

REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE - HOW TO BEST PROTECT YOUR CHILD?

An informed parent means a protected child.

More than 47,000 Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have entered Romania in recent days and tens of thousands more are waiting at the country's Northern and Eastern borders.

Tens of thousands of Romanian citizens mobilized and joined the effort to help all Ukrainian citizens crossing the border into Romania from Ukraine or Moldova, either by offering them food and clothing, or shelter or free transportation.

With the safe crossing of the border, however, new legal obstacles appear. **What rights and obligations do Ukrainian citizens who take refuge in Romania have? And most importantly, when it comes to accompanying children, how can parents best protect their children?** An informed parent means a protected child.

IMPORTANT: A minor can enter Romania accompanied by only one parent, without the need for a notarized declaration from the missing parent. Moreover, unaccompanied minors, regardless of age, can cross the border into Romania. Minors may also apply for political asylum, either through a legal representative appointed by the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Social Assistance and Child Protection, or in their own name if they have reached the age of 14.

Below are answers to the main issues of interest to refugees from Ukraine:

What are the documents required to enter Romania?

Ukrainian citizens who have a passport have a 3-month tourist visa; therefore, they can travel anywhere, without restrictions, but at the end of the 3 months, if they do not ask for political asylum, they will have to leave the territory of Romania.

Ukrainian citizens who do not have a passport or identity card can apply for international protection in Romania. Any foreign national or stateless person may apply to the competent authorities for political asylum. Thus, the applicant will be declared a refugee or political asylum seeker after his/her application has been approved.

What are the rights of asylum seekers?

- The right to remain in Romania until the expiry of a 15 days term from the completion of the asylum procedure;
- The right to a lawyer at any stage of the asylum procedure;
- The right to be provided with an interpreter, free of charge, to ensure adequate communication;
- The right to be issued a temporary identity document;

- The right to benefit from material conditions of reception, which guarantee subsistence and protect physical and mental health;
- The right to be accommodated in reception and accommodation centers, subordinated to the National Office for Refugees, until the end of their right to remain on the territory of Romania, for the asylum seeker who does not have the necessary material means for subsistence;
- The right of asylum seekers with special needs to receive adequate medical care;
- The right to receive social assistance;
- The right of minor asylum seekers to have access to early education, pre-school and compulsory school education, under the same conditions as minors of Romanian citizens;
- The right to receive free primary care and appropriate treatment, emergency hospital care, and free medical care and treatment in cases of acute or chronic life-threatening illness;
- The right to be included in national public health programs aimed at the prevention, surveillance and control of communicable diseases, in situations of epidemiological risk;

What are the obligations of asylum seekers?

- The obligation to submit a written reasoned request containing the data indicated by the relevant authority to the territorial bodies of the Ministry of Administration and Interior, as well as to allow the authorities to take their photographs and fingerprints; foreigners under the age of 14 shall not be subject to fingerprinting;
- The obligation to provide the competent authorities with complete and true information about the person and his/her asylum application and to submit all documents available to him/her which are relevant to his/her personal situation;
- The obligation to follow the status of the proceedings and to inform the competent authorities of any change of residence and to respond to requests from asylum bodies;
- The obligation not to leave the place of residence without the authorization of the National Immigration Office;
- The obligation to allow the authorities to perform body searches and to search the objects the foreigner has on him/her, at the request of the competent authorities;
- The obligation to comply with the laws of the Romanian state, as well as the measures ordered by the Romanian bodies competent in matters of asylum;
- The obligation to leave the territory of Romania within 15 days from the end of the asylum procedure, if the applicant has not obtained international protection in Romania, unless the asylum application was rejected as obviously unfounded following its settlement in accelerated procedure, in which case the foreigner must leave the territory of the Romanian state as soon as the asylum procedure has been completed.

The asylum application can also be submitted to the territorial bodies of the Border Police from a control point for crossing the state border, being immediately submitted to the competent structure of the National Office for Refugees.

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The asylum application of an unaccompanied minor shall be considered as a matter of priority.

For any questions or additional information you can write to us at contact@thechildfactor.ro and we will respond to all requests as soon as possible. We are available to provide answers in Romanian, English and Russian.