in May, the number of cases surged in July and August. As of September, there have been nearly 1.2 million confirmed cases and 26,500 deaths.<sup>22</sup> Support for at-risk children is essential.<sup>23</sup> Primary health care services such as routine immunization and infant and young child feeding counselling have been disrupted; and testing, supplies, training and personal protective equipment are urgently needed for treatment and prevention. Children and women are at heightened risk of neglect, abuse and violence due to reduced outreach for key child protection services, inadequate health protocols in alternative care facilities and prolonged lockdowns. In areas experiencing conflict, people on the move and seeking safety are at further risk due to displacement. School closures have disrupted education, necessitating digital, distance and blended learning. The quality and reach of these approaches is limited due to inadequate training for teachers and parents and limited access to equipment, technology and connectivity. The reopening of schools is threatened by lack of appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and infection prevention resources. Prolonged lockdowns have profoundly impacted economic and social well-being and exacerbated vulnerabilities. Risk communication and community engagement must be adapted and sustained to counter misinformation and reinforce healthy practices.

## HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY (COVID-19)

The UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office response to COVID-19 is guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, aligns with United Nations and World Health Organization (WHO) frameworks,<sup>24</sup> supports national and regional efforts and is delivered in coordination with partners. UNICEF will provide multi-sector support to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable children and families, meet specific needs and fill critical gaps. This will include providing health and nutrition services and supplies; enhancing infection prevention capacities through training and the provision of personal protective equipment; scaling up WASH services and supplies in schools and health care facilities; supporting quality, appropriate education and early learning; supporting protection, gender-based violence and mental health and psychosocial support services for children and families and children in alternative care; developing the capacities of front-line health and social workers; promoting social protection services, including cash transfers for economically vulnerable families; facilitating appropriate risk communication and behaviour change activities; and engaging adolescents and young people. This support will address the immediate and critical needs of the most vulnerable children and integrate gender and vulnerability analysis. UNICEF will also continue to lead, co-lead or support several sector-specific COVID-19 task forces/working groups.<sup>25</sup>

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/eca/situation-reports>

This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.

## 2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS<sup>26</sup>



### Nutrition

- **552,500** primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months reached with infant and young child feeding messages and counselling



### Health

- **476,315** children under 5 years vaccinated against measles
- **400,333** caregivers and front-line professionals provided with personal protective equipment<sup>27</sup>



### Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **1,555,330** children accessing appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces<sup>28</sup>
- **776,000** people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies (including hygiene items) and services<sup>29</sup>



### Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA<sup>30</sup>

- **700,350** children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- **106,400** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions
- **27,857** children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements



### Education

- **7,317,644** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **296,000** parents and caregivers of children under 5 years receiving early childhood development counselling and/or parenting support<sup>31</sup>
- **140,959** teachers trained on delivering digital, distance and blended learning



### Social protection and cash transfers

- **124,200** households benefiting from new or additional social transfers from governments with UNICEF technical assistance<sup>32</sup>



### C4D, community engagement and AAP

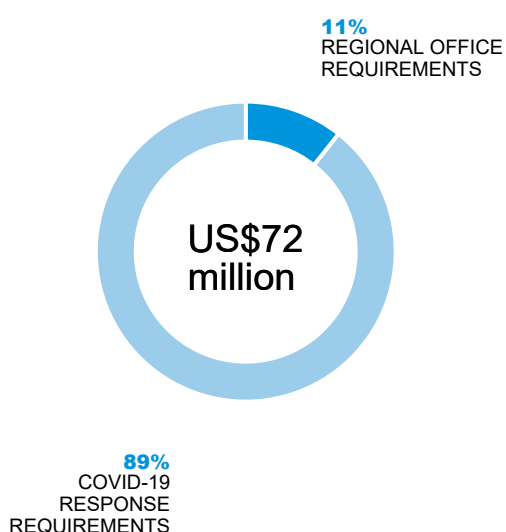
- **18,310,769** people reached with messages on access to services<sup>33</sup>

## FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

In 2021, UNICEF is appealing for US\$72 million to meet the needs of affected children in Europe and Central Asia. This includes US\$64.3 million for the COVID-19 response and US\$7.7 million for disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness. This latter ask has increased to include support for rapid, early action in response to new conflicts and emergencies; the operationalization of accountability to affected population mechanisms; and the institutionalization of humanitarian cash transfer systems, in line with Grand Bargain commitments.

This funding will be instrumental to reducing the vulnerability of affected people to conflict, risks and hazards; strengthening regional partnerships; enhancing national emergency and disaster management capacity; mitigating the impacts of climate change; and strengthening the linkages between humanitarian action and development programmes. It will enable early action to respond to new emergencies not included in stand-alone 2021 appeals and that will not benefit from inter-agency humanitarian response appeals.

Flexible thematic contributions have been vital to the ability of UNICEF and partners to respond quickly and strategically where needs are greatest to support the most vulnerable children and their families in Europe and Central Asia. In 2021, these funds will remain critical to UNICEF's ability to effectively and efficiently respond to emergency needs and the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the state of the COVID-19 crisis in the region, UNICEF will continue to mobilize its expertise, leadership, staff and resources to strengthen the timely, effective and predictable delivery of support to children and families. With few humanitarian organizations present in the region, it is critical that UNICEF continue to engage those partners that can contribute relevant experience and capacity to emergency response.



Sector	2021 requirements (US\$)
<b>Regional office requirements</b>	<b>7,660,000</b>
Emergency response	1,160,000
Preparedness and disaster reduction	5,950,000
Regional office technical capacity	550,000
<b>COVID-19 response requirements</b>	<b>64,311,750</b>
Nutrition	1,380,000
Health	14,425,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	11,699,000
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	8,839,000 <sup>34</sup>
Education	10,033,000
Social protection and cash transfers	10,168,750
C4D, community engagement and AAP	7,767,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,971,750</b>

### Who to contact for further information:

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## ENDNOTES

1. This regional appeal directly covers the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
2. These figures cover the 19 countries included in the appeal. World Health Organization, 'WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard', WHO, <<https://covid19.who.int/>>, accessed 24 September 2020.
3. The "in need" figures reflect pressing needs in the major sectors that UNICEF supports for all countries in the region.
4. This was estimated based on Robertson, Timothy et al., 'Early Estimates of the Indirect Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Maternal and Child Mortality in Low-income and Middle-income Countries: A modelling study', *The Lancet*, vol. 8, no. 7, 1 July 2020.
5. This was estimated based on United Nations Children's Fund Europe and Central Asia, ECAR COVID-19 Education Response Questionnaire, 2020; and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics Database, 2020.
6. This was estimated by UNICEF based on World Bank economic growth projections, 2020.
7. This was estimated based on country-specific inter-agency contingency plans for earthquakes, 2017-2019, Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee Contingency Plan for Earthquake for Central Asia and South Caucasus, 2016; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, Disaster Risk Profile for Turkmenistan, 2015; and country multiple indicator cluster surveys for 2018 and 2019.
8. According to 2020 Index for Risk Management (INFORM) which is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness, supported by the European Commission.
9. United Nations Children's Fund Albania, 'Earthquake Situation Report #3', UNICEF, 13 December 2020.
10. Turkish Red Crescent, 'Elazig/Turkey: Earthquake Situation Report No: 10', 31 January 2020.
11. Eurasianet, 'Uzbekistan: Dam collapse raises uncomfortable questions', 15 May 2020.
12. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Ukraine: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview', OCHA, 2020. Ukraine has a stand-alone Humanitarian Action for Children appeal that covers humanitarian action in eastern Ukraine. Additional details are available in the UNICEF 2021 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Ukraine.
13. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Syria Crisis Humanitarian Situation Report Midyear', UNICEF, September 2020. Additional details are available in the UNICEF 2021 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Syrian refugees.
14. Additional details are available in the UNICEF 2021 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for the refugee and migrant response in Europe.
15. In 2020, protests have taken place in Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Serbia.
16. World Health Organization (WHO), 2020.
17. All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in relation to United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
18. Interventions aimed at mitigating the secondary effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on refugee and migrants as well as vulnerable members of the host community have been reflected in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan and the related Syrian refugee crisis appeal, with an estimated funding requirement of over US\$200 million.
19. Ukraine has a stand-alone Humanitarian Action for Children appeal that covers humanitarian action related to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, as well as COVID-19 needs in eastern Ukraine, in line with the Humanitarian Response Plan. However, as there are COVID-19 needs outside of eastern Ukraine, these needs in the rest of the country are covered and reflected here in this regional appeal.
20. The COVID-19 resource requirements for Greece and Italy are reflected in UNICEF's 2021 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for the refugee and migrant response in Europe, while those for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and eastern Ukraine are reflected in UNICEF's 2021 Humanitarian Action for Children appeals for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine.
21. All countries in this appeal except Turkmenistan have reported COVID-19 cases.
22. 'WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard'.
23. Those particularly at risk in the region are vulnerable and marginalized children including those living in remote, rural and underserved areas; children with disabilities; children from poor households; children from minority ethnic and linguistic communities (e.g. Roma); children living in alternative care and/or institutions; and migrant children.
24. This includes the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and the United Nations framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.
25. These include child protection, education, WASH, health and nutrition, risk communication, socio-economic impacts and gender/gender-based violence.
26. This section reflects the consolidated targets of the countries included in the regional appeal only.
27. The indicator is cross-sectoral in nature and includes the provision of personal protective equipment to caregivers, health care workers, social workers and teachers.
28. This includes intended WASH support in schools, temporary learning spaces and child-friendly spaces.
29. This includes intended WASH support in health care facilities and the delivery of WASH supplies (including hygiene items) to other vulnerable groups.
30. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBViE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).
31. The indicator is cross-sectoral in nature and is relevant to education, health and child protection programming.
32. An additional 10,500 households will be reached with cash transfers across sectors.
33. This includes people reached through messaging on COVID-19 safety practices and prevention.
34. This includes US\$6,804,000 for child protection interventions; US\$1,350,000 for gender-based violence in emergencies interventions; and US\$685,000 for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and related interventions.