



FRA

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY
FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

FOCUS

This publication was originally published in 2023 as part of the FRA *Fundamental Rights Report 2023*, available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/fundamental-rights-report-2023>

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023

Print	ISBN 978-92-9489-033-7	doi:10.2811/585585	TK-05-23-051-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-9489-032-0	doi:10.2811/867387	TK-05-23-051-EN-N

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INTRODUCTION

Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted in massive internal and external population displacement. Nearly 8 million people fleeing Ukraine have arrived in Europe. Of these, nearly 4 million have received temporary protection in the EU. This displacement triggered a tremendous wave of support and solidarity from governments, local authorities and society as a whole.

The EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time since its adoption in 2001. In the event of mass influx and unavailability of return, it entitles those displaced because of the war to legal residence and access to work, housing, social assistance, education and healthcare. As the overwhelming majority of those fleeing Ukraine are women – many with responsibilities for caring for children and/or older people – the provision of access to specific services needs to be gender sensitive and targeted. Services also need to include support for those who have experienced sexual violence and exploitation.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) launched a series of activities to identify challenges and propose solutions for all aspects covered by the Temporary Protection Directive and by EU laws on human trafficking, on hate crime and on the rights of crime victims, all of which apply to beneficiaries of temporary protection.

Within one week of the Russian invasion, FRA visited EU-Ukraine border areas. It collected data and evidence on the evolving situation, which it published in March 2022. Subsequently, FRA established a dedicated task force and launched a series of projects, including a survey of displaced people from Ukraine.

All these activities are important because disturbing phenomena, such as sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking, discrimination, xenophobic disinformation and hate speech, have been recorded since the start of the war. Those belonging to minorities or marginalised groups, such as Roma,

are particularly vulnerable to unequal treatment or abuse. Further challenges affect non-Ukrainian third-country nationals, including stateless people, who also fled from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine to the EU. Such people do not always receive the same rights and benefits as Ukrainian nationals.

Legal corner

The EU activated **Council Directive 2001/55/EC** (the Temporary Protection Directive)* on 4 March 2022 by adopting **Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382**.** The directive is part of the EU asylum *acquis* under Article 78 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and must therefore be in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention and other relevant treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

* Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, OJ 2001 L 212

** Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, OJ 2022 L 71

1 LEGAL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

1.1. ACTIVATING THE EUROPEAN UNION'S TEMPORARY PROTECTION MECHANISM

From the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 until year-end, approximately 17 million border crossings from Ukraine to EU Member States, 85 % of which were by women and girls, were registered.¹ In total, nearly 4 million people fleeing Ukraine had enjoyed temporary protection in the EU by year-end – mostly women and children.² This number may, however, include multiple registrations of the same person in several Member States and registrations of people who moved onwards, including beyond Europe.³ In addition, only about half of the people fleeing Ukraine had applied for temporary protection in the EU.⁴

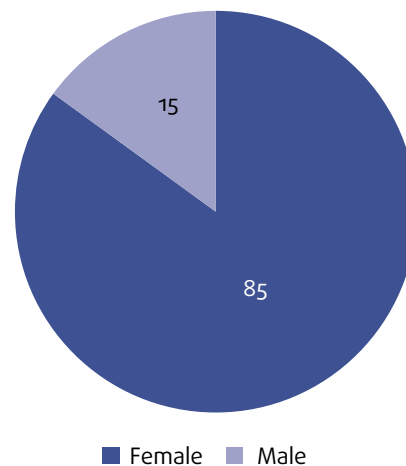
In some countries, such as **Lithuania**, students in tertiary education are not allowed to register for temporary protection even if they left Ukraine after 24 February 2022. Instead, they must formalise their student visas and residence permits. That requirement deprives them of all benefits applicable to temporary protection beneficiaries.⁵



FIGURE 1: GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE DISPLACED PEOPLE FLEEING RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE (%)

► *Note:*

43,571 interviews were conducted between May and November 2022.



Source: UNHCR, *'Profiles, needs & intentions of refugees from Ukraine'*

The Temporary Protection Directive provides minimum standards for granting immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced people. It applies to all Member States except **Denmark**.⁶ Denmark has an opt-out from the EU asylum *acquis* in accordance with Protocol No. 22 to the Treaty on European Union. However, its national rules offer protection to those displaced by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine along the lines of the Temporary Protection Directive.⁷

Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 established the existence of a mass influx of displaced people from Ukraine within the meaning of the Temporary Protection Directive. It activated the EU temporary protection mechanism. In October 2022, in the light of the ongoing conflict, the EU decided to extend the application of the implementing decision until March 2024.⁸ Looking beyond this, Member States' measures to address longer-term protection needs of the displaced people through asylum procedures or other

protection avenues, in the spirit of Articles 3 (5) and 17 of the Temporary Protection Directive, remain to be seen.⁹

Temporary protection applies to Ukrainian nationals and beneficiaries of international protection, including stateless people, residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022. It also applies to their family members. For non-Ukrainian third-country nationals permanently residing in Ukraine at that time, Member States must either apply the EU temporary protection scheme or provide adequate protection under their national law (Article 2 (2) of the implementing decision). Pursuant to Article 2 (3) of the implementing decision, Member States have the discretion to extend the EU temporary protection scheme to other legally residing non-Ukrainian third-country nationals who entered the EU after 24 February 2022 and are unable to return safely to their country of origin.

In March 2022, the European Commission published operational guidelines¹⁰ that aim to better explain and clarify the provisions of the Temporary Protection Directive and its implementing decision. EU institutions adopted a series of other guidelines and recommendations on facilitating border crossings;¹¹ recognition of professional qualifications;¹² accessing the labour market, vocational education and training;¹³ and the conversion of the Ukrainian currency – the hryvnia – into the currencies of the Member States.¹⁴ At the same time, the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Management Network ('the Blueprint Network')¹⁵ has ensured that all actors have up-to-date situational awareness to enable an effective and coordinated EU response.¹⁶ FRA has participated in and regularly contributed to this network.

All Member States had implemented the Temporary Protection Directive by the end of 2022, but there are national differences in its implementation. FRA publishes an online table¹⁷ on the implementation of the EU temporary protection scheme at national level. The full implementation of minimum rights, such as access to accommodation, employment, education and social welfare, as provided for in the Temporary Protection Directive, remains a challenge in some respects across all Member States.

1.2. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Non-Ukrainian third-country nationals

As regards the personal scope of temporary protection, **Hungary** does not grant temporary protection by law to non-Ukrainian third-country nationals permanently residing in Ukraine, despite this being mandatory under Article 2 (2) of the implementing decision. In Hungary, third-country nationals who were permanently resident in Ukraine before the war receive a 'certificate for temporary stay'. This certificate is valid for 30 days and subject to an extension of up to six months.¹⁸

The European Commission operational guidelines encourage Member States to consider extending temporary protection to those who fled Ukraine or otherwise found themselves in the EU or a third country shortly before 24 February 2022 and who, as a result of the war, cannot return to Ukraine.¹⁹

There are promising practices in **Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania** and **Sweden**, according to FRA's findings. They have extended temporary protection to these categories of displaced people. **Poland** grants temporary protection to those who arrived from Ukraine before 24 February 2022 under a national protection scheme.²⁰ Other countries, such as **Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy** and **Spain**, currently apply strict temporal criteria, irrespective of the Commission's operational guidelines.²¹

PROMISING PRACTICE

Extending temporary protection to non-Ukrainian third-country nationals

Portugal and **Spain** apply a broad personal scope. They extend temporary protection to all people fleeing Ukraine who resided there legally on either a permanent basis or a temporary basis and cannot return to their country of origin.

Bulgaria extends temporary protection to third-country nationals or stateless people who left Ukraine as a result of the war, and entered and remained in Bulgaria. Potential beneficiaries had to state explicitly by 31 March 2022 that they wanted to enjoy this protection.

* FRA (2022), '*National legislation implementing the EU Temporary Protection Directive in selected EU Member States*'

** **Decision No. 144 R. E. of 10 March 2022 of the Council of Ministers**, which gives effect to *Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382*; and *Bulgaria for Ukraine, 'Temporary protection – Who can apply for temporary protection'*



The Commission also emphasised that stateless people and non-Ukrainian third-country nationals who can prove that they were legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 might have closer ties to Ukraine than with their country of origin.²²

Stateless people

The protection of stateless people and those at risk of statelessness who cannot prove prior legal residence in Ukraine remains a challenge. They have no country of origin to return to and not all are eligible for temporary protection. Most Member States have not extended temporary protection to stateless people without legal residence in Ukraine.

It is difficult for such people to prove their residence status in Ukraine due to lack of documentation, and they might face additional obstacles in seeking safety. According to the European Network on Statelessness, tens of thousands of people affected by statelessness residing in Ukraine either were born there or are long-term residents and have no ties with another country.²³ Moreover, stateless people face limited options when applying for asylum, humanitarian protection or statelessness status, if available. They involve lengthy application procedures and strict eligibility criteria that are often difficult to meet.²⁴

Migrants from other parts of the world

The Temporary Protection Directive applies only to people displaced due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; it does not cover other people seeking to enter the EU. This leads to different sets of responses. For example, at the Polish-Belarussian border, displaced people, including vulnerable people, are still allegedly violently pushed back²⁵ or detained in closed facilities.²⁶ Pushbacks were also reported on the Latvian and Lithuanian

borders with Belarus.²⁷ Requests for international protection from displaced people fleeing conflict should always be examined irrespective of nationality, ethnicity or country of origin, as FRA noted in its first Ukraine bulletin.²⁸

FRA ACTIVITY

Bulletins on the fundamental rights implications within the EU of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

FRA published its first bulletin on the fundamental rights implications of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in May 2022, covering 1 March to 27 April 2022. It describes the situation in the four EU Member States neighbouring Ukraine, namely Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. It looks at their initial reactions and the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive. It also draws on observations from FRA missions to several land border crossing points in the EU Member States concerned.

Bulletin 2 documents the situation in all Member States, from mid-April to the end of July 2022. It focuses on further developments as Member States strive to put in place longer-term solutions. It covers 10 thematic areas. Some mirror rights that the directive guarantees, and others are selected for their particular relevance to fundamental rights.

Sources: FRA (2022), The war in Ukraine – Fundamental rights implications within the EU – Bulletin 1; and FRA (2022), The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine – The broad fundamental rights impact in the EU – Bulletin 2

2 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS SITUATION AND RISKS UPON ARRIVAL

FRA ACTIVITY

FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey

In August–September 2022, FRA conducted an online survey with 14,685 respondents in **Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia** and **Spain**. It captures the views and experiences of people displaced by the war (both adults and children from the age of 12 years) on issues related to work, education, housing and healthcare. It also captures information about humanitarian aid and the provision of information upon arrival in the EU. This chapter includes selected survey findings.

Source: FRA (2023), **Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU**, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union

2.1. FIRST ARRIVAL

Member States have a duty to admit displaced people seeking protection from war. This duty includes compliance with the non-*refoulement* principle according to Article 18 (right to asylum) and Article 19 (protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('the Charter'), read in the light of Article 78 (1) of the TFEU.

Legal corner

The principle of non-*refoulement* prohibits returning someone to a country where they are likely to experience persecution or serious harm. It is the core element of refugee protection and is enshrined in international and EU law. Article 33 (1) of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the authoritative interpretation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibit returning an individual to a country where they will be at risk of persecution, torture, or inhuman or other degrading treatment or punishment. EU primary law reflects the prohibition of *refoulement* in Article 78 (1) of the TFEU and in Articles 18 and 19 of the Charter.

All Member States bordering Ukraine facilitated access to their territory from the onset of the war. Ukrainian biometric passport holders were already entitled to enter the EU visa free for 90 days. All others, including third-country nationals and stateless people, were allowed to enter based on the humanitarian exception clause of the Schengen Borders Code (Article 6 (5)).²⁹ The European Commission published operational guidelines for external border management to facilitate crossing the EU–Ukraine border.³⁰

Member States bordering Ukraine (**Hungary, Poland, Romania** and **Slovakia**) lifted their standard COVID-19 restrictions for people fleeing Ukraine. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control issued guidance for preventing and controlling COVID-19 in temporary reception facilities.³¹

National human rights institutions, civil society and international organisations voiced concerns about alleged discriminatory treatment of certain groups on arrival, at initial reception facilities or during onward transportation. These groups include non-Ukrainian third-country nationals;³² lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people;³³ Roma;³⁴ stateless people;³⁵ and people with disabilities.³⁶

In **Slovakia**, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities³⁷ set up monitoring teams at borders to prevent any unequal treatment of Ukrainian displaced people of Roma origin.

More than half of the respondents to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey³⁸ did not experience any problems when crossing the EU-Ukraine border. However, respondents who perceive themselves as a minority in terms of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion were almost four times as likely not to be treated well by border officers as respondents who do not identify as such.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had recorded almost 9 million border crossings back to Ukraine by the end of 2022.³⁹ This figure reflects cross-border movements and not the number of distinct individuals crossing the borders.

The proximity of Ukraine to the EU and the relative safety in the western parts of Ukraine led to high numbers of 'pendulum movements' across borders. Reasons why people return from the EU to Ukraine include making sure that their families are safe or obtaining official documents necessary for accessing work or education in the EU. Such movements should not be taken as a sign that safe, permanent return is possible, as the situation remains highly volatile.

One in three respondents to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey⁴⁰ would like to return to Ukraine in the long term. A similar share would like to stay in their host country, and one in four respondents had not yet decided.

2.2. PRE-REGISTRATION AND REGISTRATION FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTION

Not all those fleeing Ukraine wish to apply for temporary protection in their countries of first arrival. The Temporary Protection Directive gives displaced people free choice over their destination in the EU, before the issuance of a residence permit. After a residence permit is issued, they are entitled to free movement within the EU for 90 days in any 180-day period.

According to Article 10 of the Temporary Protection Directive, Member States are obliged to record certain personal data of people fleeing Ukraine.⁴¹ Since data cannot be entered into the European Asylum Dactyloscopy Database (Eurodac) in the context of temporary protection,⁴² the Commission advises national authorities to register the people concerned in their national databases. The pre-registration and hence early identification of those at risk can be challenging in Member States not situated at the EU's external land borders, because there are no internal border controls.

The Commission set up an EU platform to register people enjoying temporary protection,⁴³ to ensure that those who enjoy such protection under national law can effectively benefit from the associated rights across the EU. This platform also aims to address cases of multiple registrations and thus to limit possible abuse.

The vast majority (96 %) of those who applied for temporary protection in the EU, Norway and Switzerland in 2022 are Ukrainian nationals.⁴⁴

Member States put in place various systems for the efficient management of registration for temporary protection. In some Member States, such as **Bulgaria**⁴⁵ and **Czechia**,⁴⁶ the process is very quick, and temporary protection is granted almost immediately. In **Greece**, people can apply online and receive by email an appointment for registration. Temporary protection is granted with the completion of the registration.⁴⁷ **Poland** operates two forms of registration for displaced people fleeing Ukraine: one for Ukrainian nationals and the other for non-Ukrainian nationals.⁴⁸ The United Nations Special

FRA ACTIVITY

FRA mission to land border crossing points and initial reception points

In order to identify fundamental rights risks and provide relevant advice, FRA organised a mission by expert staff to land border crossing points and initial reception points in **Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia** in early March 2022. Ten days later, FRA published a report based on observations gathered and meetings held during this mission.

Source: FRA (2022), 'EU-Ukrainian border check points: First field observations'

Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants criticised this distinction between displaced people fleeing the same war.⁴⁹

2.3. PROTECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

According to Article 2 of the Qualification Directive, the term ‘unaccompanied child’ is used to describe a person under the age of 18 years who enters the EU’s territory without an adult responsible for them in the receiving state.⁵⁰ Any decision concerning a child must be based on respect for the rights of the child as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In EU law, Article 24 of the Charter guarantees the rights of the child. The asylum instruments⁵¹ and the Return Directive⁵² contain specific provisions for unaccompanied children.



At the onset of the war, the Commission identified challenges and gaps in the registration, reception and care of unaccompanied children from Ukraine, including those from institutions.⁵³ Unaccompanied children were not always referred to the national child protection authorities for follow-up and protection. In some cases, children were not registered as present on the territory of a Member State in any system until they applied for temporary protection.

As of the end of 2022, 17 Member States had registered 8,195 unaccompanied children for temporary protection in their national systems.⁵⁴ Even as late as October 2022, unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine were not being systematically recorded, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) noted.⁵⁵

The profile of unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine is more diverse than that of other unaccompanied children who have arrived in the EU in recent years. Most of them were in institutional care before fleeing. In addition, the ratio of unaccompanied girls is much higher, the children are on average younger and there is a higher prevalence of children with disabilities and special needs.⁵⁶

The United Nations Children’s Fund estimated that before the war approximately 90,000 children lived in institutions in Ukraine, nearly half of them with disabilities.⁵⁷ Transfers of children from such institutions to the EU have been either bilaterally agreed between Ukraine and the receiving Member States or organised through private initiatives. Ukrainian authorities asked Member States to keep groups of children from Ukrainian institutions together.⁵⁸

The operational guidelines⁵⁹ on the application of the Temporary Protection Directive recommend that border control authorities register, at first entry, the identities of unaccompanied children and of any accompanying adults, and their declared destination. This is an important safeguard to prevent children from going missing or becoming victims of trafficking.

For example, **Romania** issued a ministerial order to improve cooperation between public authorities regarding the entry, registration, transit and stay of unaccompanied children, and the protection of their rights.⁶⁰ It requires adults accompanying children without their parents to provide their identity details, destination and travel plans. **Poland** amended its special act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens on 25 March 2022. This created a register and requires the authorities to record unaccompanied children entering Poland.⁶¹

In **Greece**, the National Emergency Response Mechanism for Unaccompanied Minors in Precarious Living Conditions created a 'notification form for unaccompanied or separated children from Ukraine'. The Hellenic Police distributes the form, including at the main entry point, Promachonas.⁶² In cooperation with the Ukrainian Notariat, the Council of the Notariats of the European Union developed a form⁶³ enabling Ukrainian parents or legal representatives of a child travelling to the European Union to declare who is responsible for travelling with the child and/or who can exercise parental responsibility for the child.⁶⁴

According to Article 16 of the Temporary Protection Directive, unaccompanied children must be represented by legal guardians. In addition, Member States should initiate procedures for recognising or appointing guardians as soon as possible. There have been challenges relating to the recognition of guardians, appointed by Ukrainian authorities, accompanying children without parental care who reside in institutions. These guardians needed additional assistance, and some Member States appointed additional guardians or support people to facilitate access to national procedures.⁶⁵

The 2022 explanatory memorandum to the Council of Europe Recommendation on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration⁶⁶ provides further guidance, good practices, checklists and key information to provide to unaccompanied children concerning guardianship.

The new Council of Europe Recommendation on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration and its explanatory memorandum contain guidance on upholding the rights of the child throughout age assessment procedures.⁶⁷

Responses to separated children who arrived accompanied by friends, neighbours or other family members varied among Member States. There were cases in which no guardian was appointed because the parents were considered to exercise sufficient parental authority from Ukraine. Child protection services followed up and assisted in such cases.⁶⁸

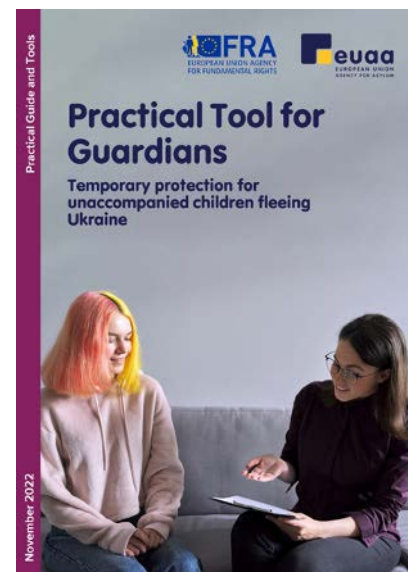
2.4. INFORMATION PROVISION

Article 9 of the Temporary Protection Directive requires Member States to provide information, including in writing, on provisions relating to temporary protection. The Commission established a website⁶⁹ to help Member States fulfil this obligation. It also encouraged them to create similar national websites.

Many Member States scaled up their efforts to inform and support potential beneficiaries of temporary protection. These include **Austria**,⁷⁰ **Greece**,⁷¹ **Portugal**,⁷² **Romania**⁷³ and **Slovenia**.⁷⁴ Austria also provides information to Ukrainians who are staying in Moldova and Poland and who are potentially to be transferred to Austria for temporary protection.⁷⁵

In addition to these national initiatives, UNHCR provides multilingual information online on provisions relating to temporary protection. This is relevant to people in, for example, **Hungary**,⁷⁶ **Poland**,⁷⁷ **Romania**⁷⁸ and **Slovakia**.⁷⁹ The EUAA also operates a web page providing up-to-date information.⁸⁰

Despite these developments, gaps in information provision remain.



FRA ACTIVITY

Practical tool for guardians on temporary protection

To enable the guardian to better inform and assist children in the process of temporary protection, **FRA** and the **EUAA** jointly published a **practical tool for guardians on temporary protection**.

Source: EUAA and FRA (2022), **Practical tool for guardians – Temporary protection for unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine**

In **Hungary**, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Hungarian Helsinki Committee voiced concerns about the lack of information provided by authorities, which was leaving many people unaware that they must apply to benefit from temporary protection.⁸¹

According to the findings of FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey,⁸² one in four respondents (25%) mentioned that they did not receive enough information. This proportion was higher among respondents who identified as a racial, ethnic or religious minority.

2.5. RISK OF TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

The Anti-Trafficking Directive⁸³ sets out measures to prevent and address exploitation related to human trafficking. Article 5 of the Charter, which prohibits slavery and forced labour, also prohibits human trafficking.

At the onset of the war, several actors warned of the risks of exploitation and trafficking for people fleeing the war in Ukraine, including children. These included FRA,⁸⁴ the Council of Europe Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, who visited **Czechia**,⁸⁵ **Moldova**,⁸⁶ **Poland**⁸⁷ and **Slovakia**;⁸⁸ the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;⁸⁹ and the Lanzarote Committee.⁹⁰ National authorities and stakeholders in several Member States (e.g. in **Luxembourg**⁹¹ and **Sweden**⁹²) also raised such concerns.

Primary risk factors were private transport and free housing offered by private actors without any oversight. To address such risks, some Member States, including **Hungary**,⁹³ introduced mandatory registration and/or vetting of people offering transport and private accommodation. In **Poland**, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, in cooperation with police headquarters, developed a procedure to verify that foreign entities are working legally, and security checks on people offering to help refugees from Ukraine.⁹⁴ In addition, UNHCR provides guidance to host countries on vetting volunteers.⁹⁵

Europol deployed operational teams in **Hungary**, **Poland**, **Romania** and **Slovakia** to support national authorities in the early detection of trafficking in human beings.⁹⁶

A common anti-trafficking plan to protect people fleeing the war in Ukraine⁹⁷ has been developed and implemented. The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator led on it, in close cooperation with Member States, the EU agencies, civil society organisations, Ukraine and Moldova.

The plan sets out prevention and awareness-raising measures. For example, the Commission launched a dedicated website for people fleeing Ukraine, with a section containing practical advice to refugees on how to avoid falling into the hands of traffickers. In addition, a list of dedicated emergency anti-trafficking hotlines in all Member States was published online.

In April 2022 the Council of Europe published a factsheet on the Lanzarote Committee special report on protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;⁹⁸ a checklist with guidance to Parties on the prevention of, and protection of children from, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the context of migration and asylum;⁹⁹ and a handbook on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in crisis and emergency situations.¹⁰⁰

Some Member States set up web pages and awareness-raising campaigns (e.g. **Bulgaria**,¹⁰¹ **Czechia**,¹⁰² **Poland**,¹⁰³ **Romania**,¹⁰⁴ **Slovakia**¹⁰⁵ and **Spain**¹⁰⁶),

PROMISING PRACTICE

Frontex VEGA operations

In April 2022, Frontex activated 'VEGA' operations in countries bordering Ukraine. The aim was to facilitate identification of vulnerable people and victims of trafficking. The operations lasted until December 2022. They covered four activities in airports and 17 at the land borders with Ukraine, including the Moldovan border.

some developed leaflets (e.g. **Luxembourg**¹⁰⁷) and some strengthened anti-trafficking hotlines with Ukrainian speakers (e.g. **Greece**,¹⁰⁸ **Slovakia**¹⁰⁹ and **Spain**¹¹⁰). Certain Member States, including **Germany**,¹¹¹ **Greece**,¹¹² **Poland**,¹¹³ **Slovakia**¹¹⁴ and **Slovenia**,¹¹⁵ provided training and information sessions for key professionals, such as asylum officers, the police and NGOs.

Other national measures include stepping up police patrols and undercover operations in high-risk areas, such as train stations and reception centres (e.g. in **Austria**¹¹⁶); joint police operations; increased cooperation with victim support services or other organisations (e.g. in **Italy**¹¹⁷); and the targeted monitoring of websites and online portals where jobs and services are advertised (e.g. in **Slovenia**¹¹⁸).

Some Member States amended their legislation. These include **Poland** (to increase penalties for traffickers)¹¹⁹ and **Spain** (to facilitate the provision of minimum income to displaced people who are victims of trafficking).¹²⁰

3 PROVIDING SUPPORT WITH HOUSING, ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET, HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION

FRA ACTIVITY

Eye on the contribution of local authorities

To better understand what local authorities are doing, FRA approached selected cities in the EU that actively promote fundamental rights in the context of FRA's work with **Human Rights Cities**, namely Barcelona, Budapest, Cologne, Gdańsk, Ghent, Lund, Nuremberg, Salzburg, Utrecht and Vienna.

Source: FRA (2023), **How did cities welcome displaced people from Ukraine?**

3.1. ACCESS TO ACCOMMODATION OR HOUSING

In accordance with Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive, beneficiaries of temporary protection must have access to suitable accommodation or, if necessary, be provided with the means to obtain housing. The directive highlights in this context the need to provide assistance to people with special needs, such as unaccompanied children and people who have experienced torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual abuse. The Charter protects the right to housing assistance to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources (Article 34).



Member States rely both on privately organised housing, provided by volunteers, NGOs or landlords, and on public facilities, including state-contracted hotels and municipal facilities.¹²¹ The European Commission's communication of March 2022¹²² underlines the need for Member States to include more permanent solutions in their broader housing policies. The communication highlighted the availability of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund to support community-based housing and services. The EUAA published practical recommendations on providing emergency placement in private accommodation for displaced people from Ukraine.¹²³ The 'Safe Homes' initiative of the European Commission¹²⁴ provides practical guidance to national, regional and local authorities, and to civil society, on how to organise safe private housing.

Many Member States adopted specific legislation or administrative instructions to coordinate and/or financially compensate the accommodation of people fleeing Ukraine (e.g. **France**,¹²⁵ **Italy**,¹²⁶ **Latvia**,¹²⁷ **Lithuania**¹²⁸ and **Slovakia**¹²⁹).

A number of countries, such as **Austria**,¹³⁰ **Belgium**,¹³¹ **Lithuania**¹³² and **Poland**,¹³³ relied mainly on private accommodation, whereas others provided accommodation in state-contracted tourist or municipal facilities (e.g. in **Bulgaria**, which has exclusively used municipal facilities since mid-November 2022,¹³⁴ **Cyprus**, **Estonia**, **Ireland**, the **Netherlands** and **Slovakia**).¹³⁵

Six out of 10 respondents (60 %) to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey were, at the time of the survey, staying in a private apartment or house. Of those, more than half were paying for their accommodation in full or in part. The most common problems with accommodation are lack of privacy and sharing a kitchen or toilet with strangers.¹³⁶

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS' PROBLEMS WITH THEIR CURRENT ACCOMMODATION, BY EU COUNTRY (%)

Problem	EU10	BG	CZ	EE	DE	HU	IT	PL	RO	SK	ES
Lack of privacy	36	36	38	33	34	24	39	38	26	31	39
I need to share a kitchen with strangers	28	17	33	18	26	24	32	29	12	27	27
I need to share a bathroom/toilet with strangers	24	12	27	17	22	22	22	26	9	19	23
No quiet/separate room for children to study	23	27	25	11	20	15	18	25	20	19	23
Too much noise	22	24	23	13	20	15	28	23	18	17	29
I don't get along with the people I share accommodation with	11	4	10	9	16	3	12	9	6	11	14
Too cold, leaking roof, mould or damp	7	12	7	5	7	7	13	7	4	3	7
I don't feel safe in my accommodation	5	4	5	3	6	3	8	4	3	4	5
I don't feel safe in my neighbourhood	3	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	5

Source: FRA (2023), **Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU**, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union

▲ Note:

EU10 = the 10 Member States in which the survey was carried out.

In some Member States, concerns were reported about the impact of the arrival of displaced people on the availability of accommodation or on housing prices for locals. These include **Hungary**¹³⁷ and **Poland**,¹³⁸ even though the Ukrainian arrivals rarely rented accommodation privately.¹³⁹

Several Member States assigned housing support specifically to beneficiaries of temporary protection (including **Bulgaria**, **Croatia**, **Cyprus**, **France**, **Hungary**, **Italy**, **Latvia**, **Poland**, **Slovakia** and **Sweden**).¹⁴⁰ This could, in some countries, exclude non-Ukrainian third-country nationals, who may only be able to use support available for asylum seekers.

Most Member States coordinate state-funded housing centrally. Some have mechanisms to allocate displaced people to housing in a territorially balanced way. These include **Austria**,¹⁴¹ **France**,¹⁴² **Germany**,¹⁴³ **Latvia**,¹⁴⁴ the **Netherlands**¹⁴⁵ and **Sweden**.¹⁴⁶ Still, the capacity and suitability of public accommodation is limited by insufficient funding and lack of long-term solutions. At local level, authorities in some Member States are overburdened, particularly in large cities and in Member States with large numbers of arrivals (e.g. in **Belgium**).¹⁴⁷

Many hosting countries relied significantly on individuals volunteering to provide housing for free or at a reduced cost. For instance, in **Austria**¹⁴⁸ and **Finland**,¹⁴⁹ 65–70 % of beneficiaries of temporary protection were staying in private accommodation as of July/August 2022.

However, in some countries, such as **Belgium**,¹⁵⁰ **Hungary**¹⁵¹ and the **Netherlands**,¹⁵² private hosts generally receive no financial compensation.

In **Poland**, compensation for private hosts is limited to 120 days (extendable in special cases, for example owing to disability, pregnancy or old age). Private hosts in Poland do not qualify for compensation if they provide housing to beneficiaries of temporary protection who are third-country nationals not covered by the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens or if the residents are not eligible for temporary protection.¹⁵³

Impact on particular groups

In **Czechia**, displaced Roma reportedly faced discrimination when looking for housing, according to the ombudsperson and NGOs.¹⁵⁴ In June, the ombudsperson issued a recommendation to municipalities, based on verified information, stating that some municipalities and regions denied accommodation to displaced Roma from Ukraine.¹⁵⁵

Similarly, in **Germany**, the media reported that discrimination and prejudices make it difficult for displaced Roma, particularly large families, to find housing.¹⁵⁶

In **Poland**, hosts were reluctant to house Ukrainian Roma families, according to NGOs.¹⁵⁷ Researchers and activists also reported that Roma faced discrimination at reception centres by staff or non-Roma fellow Ukrainian displaced people.¹⁵⁸

PROMISING PRACTICE

Vetting systems

Private accommodation is not always vetted systematically, which can lead to safety risks, especially for women. However, several good examples of vetting systems were identified across the EU.

In **Belgium**, local authorities are responsible for checking the criminal records of all adult members of the host family as well as the quality, safety and hygiene of the housing.*

In **Croatia**, state-subsidised private housing is subject to detailed state inspection.**

In **Ireland**, authorities reported inspecting vacant private homes offered as accommodation for displaced people.***

* Federal Public Service for Internal Affairs and Federal Public Service for Justice (2022), **Circular on the verification of prospective householders of persons fleeing the armed conflict in Ukraine**

** Croatia, information provided to FRA by the Office of the Ombudsperson in an interview on 22 July 2022

*** Ireland, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2022), **DCEDIY's response to the situation in Ukraine**

3.2. ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

In accordance with Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive, beneficiaries of temporary protection must be given the opportunity to engage in employed or self-employed work, subject to rules applicable to the particular profession, or vocational training. Article 15 of the Charter stipulates that third-country nationals authorised to work in the Member States are entitled to the same working conditions as EU citizens.

The Commission's communication of March 2022¹⁵⁹ underlines the benefits of early employment both for new arrivals and for the hosting communities.

In June, the Commission provided detailed guidance on accessing the labour market, vocational education and training, and adult learning.¹⁶⁰

In July, the European Labour Authority (ELA) published the results of a mapping exercise on access to employment and social security for displaced people from Ukraine.¹⁶¹ The mapping exercise provides an overview of the legal framework and other public support instruments adopted at national level in connection with the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in the field of employment and social security. It also provides an overview of other national measures affecting the employment and/or social security of displaced people from Ukraine.

FRA ACTIVITY

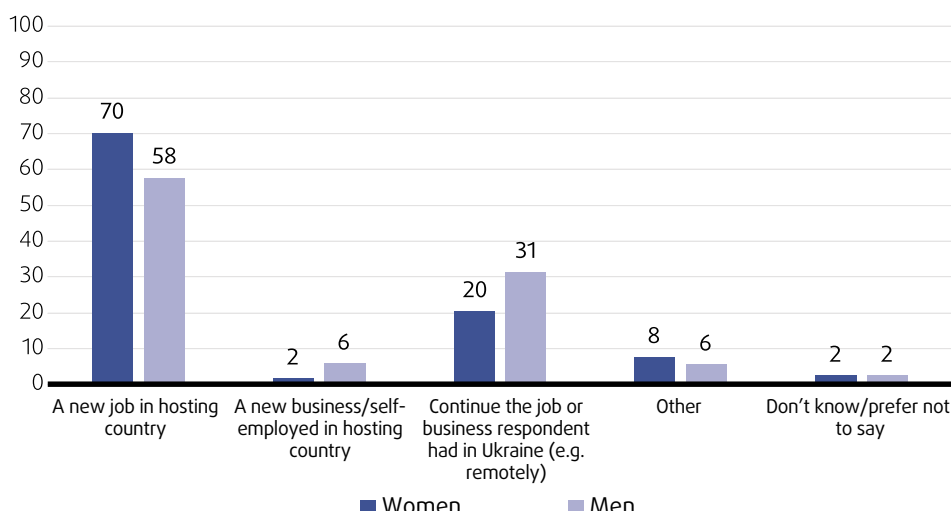
Working together with Eurofound and the European Labour Authority: enhancing synergies

FRA has been working together with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) to produce a joint paper on promoting the social inclusion and employment of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Similarly, FRA regularly contributes to the subgroup on tackling undeclared work among displaced people from Ukraine, which the ELA Platform Tackling Undeclared Work runs.

Sources: FRA (2022), 'European platform on undeclared work'; ELA (2022), 'European platform tackling undeclared work'

Beneficiaries of temporary protection generally enjoy access to the labour market and employment-related rights similar or equal to those of other third-country nationals in Member States, without needing to obtain a work permit. Among respondents to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey who were in paid work at the time of the survey, about two thirds had found a new job in the host Member State, and one in four continued working remotely in the job or business they had in Ukraine.¹⁶²

FIGURE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS' PAID WORK (%)



Source: FRA (2023), *Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU, Luxembourg*, Publications Office of the European Union

However, obstacles limiting access to employment remain. These include matching skills with jobs, overcoming language barriers, providing adequate information, recognising professional qualifications and improving the availability of childcare. Given that the majority of beneficiaries of temporary protection are women, many with responsibilities for caring for children and/or older people, access to childcare is a prerequisite to be able to work. Furthermore, there is concern that beneficiaries of temporary protection are more likely to be recruited for informal employment, which increases the risk of labour exploitation.



Provision of language training, information and tailored support

Displaced people typically find employment well below their level of education and qualifications, often in low-skilled jobs. For example, in **Czechia**, the results of a survey published in June 2022 show that, while some 45 % of adult beneficiaries of temporary protection have a university degree, about 80 % of those who are employed work in low-skilled occupations.¹⁶³ One reason for this could be language barriers. Another possible reason is the stereotypes about the nature of work women can easily do (e.g. cleaning).

Employment services and other authorities in some Member States are helping people overcome language barriers by offering language courses or referring people to other organisations providing such services. FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey found that every fourth respondent was attending a language course.¹⁶⁴

Sometimes private actors step in where the public ones are not active enough. As an illustration, in **Hungary**, IKEA offers an internship programme to people arriving from Ukraine, starting with an intensive Hungarian language course. Those who successfully complete the programme are offered employment.¹⁶⁵

Effectively providing information to displaced people about their right to work and available jobs also poses challenges. Central employment authorities, local authorities and other bodies inform people using various tools. Some Member States established dedicated portals to match beneficiaries of temporary protection looking for jobs with prospective employers. This was the case in, for example, **Czechia**,¹⁶⁶ **France**¹⁶⁷ and **Poland**.¹⁶⁸

In **Bulgaria**, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy operates a hotline to help with employment opportunities.¹⁶⁹

Recognition of professional qualifications and requirements

The Commission encourages Member States to swiftly issue decisions on the recognition of professional qualifications.¹⁷⁰ Many Member States have simplified procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications, often in sectors with a particular need for workers (e.g. in healthcare and education). For example, in **Romania**, Ukrainian nationals, but not other beneficiaries of temporary protection, could use an affidavit as a substitute for documents proving their professional qualifications or work experience.¹⁷¹

Legislation in **Hungary**¹⁷² and **Italy**¹⁷³ simplified the recruitment of beneficiaries of temporary protection in the healthcare sector. In Italy, this applied to Ukrainian nationals only.

Availability of childcare

For many adult beneficiaries of temporary protection arriving alone with young children – the overwhelming majority of whom are women – access to the labour market depends on access to childcare. Providing better access to childcare would allow women to enter the labour market, FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey confirmed. While this issue is closely linked to the availability of education for children (see Section 3.3), this section describes key challenges.

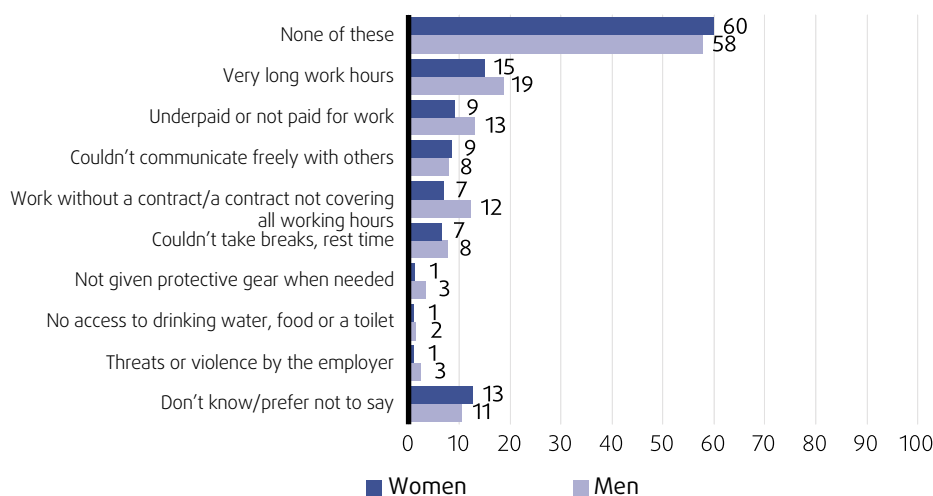
Although several EU Member States have increased their childcare capacity since the beginning of the war, this remains an issue, in particular in Member States with a systemic shortage of such facilities (e.g. **Ireland**¹⁷⁴ and **Slovakia**¹⁷⁵).

Initiatives to expand childcare capacities exist in a number of Member States, for example in **Poland**, which hosts the largest number of displaced children.¹⁷⁶

Risks of exploitation

Risks of sexual and labour exploitation were identified across the EU, and some cases of such exploitation were reported (e.g. in **Spain** and **Sweden**).¹⁷⁷ Cases of exploitative labour conditions (with no trafficking component) were also identified in several Member States. FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey also confirmed this: three in 10 respondents who were employed at the time of the survey experienced some form of exploitation at work.¹⁷⁸

FIGURE 3: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED EXPLOITATION AT WORK (%)



Source: FRA (2023), *Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union

For instance, in **Czechia**, the NGO La Strada International registered 123 cases of labour exploitation involving beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine.¹⁷⁹

The **Netherlands** Labour Authority received 80 reports from Ukrainians of underpayment, too long working hours or unsafe working situations, according to the media.¹⁸⁰ However, no cases of labour exploitation led to criminal charges.

ELA supported national efforts by providing targeted information campaigns for displaced people from Ukraine, by facilitating exchanges of good practices related to undeclared work and labour exploitation, and by conducting joint inspections of high-risk sectors for labour exploitation.¹⁸¹ ELA argues that, even though labour exploitation is not a criminal offence in all Member States, it must be adequately punished across the EU.¹⁸²

PROMISING PRACTICE

Joint actions of Member States to tackle sexual and labour exploitation

On 23 May 2022, 14 national law enforcement authorities took part in an online joint action day under the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats. The aim was to target criminal networks grooming Ukrainian refugees for sexual and labour exploitation through websites and social media platforms. It was coordinated by the **Netherlands** and supported by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, Frontex and ELA.

The online investigation focused on monitoring posts offering to help refugees with transport, accommodation and work. It also monitored dating sites, recruitment websites and platforms offering sexual services. As a result, nine suspected human traffickers and nine suspected victims of trafficking were identified.

Source: Europol (2022), 'Human traffickers luring Ukrainian refugees on the web targeted in EU-wide hackathon'

3.3. ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Article 14 of the Temporary Protection Directive obliges Member States to grant children enjoying temporary protection access to the education system under the same conditions as their own nationals. Article 14 of the Charter guarantees the right to education.

The Commission's March 2022 communication acknowledged that children need to keep in touch with their home language and culture. It called on Member States to ensure that children from Ukraine have a place in a school in their host country and that younger children can attend early childhood education from the 2022/2023 academic year, regardless of how long they intend to stay in the host country.¹⁸³

The EU has provided funding from Cohesion Policy funds and has established tools, such as the School Education Gateway, to help Member States ensure adequate access to education.¹⁸⁴



All Member States acted in line with their capacities to grant displaced children access to education, data collected by FRA indicate. They used varying approaches to integrate children into their national education systems (i.e. directly into mainstream education or through preparatory classes).¹⁸⁵

Enrolment and school capacity

Many Member States reported relatively low rates of enrolment of child beneficiaries of temporary protection in schools (e.g. **Romania**¹⁸⁶ and **Slovakia**; in the latter, beneficiaries of temporary protection are not subject to compulsory education¹⁸⁷). Many displaced children still used only remote education services provided from Ukraine. FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey confirmed this.¹⁸⁸ This raises concerns because physical school attendance is an essential aspect of a child's socialisation.

Some Member States achieved high levels of enrolment. In the **Netherlands**, for example, almost all of the 19,500 Ukrainian children of school age registered in the Personal Records Database had been enrolled in the Dutch educational system by July 2022, according to official statistics.¹⁸⁹

Schools, especially in cities and areas hosting a large number of displaced families, often lack capacity to enrol additional students. This was the case over the summer in **Czechia**, where more than a quarter of parents whose children were not enrolled in school quoted a lack of capacity or the school's refusal as a reason for non-enrolment.¹⁹⁰

In **Ireland**, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth stressed that there may not always be school places available in the areas where displaced people live.¹⁹¹

In **Croatia**, the Ministry of Science and Education and the Education and Teacher Training Agency issued guidelines for teachers and other educational staff in primary and secondary schools on inclusion of refugee students. They aim to raise awareness about their vulnerability and to build socio-emotional skills to enable a peaceful environment where children and young people learn to respect diversity.¹⁹²

Use of preparatory classes and availability of staff

Particularly in Member States with large numbers of displaced children (e.g. **Denmark**¹⁹³ and **Germany**¹⁹⁴), various forms of 'preparatory' or 'welcome' classes were used to prepare children to join mainstream classes. Several Member States quickly recognised the availability of teachers as a challenge. To overcome staff shortages, some Member States relaxed legal requirements for the recruitment of teachers and support staff (see also 'Recognition of professional qualifications and requirements' in Chapter 3.2). This happened, for instance, in **Czechia**,¹⁹⁵ **Luxembourg**,¹⁹⁶ the **Netherlands**,¹⁹⁷ **Poland**¹⁹⁸ and **Slovakia**.¹⁹⁹

Access to language classes

Language barriers are often the key obstacle in integrating child beneficiaries into national education systems. In **Slovakia**, 85 % of teachers who had contact with Ukrainian children perceive language as the biggest obstacle to their integration, according to a survey conducted by the Comenius Institute.²⁰⁰ Four in 10 respondents to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey who needed to learn the host country language to continue their education have not attended a language course since their arrival.²⁰¹

Several Member States (e.g. **Croatia**,²⁰² **Portugal**²⁰³ and **Slovenia**²⁰⁴) tackled this by providing intensive language courses.

However, in **Slovenia**, the Centre for Educational Analysis criticised these courses as being too short, being only for children aged 6–16 years and taking place only outside school hours.²⁰⁵

Impact on particular groups

Roma beneficiaries of temporary protection reportedly face obstacles in accessing education in some Member States. Research findings in **Poland** show that, while many Roma children – especially in smaller towns – could enter education, most did not, because of lack of sufficient information about access to schooling, insecure housing situations, the schools’ lack of preparedness to deal with foreign children, language barriers and the unwillingness of Roma parents to send their children to different schools.²⁰⁶

3.4. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

In accordance with Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive, Member States must ensure that beneficiaries of temporary protection receive the necessary assistance to access healthcare, at least including emergency care and essential treatment. Necessary medical assistance and other assistance (e.g. gynaecological healthcare, reproductive healthcare and paediatric healthcare, where relevant) need to be provided to beneficiaries, including those with special needs. Article 35 of the Charter provides for the right to access preventive healthcare and the right to benefit from medical treatment under conditions established by national laws and practices.



The Commission’s communication of March 2022 recommends that Member States provide beneficiaries of temporary protection with broad access to sickness benefits and that they affiliate them with their public healthcare systems. It also stressed that the standard child vaccinations should be prioritised, and highlighted the importance of free access to COVID-19 vaccinations. Providing mental health and trauma support is also of particular importance. In May 2022, the European Parliament issued a resolution on the impact on women of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, emphasising, among other things, that women and girls need uninterrupted access to sexual and reproductive health services, including access to safe delivery when giving birth, legal and safe abortion, and clinical management of rape.²⁰⁷

National legislation implementing the Temporary Protection Directive grants beneficiaries of temporary protection varying levels of access to healthcare, including mental health services.

Access to public healthcare systems

The scope of access to public healthcare systems depends on decisions of national authorities. It therefore varies among Member States. Some, for example **Bulgaria**,²⁰⁸ **Czechia**,²⁰⁹ **Estonia**,²¹⁰ **Germany**,²¹¹ **Italy**,²¹² **Latvia**²¹³ and the **Netherlands**,²¹⁴ entitle beneficiaries of temporary protection to the same public health services as citizens. Others, such as **Slovakia**²¹⁵ and **Slovenia**,²¹⁶ entitle beneficiaries of temporary protection to only emergency healthcare (although in Slovenia a medical committee may approve broader healthcare access).

Cases of doctors refusing services to beneficiaries of temporary protection were reported in various Member States. Refusals were mainly due to lack of capacity (e.g. in **Slovakia**²¹⁷) and discrimination (e.g. in **Romania**²¹⁸). Other practical barriers to accessing medical services often relate to administrative issues and lack of interpretation services. In **Poland**,²¹⁹ to address the issue of interpretation, an application was recently developed to facilitate communication between doctors and Ukrainian-speaking patients.²²⁰

Access to children's vaccines was also made available for beneficiaries of temporary protection in some countries, including **Hungary**, the **Netherlands**, **Poland** and **Slovakia**.²²¹

Mental health support

Many people fleeing the war had traumatic experiences and may need psychosocial care. In most cases, mental health support is provided to beneficiaries of temporary protection as part of their access to public healthcare.

Support is also provided by specialised staff in accommodation facilities, through helplines or online (e.g. in **Italy** – through the Italian Red Cross²²² – and in **Slovakia**²²³).

Psychological support requires sufficient knowledge of the language of displaced people. In some Member States, such as **Estonia**²²⁴ and **Greece**,²²⁵ national authorities or NGOs employed Ukrainian professionals to assist in the provision of this support.

An increasing need for mental health support was noted in some Member States, including **Czechia**²²⁶ and **Hungary**.²²⁷ Barriers to accessing mental health support were also reported (e.g. in **Hungary**²²⁸ and **Poland**²²⁹).

Impact on particular groups

In **Slovakia**, mental health services for women who experienced sexual violence were practically unavailable owing to a lack of specialists, as a coalition of NGOs reported.²³⁰ The NGO Tenenet reported that care for people with disabilities was not systematically provided and largely depended on assistance from NGOs.²³¹

In **Czechia**, healthcare providers allegedly denied some Roma access to healthcare, according to NGOs.²³²

Researchers in **Poland** reported that displaced Roma might hesitate to access healthcare, owing to prior experiences of discrimination and lack of trust in authorities.²³³

3.5. ACCESS TO SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

In accordance with Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive, Member States must ensure that beneficiaries of temporary protection receive the necessary assistance in terms of social welfare if they do not have sufficient resources. Article 34 of the Charter recognises the right to social and housing assistance, which ensures a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources.

Access to social welfare services for beneficiaries of temporary protection varies across Member States. Many Member States link the provision of allowances to temporary protection status and provide support through either general social welfare schemes or specifically established support schemes, including regular, limited or one-off payments. Still, particular challenges remain, notably the scope of assistance provided; delays in processing payments; and factors that disqualify certain groups or limit such groups' access to social allowances in practice, affecting Roma in particular.

Scope of social assistance

Several Member States determine the scope of social assistance based on the temporary protection status, nationality or type of residence permit of displaced people from Ukraine (e.g. **Cyprus**,²³⁴ **Poland**²³⁵ and **Romania**²³⁶). This limits the assistance provided to the displaced people in comparison with that provided to their own nationals.

Some Member States provide access to general assistance schemes that are available to their nationals (e.g. **Belgium**,²³⁷ **Germany**,²³⁸ and **Poland**²³⁹). In **Poland**, temporary protection beneficiaries can also receive a one-off payment of PLN 300 (€ 64) per person.²⁴⁰

Some Member States established specific social assistance schemes for people displaced from Ukraine (e.g. **Cyprus**²⁴¹). Others align social assistance with the benefits available to third-country nationals and asylum applicants (e.g. **Austria**,²⁴² **Finland**²⁴³ and the **Netherlands**²⁴⁴).

Limited amounts paid and local variance in payments are the most widely reported challenges for beneficiaries of temporary protection in many Member States. For example, in **Sweden**, NGOs claimed that the level of financial support for beneficiaries of temporary protection was insufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living.²⁴⁵

Processing of requests

The administrative burden involved in processing requests for social assistance allowances, combined with language barriers and a lack of documentation, led to delays in payments. This is the case in **Belgium**, where considerable work pressure was reported,²⁴⁶ **Finland**,²⁴⁷ and **Slovenia**, where delays were mainly due to staff shortages.²⁴⁸

Impact on particular groups

In **Romania**, some beneficiaries of temporary protection could not access social benefits because they could not meet the requirements, such as the need for both parents to be in Romania to receive child allowances.²⁴⁹

In **Cyprus**, many Ukrainians with disabilities who had applied for social assistance in spring 2022 had not received the second instalment of their payment by July 2022.²⁵⁰ This has been resolved since then and the lump amount is now provided to the Ukrainians in one instalment.

According to NGOs, social welfare services in **Czechia** are not prepared for vulnerable groups with multiple needs.²⁵¹

4 ADDRESSING FURTHER CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE ARRIVAL OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

This section focuses on two fundamental rights challenges that are directly related to the arrival of large numbers of people displaced by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. They concern (i) victims of violence, including sexual violence, and (ii) xenophobic disinformation and hate crime. These forms of abuse may also affect others than people displaced from Ukraine, including Russians, Russian speakers or visible minorities.

4.1. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

The Victims' Rights Directive²⁵² grants all victims of crime the right to information and the right to support services, including trauma support and counselling for women who are victims of gender-based violence. Rights under the directive apply to victims in a non-discriminatory manner, irrespective of their residence status. These rights therefore extend to beneficiaries of temporary protection and any third-country nationals.

In addition, offering support to victims of physical and sexual violence committed during armed conflict can be a first step towards granting them redress and, ultimately, access to judicial proceedings if cases are prosecuted and come to court – in accordance with Article 47 of the Charter.

In November 2022, judicial practitioners from **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia** and Ukraine took part in a workshop on investigating and prosecuting crimes related to sexual violence. The event was organised by the Genocide Network Secretariat, hosted by Eurojust; the European Judicial Training Network; and the European Commission.²⁵³

Provision of information for victims

To allow victims to assess the offers of assistance available to them, it is crucial to provide them with comprehensive and tailored information about their rights and practical options. This provides victims with some control over their situation. The European Network on Victims' Rights expanded the 'Find my victim support service' online tool to include support services available to victims of war crimes.²⁵⁴

A number of Member States introduced initiatives to inform women from Ukraine who are victims of gender-based violence about their rights in the EU, in particular to overcome language barriers. These include **Austria**,²⁵⁵ **Belgium**,²⁵⁶ **Germany**,²⁵⁷ **Greece**,²⁵⁸ **Poland**²⁵⁹ and **Slovakia**.²⁶⁰

Provision of victim support

Article 9 (3) of the Victims' Rights Directive provides that targeted and integrated support services, including trauma support and counselling, must be available to victims of violence.

Civil society organisations in many EU Member States play an active role in providing such services. This is the case in **Belgium**,²⁶¹ **Germany**,²⁶² **Poland**²⁶³ and **Slovakia**.²⁶⁴

For women who are victims of rape and fall pregnant as a result, smooth access to abortion services can help them cope with their victimisation. However, in some Member States, support for victims of sexual violence does not include fast and unhindered access to abortion beyond 12 weeks from the beginning of pregnancy (e.g. in **Poland**²⁶⁵ and **Slovakia**²⁶⁶).

In **Belgium**, the government of the Brussels Region approved the funding of two organisations supporting the reception of women from Ukraine who are victims of sexual violence. That is part of an approach to create a low-threshold procedure that encourages victims to talk in their own language about the violence they have encountered.²⁶⁷

FRA ACTIVITY

Survey on violence and related human rights abuses against women fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As part of its response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, in 2023 FRA will carry out a survey collecting data on the extent and forms of violence experienced by women from Ukraine who have arrived in the EU.

This survey will examine the types of support and assistance that should be provided to women victims of violence and the adequacy of existing support measures. The survey interviews will take place in **Czechia**, **Germany** and **Poland** – three EU Member States that are among the countries with the highest numbers of arrivals from Ukraine.

It will ask questions related to violence and other human rights abuses the women have experienced, whether in Ukraine as a result of the conflict, during their journey to the EU or in their current country of residence in the EU. The abuses considered include attempted or actual sexual or other exploitation.

As far as possible, the survey questions will be aligned with FRA and EIGE's Violence against Women Survey II, which will also be collecting data in 2023.

4.2. XENOPHOBIC DISINFORMATION AND HATE CRIME

The fight against hate crime is intimately linked to several Charter rights, including the rights to life, human dignity, equal treatment and freedom of expression. Article 1 of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA obliges Member States to punish public incitement "to violence or hatred directed against a group of people or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin by public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material".²⁶⁸

Europeans largely feel sympathy for people displaced from Ukraine, opinion polls and surveys show. Nevertheless, hate speech (particularly online), harassment and even violence were reported in some countries. Xenophobic disinformation and hate speech are particularly widespread on social media, with Roma from Ukraine specifically targeted. The majority of xenophobic hate speech cases FRA identified are related to Ukrainian speakers, but Russian speakers or persons perceived as Russians also experienced increased hate speech.²⁶⁹

There is a lack of comprehensive figures on the number of incidents of xenophobic disinformation and hate speech. This is partially because these crimes are often underreported and partially because authorities do not systematically record information on nationality.

Member States have various measures in place to combat disinformation online and offline. Only a few authorities or NGOs (e.g. the NGO In Iustitia in **Czechia**²⁷⁰) initiated targeted action or launched specific measures countering xenophobic disinformation. However, fact-checking and content removal initiatives in some Member States (e.g. **Poland**²⁷¹ and **Slovakia**²⁷²) specifically target this type of content.



FRA opinions

Beneficiaries of temporary protection – the majority of whom are women and children – must have access to suitable accommodation or, if necessary, be provided with the means to obtain housing, as Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive stipulates. In addition, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Charter) protects the right to housing assistance, to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources (Article 34).

In several Member States, however, obstacles remain to providing suitable and safe accommodation. These are notably difficulties in making long-term arrangements, ensuring access to housing assistance and systematically vetting private accommodation providers. The findings of FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey confirm this: six out of 10 respondents were, at the time of the survey, staying in a private apartment or house. Lack of privacy (noted by 36 % of respondents) and lack of a quiet/separate room for children to study (noted by 23 % of respondents) were stated as problems. In addition, more than half of the respondents had to pay for their accommodation in full or in part.



FRA OPINION 1.1

Given the particular needs of displaced people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, EU Member States should, where possible, prioritise finding suitable accommodation fit for long-term purposes. EU Member States should verify that private housing is affordable, safe and suitable, particularly for women and children. Those offering housing should receive some form of financial or other compensation.

Successful housing solutions for displaced people from Ukraine should also inform long-term strategies to address housing shortages more generally for asylum applicants in many Member States. Guidance and support provided by relevant EU agencies, such as FRA and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), can help implement such measures in a way that respects fundamental rights.



FRA OPINION 1.2

Member States should assist beneficiaries of temporary protection in finding employment, with registered employers, suited to their qualifications and skills. This could be carried out by further promoting the EU Talent Pool Pilot, established by the European Cooperation Network of Employment Services (EURES) under the European Labour Authority (ELA). This pilot facilitates matching the skills of beneficiaries of temporary protection with registered employers. To protect displaced people from the risk of exploitation at work, ELA and Member States' labour inspectorates should step up and intensify their cooperation, including through joint inspections in high-risk sectors. Labour inspections should be implemented to improve information provision and as awareness-raising opportunities, alongside monitoring and enforcement actions concerning employment conditions.

According to Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive, the general national legislation in Member States applicable to remuneration, access to social security systems relating to employed or self-employed activities and other conditions of employment must also apply to beneficiaries of temporary protection. Articles 1 and 31 of the Charter guarantee the fundamental rights to human dignity and to fair and just working conditions.

Overall, however, two thirds of respondents to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey aged 16+ were not in paid work at the time of the survey. Among those who were in paid work, three out of 10 respondents experienced some form of exploitation at work. FRA's past research has found that these infringements are not always adequately punished, and that the Employers Sanctions Directive protects only migrants in an irregular situation against severe exploitation in employment relationships.

Under Article 14 of the Temporary Protection Directive, EU Member States are obliged to grant children enjoying temporary protection access to education under the same conditions as their own nationals. However, the school enrolment of children displaced from Ukraine continues to be low owing to lack of school space, insufficient numbers of staff or language barriers.

Almost two thirds of children displaced from Ukraine attend online education provided by Ukrainian authorities, as shown by the findings of FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey. More than one quarter of those aged 12–15 noted not having a stable place to live as the main reason for not attending school, and one fifth indicated not being accepted to a school as the main reason.

A lack of childcare facilities is also an important obstacle to accessing employment, notably for women, who represent the majority of adults displaced from Ukraine, FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey confirmed.



FRA OPINION 1.3

EU Member States should strengthen efforts to ensure displaced children from Ukraine are integrated in ordinary schools and childcare facilities as early as possible with due consideration for their language and culture. Particular attention should be paid to children with disabilities, notably those who were living in institutional facilities, to ensure that their specific needs for accessibility and additional support are duly addressed. This integration would facilitate their socialisation and add normality to their daily life. National and EU funding should be used to provide language classes, to increase numbers of staff and to increase childcare and school capacities.



FRA OPINION 1.4

As the majority of those fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine are women – many with responsibilities for caring for children and/or older people – the provision of access to specific services needs to be gender sensitive and targeted. Services also need to include support for those who have experienced sexual violence and exploitation. Although the Temporary Protection Directive was drafted in a gender-neutral way, the application by EU Member States of its provisions concerning access to accommodation, employment, education, healthcare and social welfare services should not be ‘gender blind’. In their efforts in this regard, Member States should consider seeking the support of relevant EU agencies such as the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and FRA.

The great majority of the 4 million people having fled the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine who registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in the EU by year-end are women – many with responsibilities for caring for children and/or older people. One of the main barriers to accessing employment – alongside insufficient knowledge of the language of the host country – is caring responsibilities, according to the findings of FRA’s 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey. Yet measures by EU Member States have unevenly taken into account this gender perspective and the special needs of displaced women.

Risks of sexual exploitation were also identified across the EU, with a number of cases reported and investigated. Article 20 (equality before the law) and Article 21 (non-discrimination) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights require extra efforts and positive targeted action from national authorities to ensure widespread equal access to all rights and services offered by the Temporary Protection Directive for all displaced people fleeing the war.

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Temporary Protection Directive, the activation of the temporary protection scheme for displaced people fleeing the war against Ukraine does not prevent those people from exercising their right to apply for asylum. About one third of respondents to FRA's 2022 Fleeing Ukraine survey lodged an asylum application. However, the proportion of people applying for asylum varies among EU Member States.

People leaving conflict and violence may be fleeing such situations in circumstances and with certain characteristics that qualify them as refugees or other beneficiaries of international protection under the EU asylum *acquis*. Recital 12 and Article 3 (5) of the directive both confirm that granting temporary protection does not affect the prerogative of the Member States to provide more favourable protection statuses.

The protracted war and the subsequent impossibility of safe return even when the war ends require that Member States implement durable solutions protecting the displaced people once the extended temporary protection expires. If such solutions are not implemented, the displaced people risk ending up in a state of uncertainty and without self-sustaining integration prospects in their host Member States.



FRA OPINION 1.5

Member States should ensure that meaningful legal avenues are mobilised to offer a smooth transition from temporary protection status to other protection statuses under either EU or national law, in a sustainable manner, once the EU temporary protection scheme ends. The use of these durable protection statuses, including group-based status determination and channels leading to long-term residence, should also be backed by EU financial support schemes to alleviate the long-term costs of integrating displaced people from Ukraine into host societies.

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PROMOTING AND PROTECTING YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ACROSS THE EU —

Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted in massive internal and external population displacement. The European Union (EU) rapidly activated its Temporary Protection Directive for the first time since it was adopted in 2001. This entitled nearly 4 million people to legal residence and access to work, housing and legal assistance, education and healthcare.

The invasion triggered a tremendous wave of support and solidarity from governments, local authorities and society. It revealed how the EU and its Member States could effectively and respectfully manage a large and sudden influx of people.

This focus looks at the fundamental rights impact of the war in the EU. It shines a light on the specific needs of women and girls, the largest proportion of those who fled, and of marginalised groups, such as Roma. Services also need to include support for those who have experienced sexual violence and exploitation. The focus also examines general challenges that need addressing.



FRA – EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Schwarzenbergplatz 11 - 1040 Vienna - Austria

T +43 (1) 580 30 - 0 - F +43 (1) 580 30 - 699

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