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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

**Temporary protection for those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: one  
year on**

## 1. Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russia started an unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. This was met with an unprecedented and unified response by the European Union and the international community. **A key component of that response was the unanimous decision by Member States on a proposal of the Commission to activate the Temporary Protection Directive<sup>1</sup>.** On 4 March 2022, just one week after the start of the war, millions of displaced persons fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine were given immediate access to the labour market, education and vocational training, healthcare, and accommodation in the EU. The Directive's activation was complemented on 28 March 2022 with a 10-Point Plan<sup>2</sup> on stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Temporary protection has already been extended until March 2024.

One year on, the use of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) stands as testament to the **Union's unity and solidarity** with the people of Ukraine, in the face of unprecedented challenges. Activated for the very first time, the Directive allowed the Union to provide immediate protection while **reducing formalities to the minimum**. It complemented such protection with a **comprehensive and harmonised set of rights**, including residency rights, suitable accommodation, access to education and training, healthcare and to the labour market. It gave structure to the remarkable welcome offered by so many Europeans, their families, and communities. Today, some four million people enjoy temporary protection in the EU. Of these, 47% are women and more than one third are children, whose protection remains a critical priority. The implementation of the Directive has not been without challenges but thanks to the continued efforts of the EU institutions and Member States, the Directive continues to successfully deliver.

This Communication takes stock of the Directive's implementation over one year, building on the Communication 'Welcoming those fleeing the Russian aggression towards Ukraine: Readyng Europe to meet the needs'<sup>3</sup> adopted on 23 March 2022. It provides insight into how the EU managed to enable and coordinate a genuine whole-of-society response to the largest displacement on European soil since the Second World War. It also identifies priority areas where continued efforts are needed to guarantee the rights provided for in the Directive.

Furthermore, this Communication will offer some reflections on the way forward to preserve some key lessons learned and make the EU more resilient and better able to adapt to future challenges.

## 2. Situational picture

As of February 2023, more than 16 million entries from Ukraine and Moldova into the EU have been recorded, out of which 14 million were Ukrainian nationals. Border crossings from the EU to Ukraine and to Moldova amounted to more than 11 million<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [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.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The 10-Point Plan For stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war from Ukraine.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Welcoming those fleeing war in Ukraine: Readyng Europe to meet the needs.](#)

<sup>4</sup> The cumulative number of entries into the EU from Ukraine and Moldova does not include entries by Romanian and Moldovan nationals from Moldova to Romania. Available data does not allow us to

Entries were significantly higher during the first month of the Russian aggression, with a weekly average of 800 000 entries from Ukraine and Moldova into the EU, reaching peaks of over 200 000 daily entries heavily affecting Member States at the border with Ukraine. From April 2022 onwards, the trend stabilised to around 240 000 entries per week and the number of border crossings between the EU and Ukraine went back to pre-aggression and pre-pandemic levels.

Overall, nearly 4 million registrations for temporary protection were recorded in the EU, out of which more than 3 million in the first half of 2022. Since June 2022, the number of weekly registrations for temporary protection has been declining steadily, albeit with some fluctuations. In total, as of 26 February, on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, there are 90 187 foreign citizens, out of which 84 038 are Ukrainian nationals and 44 751 are minors.

At the end of 2022, almost half of the total current beneficiaries of temporary protection (3.8 million)<sup>5</sup> were hosted in Germany and Poland, followed by Czechia, Italy, and Spain. Estonia, Poland and Czechia host the highest number of beneficiaries of temporary protection per capita. Most beneficiaries are Ukrainian nationals, with around 70 000 nationals of third countries other than Ukraine enjoying temporary protection at the end of 2022.

Those fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine to the EU are predominantly adult women (47 %) and children (34 %). Around 69 % of the displaced children were under 13 years of age and 0.5 % were registered as unaccompanied minors.

The activation of the Temporary Protection Directive ensured that asylum systems across Member States would not be overwhelmed with protection requests. Ukrainian nationals were the ninth largest group during 2022 for applications for international protection (28 160).

Based on the EU's cooperation with international partners, so far over 400 000 people displaced from Ukraine travelled onwards to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom and benefitted from their respective protection schemes. Another 900 000 visas and applications for temporary residency have been approved by these countries.

### **3. Response to the crisis: a strong EU coordinated effort**

The activation and the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive required unprecedented coordination and cooperation among Member States and their respective administrations, Commission services, the Agencies of the European Union, the European External Action Service, and international organisations.

The **Solidarity Platform 'Ukraine'**<sup>6</sup> set up by the Commission immediately after the activation of the Directive has played a crucial role in ensuring such coordinated response. It provides a framework for regular exchanges and ensures coherence between existing fora at EU level. It has addressed a wide range of issues, from border management to the protection of minors, access to education, employment access, vocational education and training and

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distinguish how much of this is normal border traffic and how many are fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Figures on entries and exits indicate the number of cross-border movements not single individuals. The difference between total entries and exits indicates the number of cross-border movements not single individuals. The difference between total entries and exits by Ukrainian nationals includes entries by both EU nationals and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine. Over 300 000 nationals of third countries other than Ukraine entered the EU from Ukraine and Moldova, the main nationalities being Turkish, US citizens, Russians, Israelis, Indians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, UK citizens, Moldovans and Uzbeks.

<sup>5</sup> [Beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of the month by citizenship, age and sex – monthly data.](#)

<sup>6</sup> The Solidarity Platform brings together the European Commission, Council Secretariat, the European External Action Service, EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries, EU Agencies, international organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as Ukrainian and Moldovan authorities.

adult learning, as well as going home back to Ukraine and onward movements from one Member State to another.

The Solidarity Platform also focused on increasing the overall preparedness at EU level by developing contingency measures in case of increased arrivals from Ukraine, on security aspects and prevention of trafficking in human beings and engaged regularly with local and regional authorities as well as with civil society organisations.

The Solidarity Platform's dedicated sub-groups, for instance on the transfers of displaced persons from Moldova and on the Temporary Protection Registration Platform, played a crucial role in strengthening cooperation and meeting continuously arising challenges.

Furthermore, the Solidarity Platform has proven its added value in the overall coordination of the EU response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, by offering a flexible and informal framework for the quick adoption of soft policy documents (e.g., replies to Frequently Asked Questions made available online, Standard Operating Procedures). Member States and other stakeholders consider it to be a good practice to replicate in the future.

### 3.1. Accurate data

Since the adoption of the Council Implementing Decision<sup>7</sup>, the Commission has made a substantial effort to coordinate the exchange of information between Member States. Collection of data has been one of the main challenges of the overall coordination under the current exceptional circumstances, but the situation has improved steadily thanks to the actions taken.

Since the onset of the crisis, the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis **Blueprint Network**<sup>8</sup> has held over a hundred meetings followed by written reports, providing a common situational awareness of the migratory implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the EU's and Member States' preparedness. It works in full complementarity with other fora, such as the Solidarity Platform, the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements, and the European Migration Network and as part of the overall coordination for Ukraine at EU level.

The EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) played a crucial role in swiftly setting up a system to collect data on daily registrations for temporary protection. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) also stepped up in support to managing the EU external borders, providing timely information on the situation at the border, planning different scenarios on the possible evolution and initiating an operational response, including capacity building and monitoring of cross-border crime threats in the area. The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) provided further information on the implementation of the Directive in several Member States through periodic bulletins.

Crucially, as a follow-up to the 10-Point Plan of 28 March 2022, the **Temporary Protection Registration Platform** was developed in just six weeks. 25 Member States are exchanging information on beneficiaries of temporary protection and of adequate protection available

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<sup>7</sup> [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.](#)

<sup>8</sup> This Network responds to the need to provide an accurate, updated and joint situational picture as a basis for swift political and operational decision making. It monitors cross-border movements from Ukraine into the EU, first reception and implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive, including trends of weekly registrations and in-depth information on access to education, employment and healthcare. [Commission recommendation \(EU\) 2020/1366 of 23 September 2020 on an EU mechanism for preparedness and management of crises related to migration.](#)

under national law to detect double registrations within the same Member State and across EU Member States.

### **3.2. Provision of information**

The Commission created a network of information hubs, notably with the support of the EUAA, embedded within the existing network of major transportation hubs in Member States, facilitating onwards movement of people fleeing Russian aggression and entering the EU as well as providing key information of authorities and other official sources of information.

Following the activation of the Directive, the Commission rapidly launched a communication campaign to inform people fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine about their rights. This was a key feature of the central EU website on ‘EU Solidarity with Ukraine’<sup>9</sup>. The website, translated in Ukrainian and Russian, includes practical information for people fleeing the Russian aggression and arriving in the EU and an interactive map with key contact points in each Member State.

In parallel, *ad hoc* communication actions were carried out on the prevention of trafficking in human beings, awareness of misinformation, the Safe Homes initiative and the Talent Pool Pilot for people fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The Commission also made the EU helpline<sup>10</sup> available in Ukrainian and Russian. Communication and information actions are closely coordinated with EU Member States, the EUAA as well as other relevant stakeholders, including Ukrainian authorities. On 24 February 2023, the Commission launched the webpage of one year of Ukrainian resistance<sup>11</sup>.

### **3.3. Scope of the temporary protection**

Temporary protection covers persons who left Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 because of Russia’s military invasion and who fall under the personal scope of the Council Implementing Decision<sup>12</sup>. In practice, many Member States extended the scope of protection to Ukrainian nationals who entered their territory prior to 24 February 2022.

The Council Implementing Decision that activated the Temporary Protection Directive also protects nationals of third countries other than Ukraine and stateless persons that were permanently residing in Ukraine prior to 24 February 2022 and who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin<sup>13</sup>.

In many Member States third-country nationals who had other temporary rights to stay in Ukraine, e.g., students<sup>14</sup> also benefitted from the rights attached to temporary protection. In most but not all Member States, other third-country nationals who are beneficiaries of temporary protection fall under the same administrative procedures as Ukrainian nationals<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> [EU Solidarity with Ukraine.](#)

<sup>10</sup> [EU Helpline.](#)

<sup>11</sup> [One year of Ukrainian resistance.](#)

<sup>12</sup> Articles 2(1) and 2(2) of the Council Implementing Decision.

<sup>13</sup> The Decision provides that for these categories of people, Member States shall apply either temporary protection or adequate protection under national law. Most Member States avoided applying two-track systems and third-country nationals and stateless persons who held a permanent residence in Ukraine benefitted for the rights attached to temporary protection, rather than from other forms of adequate protection available under national law.

<sup>14</sup> Though one year after the beginning of the aggression, such provisions are being stopped in some Member States, such as the Netherlands.

<sup>15</sup> In Poland, third-country nationals are administratively managed through the Bureau of Foreigners.

At the same time, Member States who decided to apply a form of protection other than temporary protection<sup>16</sup> to nationals of third countries other than Ukraine took measures to ensure an expedited registration process to give life to the ensuing rights at the same speed as for the Ukrainian nationals. In any case, it remains important that no administrative procedure create undue delays for enjoying the rights attached to temporary protection<sup>17</sup>.

As of November 2022, around 70 000 nationals of third countries other than Ukraine received temporary protection across the EU, in addition to just under 300 stateless persons<sup>18</sup>.

### **3.4. Access to registration and documentation**

To translate temporary protection into reality, Member States quickly set up expedited procedures for registration and issuance of documentation. In this way, Member States' authorities managed to swiftly provide protection where traditional asylum systems might have been overwhelmed.

Most displaced people fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine arrived in possession of official documentation or biometric passports, which facilitated the eligibility check for temporary protection. In addition, innovations in information provision, registration and document issuance helped granting fast access to the rights attached to temporary protection. This included automatic push messages, digital registration, and subsequent processing, and sometimes issuance of digital IDs. Where people lacked the required documentation, most Member States aligned with the Commission's guidance to ease requirements when allowing entry.

In many Member States, the Ukrainian embassies and consulates provided important support, stepping in to (re-)issue passports, or provide other certificates of civil status. The use of specific mobile applications (such as the Ukrainian application DiiA), allowing displaced persons to access their digital documents, as well as information on public services, was also promoted. 'One-stop-shops' and other fast-track arrangements helped speed up practical access to services.

According to a survey conducted by the FRA in August 2022, most respondents reported that they did not face difficulties when travelling into and within the EU and most felt that they were provided with enough information on their rights and on the services available to them<sup>19</sup>.

There have been different reports of sporadic difficulties encountered by some third-country nationals as well as Roma and other disadvantaged groups (e.g., LGBTIQ people and also persons with disabilities) in accessing temporary protection. More specifically, some Roma encountered difficulties in accessing protection in the absence of documentation from Ukraine at the moment of arrival in the EU; persons with disabilities had difficulties in accessing specific types of support due to lack of recognition of disability certificates or other documentation. The FRA has noted the need for more comprehensive data in this regard as well as the need for targeted action.

In line with its position that all people who are fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine should be granted access to the EU, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or skin colour, the Commission took contact at all levels with EU Member States, Ukrainian authorities, and

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<sup>16</sup> Austria, Estonia, Greece and Sweden.

<sup>17</sup> Austria and Estonia for instance are applying fast-track procedures.

<sup>18</sup> [Beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of the month by citizenship, age and sex – monthly data.](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU.](#)



the Republic of Moldova to ensure that the safe arrival of third-country nationals, Roma and other disadvantaged groups was facilitated.

The Commission will continue working with Member States to ensure that all measures supporting persons displaced from Ukraine in the EU are implemented in full respect of fundamental rights and non-discrimination requirements stemming from EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and international law<sup>20</sup>. Specific measures need to be taken from the moment of first arrival, leading to reception and integration, to address the needs of vulnerable groups who are at a greater risk of discrimination, sexual and labour exploitation and abuse, as well as human trafficking, for example different categories of vulnerable children<sup>21</sup> and women.

With temporary protection prolonged until March 2024, the challenge for Member States' administrations is to renew residence permits. Member States are adopting various models to do so, from automatic prolongation of chips, to mailing new cards or in-person renewal at the relevant administrative office. The Commission encourages the Member States to continue their commitment and efforts to accelerate the issuance or renewal of residence permits. To facilitate free movement inside the EU, Member States should register the specimen of residence permits issued by Member States (Annex 22 and 23 of the Practical Handbook for Border Guards) and all the different newly nationally issued residence IDs related to temporary protection in the Schengen Information System.

#### **4. A whole-of-society approach**

The coordinated response to the large displacement of people fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine has touched all sectors of society in the EU. With the contribution of private citizens, social partners, non-governmental organisations, public authorities, and international organisations, the EU managed to provide a coherent response, giving life to the rights enshrined in the Temporary Protection Directive.

##### **4.1. Special protection for children**

Child protection has been central to the EU's support to persons fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Currently close to one fifth of Ukraine's children are taking refuge in the EU.

Of the large number of children arriving from Ukraine to the EU, few have been registered as unaccompanied or separated children within the meaning of EU law<sup>22</sup>. This is because numerous children arrive accompanied by a guardian appointed in Ukraine, including over

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<sup>20</sup> [Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council implementing Decision 2022/382 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 2022/C 126 I/01](#).

<sup>21</sup> [Unaccompanied and Separated Children fleeing from war in Ukraine - Frequently Asked Questions on Registration, Reception and Care](#).

<sup>22</sup> 'Unaccompanied minor' means third-country nationals or stateless persons below the age of eighteen, who arrive on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or custom, and for as long as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person, or minors who are left unaccompanied after they have entered the territory of the Member States (Art. 2 (f) of the Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC).

A 'separated child' is a child who arrives on the territory of the Member States accompanied by relatives or known (non-related) adults, whereby sometimes the latter have been provided by the parent(s) an authorisation to travel with the child and/or provide temporary care (example: Ukrainian mother traveling with her own children and those of another family).

5 000 evacuated from Ukrainian institutions, together with their guardians. These children are particularly vulnerable and a considerable number of them are children with disabilities.

The modalities of arrival and specific protection needs raised challenges for host Member States. In the early stages of the displacement, challenges were related to ensuring the **registration** of unaccompanied and separated children, and of children arriving with Ukrainian guardians and of groups of children from institutionalised care facilities.

Since the early stages of the conflict, the Commission engaged closely with the relevant stakeholders in the Member States, and will continue to do so, to ensure that these multiple challenges are addressed in a comprehensive and coherent manner.

While recognising the legitimate concerns of the Ukrainian stakeholders to maintain unity and keep track of these particularly vulnerable categories of children, it is important to ensure a high standard of reception and care in a de-institutionalised environment<sup>23</sup>, so that children are hosted in line with EU standards of community and family-based care. The EU stands ready to work with the Ukrainian authorities to identify solutions that allow high quality alternative care for the members of the group while preserving close contacts among the members of the group and with their Ukrainian guardian. It will be important to ensure that support and protection are tailored in consideration of age, gender, abilities, and other forms of diversity according to the individual needs of each child.

In the Operational Guidance on the application of the Temporary Protection Directive<sup>24</sup>, the Commission advised on how to register each category of children during transit and in the country where they take up temporary protection. As part of the 10-Point Plan, the Commission worked closely with experts and stakeholders to identify the specific challenges related to reception and care for the most vulnerable categories of children arriving from Ukraine. This work resulted in comprehensive recommendations, published in the form of a ‘Frequently Asked Questions document on the registration, reception and care for unaccompanied and separated children from Ukraine<sup>25</sup>’.

The Commission is closely collaborating with UNICEF to secure appropriate reception and care in the host Member States for children evacuated as groups from the Ukrainian institutions and to support Ukraine’s de-institutionalisation reform. In addition, the EU is working closely with its Ukrainian counterparts on how best to assist the Ukrainian authorities and Ukrainian parents or legal guardians with tracing **missing children**, in full respect of EU data protection legislation and of the rights of the children and their representatives.

Another issue relates to the **recognition of guardianship decisions from Ukraine**. There are still reports of difficulties encountered in the Member States in obtaining direct recognition of guardianship decisions issued by the relevant authorities in Ukraine, although both Ukraine

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<sup>23</sup> The Union attaches importance to de-institutionalisation which is reflected in the general EU policy framework. For instance, the Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee provides that “with the aim of the de-institutionalisation of children, quality community-based or family-based care should be promoted. Placing children in institutional care should be done only when it is in the best interests of the child, taking into account the child’s overall situation and considering the child’s individual needs.”

<sup>24</sup> [Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council implementing Decision 2022/382 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.](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Frequently Asked Questions on registration, reception and care for unaccompanied and separated children fleeing from war in Ukraine.](#)



and the Member States apply the 1996 Hague Child Protection Convention<sup>26</sup>. Stakeholders also signal that, months after arrival in the EU, relations between children and their Ukrainian guardians are starting to deteriorate as these arrangements were often conceived as temporary. This will pose new challenges to child protection services in the Member States. Some Member States took early steps to prevent this trend by appointing local guardians to support and guide the Ukrainian guardians.

The Commission also collaborated closely with the European Guardianship Network, which collected and made available good practices developed in the Member States in relation to the reception and care for vulnerable children<sup>27</sup>. The challenges related to the protection of children have also been explored together with the Member States in various meetings of the Solidarity Platform and in dedicated technical meetings with the countries who received most children evacuated from Ukrainian institutions.

Moving forward, **targeted financial assistance will be mobilised**. In Kyiv in February 2023, President von der Leyen announced EU support to a de-institutionalisation reform in Ukraine. Prior to the Russian invasion, Ukraine had over 100 000 children in institutional care and Ukraine wants to move towards community and family-based care. The aim of the reform is to design a modern childcare strategy, including capacity building and to fund a twinning project to share our best practices.

Inside the EU, the Home Affairs Funds directly support help for persons in vulnerable situations, the reception of children, particularly if unaccompanied, and persons with disabilities, including children, as well as the early identification of persons at risk of human trafficking and their referral to specialised services. Furthermore, the European Social Fund + ESF+ can be used to increase support for the relocation of unaccompanied children to family and community-based care. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of children with disabilities. The ESF+ 2021-2027 will also be able to support social protection systems with a particular greater focus on children, disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities, promoting in particular the accessibility of such systems.

#### **Next steps:**

- The Commission is mobilising EUR 10 million to support Ukraine's transition towards de-institutionalisation of childcare.
- Inside the EU, the Solidarity Platform will support the coordination of the transfer of unaccompanied children to family and community-based care as needed.
- The Commission will work with the Ukrainian and Polish authorities and relevant stakeholders on a project in a childcare facility in Poland, hosting large numbers of Ukrainian children, as a pilot for the de-institutionalisation reform in Ukraine.
- The Commission will update existing guidance to Member States to ensure the registration of children who arrive to the EU accompanied by their Ukrainian guardians to guarantee the engagement of national child protection services.

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<sup>26</sup> [Convention on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, enforcement, and co-operation in respect of parental responsibility and measures for the protection of children.](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Practices regarding unaccompanied and separated children from Ukraine.](#)

#### 4.2. Addressing risks of trafficking in human beings and supporting victims of war crimes

The Commission, Member States and relevant EU Agencies put in place prompt awareness raising and preventive activities. The number of confirmed cases of human trafficking related to displaced persons from Ukraine is currently low<sup>28</sup>. Nevertheless, the risk of human trafficking, in particular for women and children, will remain high and risks being compounded should the economic situation of some displaced persons deteriorate, which may increase their vulnerability<sup>29</sup>.

The Solidarity Platform endorsed a dedicated Common Anti-trafficking Plan<sup>30</sup> on 11 May 2022, developed and implemented under the lead of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. The plan pursues five goals: (1) strengthening awareness raising; (2) reinforcing prevention; (3) enhancing law enforcement and judicial response; (4) improving early identification, support, and protection of victims; (5) addressing the risks of trafficking in human beings in non-EU countries, especially Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The actions and recommendations set out in the Plan complement the Temporary Protection Directive which has substantially contributed to decreasing the vulnerability of persons fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine to trafficking. The Commission reported on the implementation of the Plan in the fourth report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings, adopted on 19 December 2022<sup>31</sup>.

All actions have been completed or are ongoing. The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator continues to monitor the implementation of the Plan, in close cooperation with the National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms<sup>32</sup>, the EU Civil Society Platform against trafficking in human beings and EU Agencies.

As part of the coordinated approach, actions to tackle trafficking of displaced people from Ukraine are taken within the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), involving law enforcement and judicial authorities, as well as labour inspectorates. Member States and EU Agencies train relevant stakeholders to detect the signs of trafficking in human beings.

Europol, in cooperation with the Member States, continues to monitor the situation via the information it receives through SIENA. Member States are encouraged to continue to share information on possible cases of trafficking with Europol.

In addition, the European Labour Authority organises meetings with national law enforcement and labour authorities and social partners addressing the vulnerabilities and risks linked to

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<sup>28</sup> The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine – The broad fundamental right impact in the EU, Bulletin 2 European Union Agency for Fundamental Right ([The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine — The broad fundamental rights impact in the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)).

<sup>29</sup> [International Labour Organisation and European Labour Authority joined forces to reduce the risks of undeclared work, labour exploitation and trafficking in persons fleeing the war in Ukraine | European Labour Authority \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>30</sup> [A Common Anti-Trafficking Plan to address the risks of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine.](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings \(fourth report\).](#)

<sup>32</sup> National Rapporteur or Equivalent Mechanisms in Member States contribute to the understanding of trafficking in human beings in its various forms of exploitation by collecting and analysing data on a regular basis, evaluate the effectiveness and impact of national policies and actions against human trafficking and in support of its victims, and present recommendations for improving policies and practices addressing all forms of trafficking ([Intensifying a coordinated response \(europa.eu\)](#)).

undeclared work and labour exploitation as part of the European Platform subgroup tackling undeclared work among displaced persons from Ukraine.

In parallel to this effort, the Commission is working to ensure that displaced persons from Ukraine who are victims of war crimes, receive support and protection in the EU, as provided for by the Victims' Rights Directive<sup>33</sup>. Under the EU Victims' Rights Platform, the Commission is closely working with EU bodies and agencies, such as Eurojust, and with non-governmental organisations, relevant for victims' rights to ensure that the rights of victims of war crimes are taken into consideration. On 21 September 2022, Eurojust and the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC jointly published guidelines for civil society organisations on documenting international crimes and human rights violations for accountability purposes<sup>34</sup>. Ensuring that victims can fully rely on their rights is particularly important in the context of the ongoing investigations in the EU Member States.

#### **Next steps:**

- The EU Anti Trafficking Coordinator will continue monitoring the implementation of the Common Anti Trafficking Plan and update it as appropriate.
- Member States are urged to share information on trafficking cases with Europol to maximise the impact of a coordinated approach.
- The European Labour Authority will continue engaging key stakeholders as part of the dedicated group on undeclared work among those displaced by the war against Ukraine and present its findings to the Solidarity Platform.

#### **4.3. Access to education and vocational training**

Education is indispensable for inclusion and helps improve the social and emotional well-being of children displaced by the Russian aggression, many of whom already experienced disrupted schooling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the Temporary Protection Directive, Member States should grant persons under 18 years of age access to the education system under the same conditions as nationals of the host Member State. They may also grant adults enjoying temporary protection access to the general education system.

EU Member States have made substantial efforts to rapidly include displaced children from Ukraine in their education systems, from early childhood education and care to higher education<sup>35</sup>. Yet, at the beginning of the school year 2022/2023, only half a million Ukrainian children were enrolled in education systems across the EU<sup>36</sup>. What's more, in localities where the number of displaced children is particularly large, reinforcement of basic infrastructure continues to be a necessity alongside the need for recruitment and training of teachers, trainers, and carers. Additional language and psychosocial support are proving critical and should be reinforced where not sufficiently available so as to sustain enrolment rates and address emerging challenges.

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<sup>33</sup> Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57 – 73.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/sites/default/files/assets/eurojust-icc-csos-guidelines.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> At the beginning of the school year 2022/2023, some half a million Ukrainian children were enrolled in education systems across the EU.

<sup>36</sup> [European Education Area - Quality education and training for all.](#)

As the Russian aggression continues, enrolment in education is critical to help all children displaced from Ukraine, including children with disabilities, reach their full potential and lay the foundations for their future. For children close to adulthood, it can also facilitate their later inclusion in the labour market. The education received in the EU will also be relevant for the later reconstruction and rebuilding of Ukraine.

To ease the transition and simultaneously enable children to maintain their bond with Ukrainian culture and language, some Member States have hired Ukrainian-speaking support teachers in schools, added Ukrainian textbooks in schools and libraries and provided dedicated information material for Ukrainian parents. Moreover, in some cases, Ukrainian authorities have worked with schools and education authorities in Member States to ensure that the Ukrainian curriculum, the use of online resources and the inclusion in a new host-country school can supplement each other<sup>37</sup>. At the European Education Summit on 1 December 2022, support was announced for the publication of Ukrainian schoolbooks.

Discussions regarding the recognition arrangements for periods of study in a host country school upon return to Ukraine are critical in this regard. Such recognition arrangements help ensure continuity of education and recognition of achievements and qualifications and can help parents and children avoid feeling that they need to choose between inclusion in their host country and continuing education on return to Ukraine. Beyond this, the Commission's June 2022 practical manual for the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in Member States' education systems summarises early best practices regarding all aspects of inclusion in schools<sup>38</sup>. It is now important that Member States build on these efforts and address challenges on all relevant aspects, for example by supporting schools and educational staff to include displaced children, targeted activities related to psychosocial support and language acquisition, engaging with displaced families and communities or helping displaced children maintain the link with Ukraine.

To support Member States and particularly teachers in their efforts, the EU provides resources and information on education and training intended for displaced parents, pupils, schools, and teachers, as well as for stakeholders and organisations engaged in providing solidarity efforts in EU Member States. The European Social Fund+ (ESF+) provided significant resources to the training of the teachers, increasing accessibility of education, and providing adaptation programmes for children. These are available on the European Education Area Portal and the **European School Education Platform**<sup>39</sup>, the successor of the **School Education Gateway**<sup>40</sup> and new home of eTwinning.

The online **European School Education Platform** serves teachers, school leaders, researchers, teacher educators, policymakers and other professionals working in school education, including Early Childhood Education and Care as well as Vocational Education and Training (VET). To support the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine the Commission opened a dedicated webpage, offering a wide array of different resources for education stakeholders<sup>41</sup>. The Platform also includes a series of free online professional development courses on topics related to refugee education. The online community platform

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<sup>37</sup> [The Ukrainian Education in Emergency](#) website provides information on the Ukrainian education system and curriculum and its aim is to help Ukrainian children adapt to new schools and curricula abroad.

<sup>38</sup> [Supporting the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in education: considerations, key principles and practices for the school year 2022-2023.](#)  
[European School Education Platform.](#)

<sup>40</sup> [School Education Gateway.](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Education and support for Ukrainian refugees.](#) The landing page was originally created on the online School Education Gateway, which – since 1 October 2022 – migrated to the European School Education Platform.

for teachers and school staff, **eTwinning**, created dedicated discussion groups for peer-to-peer support for teachers (and their pupils) in Ukraine and/or neighbouring countries, and to support European teachers to promote inclusion and diversity in the classroom. All displaced teachers from Ukraine who establish a link with a school in their host country can get full access to the eTwinning community and launch their own specific projects.

The Commission has also **mobilised the Erasmus+ programme** so that students studying at a Ukrainian higher education institution at any study level - from short cycle, bachelor and, master to doctoral level - may receive a grant to study for up to 12 months at their receiving higher education institutions in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Erasmus+ programme. Students and recent graduates from Ukrainian higher education institutions can also do an Erasmus+ funded traineeship. Staff from Ukrainian higher education institutions may also receive an Erasmus+ grant for a short period. In addition to student and staff mobility actions, the higher education and vocational education and training capacity-building projects, as well as the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters will continue to be open to students, staff and education institutions from Ukraine. In addition, proposals for cooperation partnership projects can be submitted to support higher education institutions in Ukraine.

The new **Erasmus+ Online Language Support platform** helps students, learners, teaching staff, professors and educators, who participate in Erasmus+ projects, to acquire language skills.

Access to education and vocational training is also important for adults who need to complete learning programmes initiated in Ukraine or to complement their existing qualifications and learning to access work commensurate to their profile. The EU guidance on ‘Helping people fleeing Russian aggression to access the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning’ calls upon Member States to provide targeted upskilling and reskilling opportunities, Vocational Education and Training or practical workplace experience, including language training<sup>42</sup>.

The Commission will continue to support Member States in providing access to education for Ukrainian pupils and students and addressing the existing challenges, while strengthening contacts with the Ukrainian authorities, including through the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine, which already supports the exchange of information and experiences between Member States on all matters related to supporting displaced persons from Ukraine in terms of education.

The Commission has also continued to support the Ukrainian **research and academic community**, including those researchers fleeing Russian aggression against Ukraine. A dedicated EUR 25 million fellowships’ scheme has been launched under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Programme and a EUR 20 million action has been made available by the European Innovation Council to support deep tech start-ups of Ukraine. The Horizon Europe ERA4Ukraine initiative has served as a one-stop shop for information for researchers fleeing Ukraine, working jointly with the Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries.

### **Next Steps:**

- The Commission will work with Member States to scale up enrolment in schools by supporting regular exchanges on their progress, challenges, and good practices as part

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<sup>42</sup> [Communication from the Commission on Guidance for access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning of people fleeing Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.](#)

of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine. Outreach to the Ukrainian authorities will be intensified to encourage Ukrainian parents to send their children to school in the EU.

- The Commission will deliver half a million schoolbooks in Ukrainian language for fifth grade students under the new Ukrainian curriculum by spring 2023.
- Through its online platforms, the Commission will continue to support teachers and schools with online materials, good practices and training courses, with the specific emphasis on language teaching, psycho-social support and inclusive education.
- The Commission will continue to encourage Member States to make full use of the skills and competences of displaced educational staff from Ukraine, in line with its Recommendation and practical advice for the flexible recognition of qualifications.
- The Commission will implement – through Erasmus+ ‘Capacity building in the field of higher education’ – an action worth EUR 5 million for the creation of an open educational digital environment for students who have fled from Ukraine or have been displaced in the country.
- The Commission will continue to offer participation in the EU Bluebook traineeships to young Ukrainian graduates.
- The Commission will also intensify the exchanges with the Ukrainian authorities to facilitate the recognition in Ukraine of academic qualifications obtained in the Member States, including by supporting the Ukrainian National Information Centre of Academic Mobility in the framework of the Bologna Process.

#### 4.4. Access to healthcare and social benefits

Human dignity and dignified standard of living are key aspects of temporary protection. The Directive requires Member States to provide the necessary assistance in terms of social welfare and means of subsistence, where these are not available, as well as medical care<sup>43</sup>. In response, Member States, including with the support of other partners, have generally provided immediate humanitarian assistance. They have also included beneficiaries of temporary protection in wider social protection systems, which can provide for the essential transition from ad-hoc emergency aid to targeted social assistance and self-reliance<sup>44</sup>.

The type, level and even duration of **social assistance benefits** (both cash and non-cash) for beneficiaries of temporary protection vary considerably across Member States, reflecting the diversity and often complexity of national social systems. Three broad approaches can be distinguished: a substantial number of Member States treat beneficiaries of temporary protection on an equal footing with their own nationals/citizens or recognised refugees, providing the same access to social services and support measures. This has often included the easing of access requirements to take into account the specific circumstances of displacement, e.g. in terms of verification for means-testing or other eligibility criteria. Other Member States include beneficiaries of temporary protection in the support systems established for applicants for international protection. A few others developed ad hoc arrangements specifically targeted

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<sup>43</sup> See Article 13 TPD.

<sup>44</sup> Article 13 also states: “Where persons enjoying temporary protection are engaged in employed or self-employed activities, account shall be taken, when fixing the proposed level of aid, of their ability to meet their own needs.”



at beneficiaries of temporary protection. In such cases, the level of support is often less generous or limited in time. One Member State operates a hybrid system with different provisions applying to Ukrainian nationals and third-country nationals falling under temporary protection.

The large majority of Member States also provide different types of additional benefits or one-off support measures: e.g., housing benefit, free train tickets, or initial subsistence or integration grants, special integration courses or related support, rehabilitation services and accessible solutions for persons with disabilities.

In addition to Member State action, in many cases European civil society also frequently provided essential additional support through voluntary support platforms, individual donations and other initiatives. In approximately half of the Member States, notably including those hosting the highest number of beneficiaries of temporary protection, dedicated online platforms were launched to coordinate offers and support provided by social organisations, enterprises and private persons<sup>45</sup>.

As the situation evolves, and with the prolongation of temporary protection until at least March 2024, Member States are reviewing and changing national legislation and arrangements. The Commission will work with the Member States to ensure that all rights set out in the Directive continue to be afforded to the beneficiaries of temporary protection and to promote policies leading to their self-reliance (notably through access to jobs and education and training opportunities).

The Temporary Protection Directive requires that assistance necessary for medical care includes at least emergency care and essential treatment of illness. Reflecting the Commission guidance on the matter, a first report<sup>46</sup> of the Commission concluded that the majority of Member States have provided inclusive access to national health care systems to beneficiaries of temporary protection, on a par with or closely mirroring that of their own citizens, with only a few differences.

Practical implementation difficulties in some Member States relate for instance to lack of information about access to healthcare or language barriers. The differences of vaccination schedules<sup>47</sup> and the courses of treatment for some chronic and communicable diseases have also presented challenges for health systems in host countries. The Commission is currently working with Member States to identify the problems of accessibility and a second report will be published in April 2023.

The identification and support to people with **disabilities** also remains an overall challenge. Key issues relate to identification of people with special needs and of persons with disabilities through early medical assessments or by social workers or how to translate existing disability certificates to different national disability support systems. The Commission has provided relevant guidance on this issue and has brought together Member States, civil society partners and Ukrainian authorities and other organisations to help address these challenges<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> EUAA Providing Temporary Protection to Displaced Persons from Ukraine: A Year in Review.

<sup>46</sup> [Report on access to health care in EU Member States - Implementation of Temporary Protection Directive \(2001/55/EC\) and Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/382.](#)

<sup>47</sup> Free COVID-19 vaccination were provided in the large majority of Member States.

<sup>48</sup> [Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council implementing Decision 2022/382 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.](#)

Through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the EU has supported **medical evacuation of Ukrainian patients and those wounded in the war** who could no longer receive treatment in Ukraine due to the war. Almost 2 000 Ukrainian patients have been evacuated successfully to 20 EU and EEA countries. A medical hub has been established in Rzeszów (Poland) to facilitate the evacuation. This has involved the joint efforts of the European Commission, World Health Organization, EU and EEA Member states, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. Upon request of the Ukrainian authorities, an EU repatriation scheme for facilitating the evacuated patients return to Ukraine has been developed. Ukraine has also been associated to the EU4Health Programme and is joining several actions, such as the Joint Action on Integration of European Reference Networks for Rare Diseases into national health systems.

A Network on Supporting Ukraine, neighbouring EU Member States and the Republic of Moldova has been established through the EU Health Policy Platform to support the cooperation and coordination of NGOs and civil society in their effort to support health care in Ukraine and for displaced persons from Ukraine. The Commission sustained the work of the network with additional funding from the EU4Health Programme with calls for proposals targeting patients' and civil society organisations to support people fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Many of those displaced, including children, have specific needs because of the traumatising experience of Russian aggression. To complement the mental health and/or psychosocial support offered in the majority of Member States, the Commission has therefore provided additional funding for first psychological aid through different channels, including the International Federation of the Red Cross Societies and other non-governmental organisations.

**Next steps:**

- The Commission will report on barriers to accessing healthcare by April 2023 and will discuss with Member States how to overcome them.
- The Commission will work with Member States to continue targeted actions. Priority will be given to the vaccination of displaced children, according to the vaccination programmes of the host country, in agreement with Member States. Support for continuity of care for those in need of long-term treatment should also be prioritised. Epidemiological surveillance should be ensured.
- The Commission will work with Member States to continue the support to Ukrainian cancer patients, through the current medical evacuations, the provision of cancer medicines to Ukraine and the participation of Ukraine in the activities developed under Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, through the EU4Health Programme.
- The Commission will fully deploy psychosocial and mental health support for Ukrainian displaced persons through agreements with the IFRC and NGOs, including by scaling up provisions of mental health training for teachers and social workers.

**4.5. Access to jobs**

Labour market inclusion is fundamental for people to be financially independent, support their families and contribute to the host community. Inclusion will also be beneficial to Ukraine in the long-run, when people with newly acquired skills return home and help to rebuild the country.

Upon activation of the Temporary Protection Directive, Member States have removed many formalities and additional administrative steps (like additional work permits) or other barriers, to ensure immediate access to the labour market. In June 2022, the Commission, drawing on lessons learned from previous crises, provided guidance and put forward concrete measures to facilitate access to the labour market, vocational education, training, and adult learning<sup>49</sup>.

Evidence so far shows that such initiatives have been successful and the entry of displaced persons from Ukraine to the labour market has been faster than that of applicants for international protection and persons with refugee status<sup>50</sup>. Available figures as of December 2022 indicate that more than 1.1 million people displaced from Ukraine were in employment across the European Economic Area<sup>51</sup>. At least 614 933 beneficiaries of temporary protection have been employed in 18 Member States, Norway and Liechtenstein and 413 365 persons are registered as job seekers in 15 Member States (as of 1 March 2023).

As part of these initiatives, in October 2022, the Commission and the European Labour Authority launched the **Talent Pool Pilot**<sup>52</sup> for people fleeing Russian aggression against Ukraine. The initiative supports labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection for as long as they are in the EU. It facilitates the matching of their profiles with jobs and vacancies that correspond to their skills and qualifications. It helps them to create their CVs and make their profiles available to more than 4 000 EU employers with 3 900 000 vacancies, as of February 2023. Employers registered on the EURES portal undergo a vetting procedure among others to avoid the risk of labour exploitation. While the portal is available to jobseekers in all EU Member States, some Member States have invested additional resources to support its implementation<sup>53</sup>. To ensure swifter labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection, Member States are encouraged to better promote and support the use of the Talent Pool Pilot through active promotion and information campaigns.

The swift validation of skills and recognition of qualifications is particularly important for successful labour market integration. In April 2022, the Commission issued a **Recommendation and practical advice for the flexible recognition of qualifications** giving access to regulated professions, or to further learning for people fleeing Russia's war against Ukraine, and is monitoring its implementation<sup>54</sup>. To support a better understanding and comparability of Ukrainian qualifications with qualifications gained in the EU, the Commission published a comparison report<sup>55</sup> and is organising exchanges for practitioners and others involved in the review of qualifications.

Many Member States have already taken important steps to facilitate the recognition of qualifications<sup>56</sup>, with some concluding agreements with Ukraine in the field of academic

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<sup>49</sup> [Communication from the Commission on Guidance for access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.](#)

<sup>50</sup> [OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine – What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine.](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Public Employment Services support to persons displaced from Ukraine: latest developments - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion.](#)

<sup>52</sup> [EU Talent Pool Pilot.](#)

<sup>53</sup> Cyprus, Spain, Finland, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Poland.

<sup>54</sup> [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine.](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Comparison report of the European Qualifications Framework and the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework.](#)

<sup>56</sup> For example, measures to allowing Ukrainian medical professionals to work under supervision in Latvia before their qualifications are formally recognised.

recognition. It is important to ensure that people can access work that corresponds to their qualifications and experience.

Given the predominance of Ukrainian female-headed households among beneficiaries of temporary protection, several Member States' labour market inclusion programmes have added a focus on **support for women from Ukraine**. This context also makes the availability of 'early childhood education and care' services a particularly critical precondition for their rapid and sustainable labour market inclusion.

Specific attention has also been given, and will continue to be given, to **Ukrainian journalists and media workers**. The "Europe-wide rapid response mechanism for violations of press and media freedom"<sup>57</sup>, supported by the EU, has hosted journalists in the EU. Another EU-financed project to promote cross-border journalism partnerships<sup>58</sup> has been open to Ukrainian media. To support the entrepreneurial potential of young Ukrainians, the Commission has taken measures to allow more flexible participation in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme. As a result, the programme saw highest numbers of Ukrainian entrepreneurs applying and participating in the programme since 2018.

The Commission also intensified its work with social and economic partners in the European Partnership for Integration to further the labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection. As highlighted in a joint statement issued in December 2022, its members agree to focus on strengthening the cooperation structures between relevant labour market actors and making the assessment, recognition and validation of skills and qualifications of refugees and migrants easier and more straightforward<sup>59</sup>.

As Member States are starting to implement their ESF+ programmes for the 2021-2027 period, the Commission will monitor the use of the ESF+ to support the labour market and social inclusion of third-country nationals, notably from Ukraine.

Clarity about the right to employment and self-employment without delays or conditions has been a key factor so far to ensure people displaced from Ukraine can access the labour market. Efforts can still be stepped up to reach out to displaced people with information about possible support to enter the labour market, and to encourage registration at the Public Employment Services. At the same time, uncertainty over how long displaced people from Ukraine might stay in the EU calls for flexible approaches to ensure both rapid and sustainable labour market access. In this regard, the forward-looking efforts of Member States, such as Poland, Estonia, and others to facilitate access to other legal migration statuses, including through employment, present an important step. In the future, proactive efforts in providing language courses, better access and inclusion in the labour market will have to continue to accompany this approach, not to leave anyone behind.

#### **Next Steps:**

- The Commission will encourage Member States to promote swifter labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection by better promoting and supporting the use of the Talent Pool Pilot and by sharing best practices identified.
- The Commission will promote exchanges on progress, challenges, and good practices in implementing EU funding projects for third-country nationals with national ESF+ managing authorities.

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.mfr.eu/>.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.investigativejournalismforeu.net/>.

<sup>59</sup> [European Partnership for Integration](#).

- To support a better understanding and comparability of Ukrainian qualifications with qualifications gained in the EU, the Commission will take stock of the implementation of its Recommendation on flexible recognition of qualifications , and organise exchanges for practitioners and others involved in the review of qualifications

#### 4.6. Access to accommodation and housing

Hosting millions of persons displaced in a short period of time has proven one of the major challenges in the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive.

Throughout the EU, different types of temporary or more permanent accommodation were provided by national authorities and municipalities, through private sponsors but also the housing market. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)<sup>60</sup> helped meet the demand for emergency shelter in Member States neighbouring or close to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, especially for the first few days upon arrival. The Commission’s Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) channelled offers from 21 EU Member States and Norway, and mobilised Relief Housing Units and beds from the rescEU shelter reserve.

Looking back, however, one of the most remarkable aspects of the response to the crisis has been the **enormous generosity shown by private individuals** in opening their own homes. Without that, official reception facilities would have struggled to cope.

To support vulnerable people and their hosts, national authorities supported and engaged in innovative joint cooperation platforms that connect people to homes, exchange information and provide mutual support. Many Member States also provide financial support to households hosting beneficiaries of temporary protection and others provide housing allowances directly to beneficiaries of temporary protection<sup>61</sup>.

Under the ‘**Safe Homes**’ initiative<sup>62</sup> the Commission put forward guidance to assist Member States, regional and local authorities, and civil society in the organisation of private housing initiatives<sup>63</sup>. The Commission further encouraged Member States to exchange on and study so-called ‘community sponsorship’ or other similar schemes that provide integration pathways to hosted people. A targeted budget of EUR 5.5 million implemented by the International Federation of Red Cross project aims to support the implementation of the Safe Homes guidance and the development of a good practice model. The project will better match hosted individuals of families with potential hosts, while assessing the needs of Member States, and create a referral mechanism matching accommodation to several integration services. Other project activities will include the provision of support and guidance to hosts. Components of the programme will be implemented throughout 2023 in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

Furthermore, in January 2023, the Commission launched a call for proposals for project grants under the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund<sup>64</sup> to further support and promote community sponsorship schemes and to help develop complementarity between the reception capacities of Member States and the housing offer provided through private hosting schemes.

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<sup>60</sup> [EU Civil Protection Mechanism \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu).

<sup>61</sup> [OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine - Housing support for Ukrainian refugees in receiving countries.](#)

<sup>62</sup> [Safe and suitable homes for people fleeing the war in Ukraine.](#)

<sup>63</sup> [Solidarity and housing: supporting safe homes – Considerations, key principles and practices - As of 21 February 2023.](#)

<sup>64</sup> [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\) – Call for proposals – 17 January 2023.](#)

This will allow to integrate the lessons learned from the Ukraine response identify opportunities to expand the structural reception capacity at EU level. The ESF+ will be also well placed to support such schemes in EU Member States.

In the future, displaced persons from Ukraine will need to transition from short-term emergency housing or temporary private hosting towards more sustainable housing solutions, avoiding a permanent dependence on state-run reception. In addition, accessible housing for persons with disabilities needs to be available. Shortages of affordable or social housing – amounting to a housing market crisis in some Member States – make this transition more difficult. Where beneficiaries of temporary protection fully or partially pay for their accommodation, appropriate means-testing, and support, where necessary, is critical to preserve access to accommodation to those who need it.

### **Next Steps:**

- The Solidarity Platform will continue monitoring displacement trends and update the European contingency plan to ensure that accommodation is available;
- The Commission will monitor the application of the Temporary Protection Directive in the field of reception to identify risks in the transition from emergency accommodation to longer term solutions, in particular for vulnerable individuals.
- The Solidarity Platform will discuss the Safe Homes implementation and guidance to identify key steps to be taken in the coming months and lessons learned;
- The European integration network<sup>65</sup> will continue exchanging good practice in providing accessible housing on the basis of the discussions held on 2-3 February 2023 in Sweden.
- The Commission will mobilise EUR 8 million in funding to support and promote community sponsorship schemes in 2023.
- The Commission will monitor the implementation of the Safe Homes project coordinated by International Federation of the Red Cross and reinforce it as needed.

## **5. Financial and operational support**

The EU has provided support through unprecedented measures and funding addressing the needs of displaced persons, drawing from several EU funds. The Commission mobilised very early on its comprehensive toolbox across EU spending programmes in support of Member States.

### **5.1. Financial support**

Since March 2022, the rules governing cohesion policy were revised several times to enable Member States to reallocate unused funds from the 2014-2020 envelope and provide additional liquidity also from the new 2021-2027 envelope. The **Cohesion's Action for**

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<sup>65</sup> The European Integration Network (EIN) brings together representatives of national public authorities, mainly from the ministries responsible for migrant integration, from all 27 EU Member States and Iceland and Norway. These often play a role in the planning and implementation of dedicated EU funding opportunities such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) in their respective countries. The EIN members also participate in targeted study visits, peer reviews, workshops and mutual assistance actions on specific integration aspects to exchange knowledge. See [European Integration Network | European Website on Integration \(europa.eu\)](https://european-integration-network.eu/)



**Refugees in Europe (CARE) package**, comprised of three modifications<sup>66</sup>, increased the flexibility of existing rules, provided more liquidity to finance urgent needs and simplified reporting for the managing authorities.

The total additional liquidity provided by the EU through CARE and FAST-CARE packages amounts to EUR 13.6 billion. An amount of nearly EUR 1 billion reprogrammed funds<sup>67</sup> to finance welcoming and arrival of displaced persons from Ukraine and facilitate access to mainstream labour market, education, language courses, childcare, housing, medical care and other long-term integration measures. As such measures are often provided by local authorities and civil society organisations, Member States are required to allocate at least 30% of relevant CARE measures to those beneficiaries<sup>68</sup>.

The EU also amended the **Home Affairs Funds** to increase financial flexibility and make it easier for Member States to redeploy available funds under their 2014-2020 programmes for actions targeting displaced persons from Ukraine, such as the provision of first reception needs (e.g. emergency accommodation, food, healthcare, extra staff etc.) and supporting Member States efforts (e.g. initial processing and registration activities and referral of persons to specialised support services).

Moreover, the pledging event of 9 April 2022 ‘Stand Up for Ukraine’, **EUR 400 million in Emergency Assistance funding** was mobilised from the Home Affairs Funds. Of those, EUR 385 million were allocated to cover the most pressing needs in Member States<sup>69</sup> most affected by the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine and for early integration while the remaining EUR 15 million are planned to address mainly the ‘Safe Homes’ initiative and to provide psychosocial support for displaced persons from Ukraine.

Through the Technical Support Instrument, the Commission has also been supporting Member State administrations to facilitate access to rights under the Temporary Protection Directive. This is contributing towards enhancing multi-level coordination and improving procedures relating to access to social services, education and jobs for displaced people from Ukraine.

With the new generation of programmes being adopted, Member States have access to significant financial support under the **2021-2027 Home Affairs Funds and Cohesion Policy**, allowing them to launch actions adapted to their specific needs.

The Commission will continue to work with Member States, in particular in the light of the European Council conclusions of 9 February 2023, to ensure that adequate and flexible financial assistance to the Member States who bear the largest burden of medical, education and living costs of refugees continues to be provided.

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<sup>66</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2022/562 of 6 April 2022](#), [Regulation \(EU\) 2022/613 of 12 April 2022](#), [Regulation \(EU\) 2022/2039 of 26 October 2022](#).

<sup>67</sup> As of 31 January 2023.

<sup>68</sup> The re-programming exercise to set up this scheme is ongoing, and the Commission will check compliance with this condition at the closure of programmes.

<sup>69</sup> Emergency Assistance of EUR 385 million was allocated to Czechia (EUR 54.4 million), Poland (EUR 200.1 million), Estonia (EUR 10.1 million), Lithuania (EUR 10.1 million), Bulgaria (EUR 10.9 million), Latvia (EUR 7.8 million), Romania (EUR 39.1 million), Hungary (EUR 21.1 million), Slovakia (EUR 24.7 million) and Cyprus (EUR 6.7 million).

## 5.2. Operational support

Russia's aggression against Ukraine triggered the largest emergency operation since the creation of the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)**, which has demonstrated its ability to mobilise assistance both to Ukraine and EU Member States most impacted by the inflow of displaced persons from Ukraine. Three UCPM logistical hubs were established in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia to channel more than 80 000 tons of in-kind assistance from the Member States and Participating Countries to Ukraine. The Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) has been managing the largest and most complex UCPM operation to date, with an estimated financial value of assistance of over EUR 540 million. This includes medicines and medical devices, emergency vehicles, energy generators and transformers, to name just a few. It also coordinated the aforementioned medical evacuations.

**EU operational support** also materialised through the involvement of its **Agencies**, notably the EUAA, Frontex, Europol and the FRA.

The EUAA supports 13 Member States with their asylum, reception and temporary protection needs. An additional 90 staff were deployed to specifically support Member States with the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive, information provision needs and other consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Agency has developed and distributed a wide range of information provision products and launched information campaigns on temporary protection, in close collaboration with the Commission. Relevant training was made available to Member States on how to equip their staff with the knowledge and skills required to give effect to the rights under the Temporary Protection Directive.

Around 200 Frontex staff are deployed at the relevant border-crossing points in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia and the Republic of Moldova to support the efficient and expeditious processing of those fleeing Russian aggression against Ukraine. Europol has also deployed staff and guest officers to conduct secondary security checks in Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, and the Republic of Moldova. Europol staff also support investigations in these countries when requested.

The FRA has compiled reports on the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive and has recently conducted an extensive survey with beneficiaries that identified key challenges and priorities for the coming months.

## 6. Solidarity and Partnership

### 6.1. Solidarity in action

Solidarity has been the defining feature of the EU's response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, notably with Member States deciding to **waive the application of Article 11 of the Temporary Protection Directive**, thereby facilitating the possibility for persons enjoying temporary protection in one Member State to move to other Member States to enjoy temporary protection there. This enabled **fluidity of onward movements** in the EU that helped to lower the pressure on national reception systems of those Member States bordering Ukraine and reduced formalities<sup>70</sup> regarding transfers, thereby making the instrument still easier to apply.

To alleviate the Republic of Moldova's overstretched reception capacity, the Commission has been supporting and coordinating from an early stage, in the framework of the Solidarity

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<sup>70</sup> Article 26 TPD.

Platform, the transfers of vulnerable persons having fled Ukraine and who are entitled to temporary protection from the Republic of Moldova to pledging EU Member States and other Schengen associated countries. So far, 12 EU Member States, as well as Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Iceland made pledges to welcome 17 870 people transiting through the Republic of Moldova. Out of the pledges made so far, a total of 2 377 persons have been transferred to the EU and other Schengen associated countries from the Republic of Moldova (as of 17 February 2023). Moreover, the EU engagement has also included a financial support being provided to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) activities related to the organisation of flights from the Republic of Moldova to pledging EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries as part of a EUR 15 million EU-funded project.

## **6.2. Engagement and coordination with Ukrainian authorities**

The involvement and participation in meetings of the Ukrainian authorities in Ukraine and the Ukrainian embassies and consulates in the EU Member States quickly became one of the **distinctive features** of the operational response to this crisis compared to any other crises in the past. The Commission has been able to establish close cooperation with Ukrainian authorities, which allowed for broader coordination also in key areas dedicated to the protection of categories of vulnerable persons, preventing human trafficking and smuggling and for a better identification of the challenges people faced in accessing rights attached to temporary protection in practice. This helped the Commission and Member States to detect and correct shortcomings in the implementation of the Directive.

## **6.3. From European solidarity to global response**

The Commission reached out to its international partners by setting up an international leg of the Solidarity Platform to include the **United States, Canada and the United Kingdom**. The aim is to exchange information on the schemes put in place by different countries offering protection to those fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine<sup>71</sup>, to share updated situational awareness on the circumstances in Ukraine and to discuss contingency planning and additional assistance.

Close cooperation with relevant international organisations, especially with **UNHCR and IOM**, has helped improve the EU's situational awareness. It has supported better-informed actions (through studies and analysis) and provided operational support to stakeholders and concrete projects on the ground, such as the transfer of vulnerable persons fleeing Ukraine from the Republic of Moldova to the EU, and the development of the Standard Operating Procedures guiding these transfers.

## **7. Looking ahead**

As reiterated in the European Council meeting of 9 February 2023, the Union will stand in support of those fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine for as long as needed. In triggering the Temporary Protection Directive, the EU has provided safety for millions who had to leave the country. Temporary protection has already been prolonged until March 2024. The Commission will be ready to make a proposal for further prolongation as necessary.

The directive has been the enabler of an unprecedented whole-of-society effort, one that the Commission has advocated for since the early days of the response. All sectors of government and society have been mobilised in an unprecedented manner, giving life to the rights

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<sup>71</sup> Since the beginning of the war, more than 400 000 people from Ukraine arrived in the US, Canada and in the UK.

enshrined in the Temporary Protection Directive. It has spurred a large degree of innovation, including pilot projects across various sectors including employment, education, housing, and recognition of qualification that will offer crucial lessons learned to improve our policies and be ready for future scenarios.

The Directive proved to be both strong and flexible enough to enable a collective and quick response, backed by **strong EU coordination through the Solidarity Platform**. This has helped to forge new connections and foster cooperation between public authorities, social partners, civil society, and those fleeing the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

**A strong EU coordinated approach** is not only necessary to continue addressing current challenges but also for any future action. It will be crucial to ensure a **smooth transition** to alternative legal statuses that would allow access to rights beyond the maximum duration of temporary protection, for example by prolonging residence and work permits, or by creating the conditions to transit into other legal statuses. This is important to ensure that Member States' asylum systems are not overwhelmed.

In parallel, **targeted support** is needed for persons who, having fled Ukraine, want to go back home. The Commission has already intervened on the issue with targeted guidance in the form of Frequently Asked Questions, clarifying the different consequences of short-term visits to Ukraine and voluntary return to Ukraine<sup>72</sup>, and providing safeguards for those wishing to go home back to Ukraine so they can easily re-access their protection if they need to flee again<sup>73</sup>. The Commission will continue to monitor the situation, to make sure that Member States take the necessary measures to cater for the voluntary return of persons who, in full knowledge of the facts, decide to go home, and to support such decisions with Home Affairs Funds. The Commission is also stepping up efforts under the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform to support Ukraine's repair, recovery, and reconstruction process. The return of those displaced will be an important consideration in this context.

More broadly, the Temporary Protection Directive has proven to be an essential instrument to provide immediate protection in the EU and the Commission considers that it **should remain part of the toolbox available to the European Union** in the future.

However, experience has shown that the types of migratory challenges the Union faces can vary greatly, particularly with regards to the scale of the flows or their composition. It is therefore essential that the EU be equipped with a variety of tools and prepared to reply to all types of crises. The Commission will work with the co-legislators to make sure the European Union is equipped with the tools it needs in the future and ensure proper articulation with the Commission proposal for a Crisis and force majeure Regulation<sup>74</sup>.

The implementation of the Directive in the near future will require continued support to make sure that existing challenges are addressed, and that appropriate transitions and contingencies are in place to cater for future situations. The **Solidarity Platform will continue to ensure an EU coordinated response and to engage with Member States** and other stakeholders.

The solidarity and compassion shown by people across the EU, as well as the efforts provided by national and local authorities, stakeholders and communities continue to teach us important

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<sup>72</sup> [Frequently asked questions received on the interpretation of the Temporary Protection Directive and Council Implementing Decision 2022-382\\_en.pdf](#).

<sup>73</sup> [Frequently Asked Questions on going home to Ukraine on a voluntary basis in the context of the Temporary Protection\\_en.pdf](#).

<sup>74</sup> [Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council addressing situations of crisis and force majeure in the field of migration and asylum](#).

lessons, proving once again that the European Union is strong when it acts with unity and coordination.

The European Union will remain a place of welcome for those fleeing the Russian aggression for as long as it takes.