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HORIZON EUROPE

Executive Summary

This report examines the reception of Ukrainian FDPs (forcibly displaced persons) in Germany between February 2022 and September 2025. Germany received around 1 million Ukrainian FDPs during this period, the highest figure in Europe. The analysis focuses on the practical implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) in the fields of housing, education and the labour market. To provide insights into factors that hinder and facilitate the integration of Ukrainian FDPs, the analysis draws on policy documents and reports as well as expert interviews with street-level bureaucrats (SLBs), representatives from street-level organisations (SLOs) and civil society organisation (CSO) involved in everyday policy implementation.

The report shows that Germany has implemented comprehensive measures for Ukrainian FDPs under the TPD, ensuring the provision of social support through the 'citizen's benefit', which secures their livelihood. This approach echoes not only Germany's commitment to supporting Ukraine but also the expectation that high-skilled Ukrainian FDPs would address the country's labour shortage, making the social support an investment in Germany's economic future. However, the new German government plans to restrict social support for Ukrainian FDPs.

Due to the German approach of long-term labour market integration into highly skilled jobs, the employment rate of Ukrainian FDPs in Germany has been low relative to other European countries. Challenges facing labour market participation include language barriers, unrecognised qualifications and inadequate support for women with caregiving duties. Moreover, the high expectations for fast labour market integration neglected the reality that Ukrainian FDPs, unlike labour migrants, didn't have the necessary language skills prior to their arrival and needed time to secure housing, childcare and schooling. In November 2023, the German government introduced the Job Turbo programme, marking a shift to fast labour market integration despite the expected associated de-skilling risk. Regardless, experts stress the positive developments linked to increased cooperation between the employment agency's 'job centre' and non-public-sector actors.

The temporary nature of Ukrainian FDPs' protection constrains them from making long-term investments in the labour market integration strategies that would be necessary for them to work according to their qualifications.

At the same time, SLBs and employers are hesitant to support retraining or other tailored programmes for Ukrainian FDPs due to uncertainty around how long they will remain in the country. Young Ukrainian FDPs, in particular, struggle with the uncertainty of the TPD and the need to strike a balance between a desire to return home and a drive to pursue education in Germany, leading to a low sense of belonging in schools.

Moreover, the analysis reveals how interactions with German bureaucracy cause anxiety and fear among Ukrainian FDPs. While SLOs and CSOs provide protection-seekers with crucial support in navigating bureaucratic hurdles, negative bureaucratic experiences can erode trust in German institutions and hinder integration, including in the labour market.

In all, this report emphasises the urgent need to discuss alternative medium- and long-term solutions for Ukrainian FDPs for the period after the TPD ends in March 2027. Germany and the EU should consider solutions for both those who intend to stay in EU countries and those who intend to return to Ukraine after the war. Such a dualistic approach will contribute to a successful integration in EU countries and stronger reintegration in Ukraine, thereby facilitating the country's reconstruction.

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Abbreviations

Project abbreviations

HUG	Help Ukraine Gothenburg - Sweden
UPF	Universidad Pompeu Fabra - Spain
LSMC	Lietuvos Socialiniu Mokslu Centras - Lithuania
KKNU	V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University - Ukraine
UEF	Ita-Suomen Yliopisto - Finland
UG	Uniwersytet Gdanski - Poland
UGR	Universitaet Greifswald - Germany
ZAVOD APIS	Zavod Za Avtorsko Produkcijo Izobrazevanje Inovativnost In Sodelovanje - Slovenia
UGOT	University Of Gothenburg - Sweden

Other

TPD	Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC)
SLB	Street-Level Bureaucrat
SLO	Street-Level Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FDPs	Forcibly Displaced Ukrainians

Background

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine caused the largest wave of forced migration in Europe since the end of World War II. Germany received the highest number of Ukrainian FDPs (forcibly displaced persons) in Europe with roughly 1 million, just above the figure for Poland. Like other member states of the European Union, Germany has been bound to the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) since March 2022, which compels the country to provide a common legal framework for the reception of Ukrainian refugees (Council of the European Union, 2022). The TPD was intended to enable Ukrainian FDPs to be admitted quickly and with fewer bureaucratic hurdles by avoiding individual case reviews (standard procedure for asylum seekers). The TPD set minimum standards for housing, work, education and healthcare for Ukrainian FDPs. Germany implemented these standards quite comprehensively by, for example, providing access to work-activation measures and by providing social benefits to secure the FDPs' livelihood. This approach echoes not only Germany's commitment to supporting Ukraine but also the expectation that high-skilled Ukrainian FDPs would address the country's labour shortage, making the social support an investment in Germany's economic future.

The societal mood towards Ukrainian FDPs in Germany has been characterised by solidarity and broad approval of taking in those seeking protection. In surveys, Germans have expressed a more positive attitude towards taking in a large number of Ukrainian FDPs than taking in protection-seekers from other countries. However, those who are active in materially supporting refugees have similar attitudes to both groups (Uhr et al., 2025). Moreover, a study interprets the differences in societal attitudes towards Ukrainian FDPs and other protection-seekers as marginal, emphasising other factors (e.g., institutional trust, political attitudes) as more influential on people's solidarity with these groups (Storz, 2023). Most notably, media discourse has stressed, among other things, an opportunity to quickly integrate highly skilled Ukrainians into the German labour market, thereby addressing the country's worrisome labour shortages. Media reports described Ukrainian FDPs as easier to integrate than the Syrian refugees that Germany had taken in in 2015 due to Ukrainians' high qualifications and perceived cultural closeness (Börner et al., 2025).

Like in 2015, the onset of the war in Ukraine sparked a broad mobilisation of civil society that built on existing structures. This is most evident in the support offered by groups like 'Berlin Arrival Support' (whose Telegram group quickly grew to 18,500 members) at railway and bus stations in Germany's capital, which quickly became the central arrival hub for those seeking shelter in February 2022. The war-driven migration from Ukraine also triggered new forms of engagement, such as the hosting of Ukrainian FDPs in private homes, which temporarily compensated for the housing shortage (Haller et al., 2022). In 2023, societal support for taking in Ukrainian FDPs had already declined in Germany, although overall support for Ukrainian FDPs remained stable (IPSOS, 2023), with 64 per cent (in December 2023) supporting their reception in Germany (Hoffmann & de Vries, 2024).

At the same time, alongside these positive attitudes towards Ukrainian FDPs, right-wing and far-right forces like the Alternative for Germany (AfD) have been fuelling critical moods on war migration from Ukraine. Representatives of conservative parties also engaged in such rhetoric, as seen in current chancellor Friedrich Merz's derogatory remarks accusing Ukrainian FDPs of engaging in social tourism and taking advantage of social benefits (Riese, 2022). Although Merz later apologised for his statement, it is unsurprising that he later proposed cutting social benefits for Ukrainians. After taking office in 2025, Friedrich Merz's government introduced a law to cut the social benefits provided to Ukrainians who have arrived in Germany since 1 April 2025. Criticism of social benefits is also growing due to the initial high expectations of both the previous and current German governments regarding the rapid integration of Ukrainian FDPs into the labour market not being met.

Research on Ukrainian FDPs in Germany provides comprehensive insights into the profiles and living situations of protection-seekers based on consecutive waves of large-scale surveys (see Bartig et al., 2025, for a report about the latest wave). It also points to obstacles facing Ukrainians hoping to find work while, at the same time, emphasising the time required for a sustainable integration into the labour market (Ette et al., 2024; Honorati et al., 2024; Kosyakova et al., 2024; Lashchuk, 2024; Panchenko, 2022; Schmidt & Kroll, 2024; Tränhardt, 2023, 2024). Other studies have examined the integration and anchoring processes of Ukrainian FDPs through interviews, emphasising, for example, the role of emotions, social networks and social engagement (Chargaziia & Panchenko, 2025; Lazarenko, 2024; Mozetič et al., 2023; Rock, 2025).

This report contributes to an understanding of how migration policies shape the arrival infrastructure for Ukrainian FDPs. The report draws on street-level bureaucracy theory (Brodkin, 2013; Lipsky, 1980) to emphasise the role of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs), street-level organisations (SLOs), and civil society organisations (CSOs) in shaping everyday policy practices. Using Berlin as an example, the report provides insights into the strong and flawed practices of the implementation of the TPD in Germany. It draws on official documents, reports and interviews with SLBs as well as officials from SLOs and CSOs. The following section offers an overview of the characteristics of Ukrainian FDPs in Germany. That is followed by an overview of the implementation of the TPD, which lays the groundwork for the subsequent discussion of implementation practices in the areas of work, housing and education. The conclusion sums up the results and sketches possible solutions for an improved arrival infrastructure for Ukrainian FDPs.

Ukrainian FDPs in Germany

As of October 2025, a total of 1,292,122 FDPs from Ukraine are registered in Germany, 97 per cent of whom are Ukrainian citizens. 1,106,204 FDPs have a residence permit under paragraph 24 of the Residence Act, which implements the Temporary Protection Directive. There are 51,727 FDPs from Ukraine with a provisional certificate, meaning that they are still waiting to receive TPD status.[1] Since Ukrainians can travel freely within the EU, it is more difficult to determine the number of FDPs who have returned to Ukraine or moved on to another country. In August 2025, the Federal Ministry of the Interior estimated that 438,410 of those who fled Ukraine to Germany had already returned to the country or moved to another country.[2] Migration researcher Franck Duevell believes that the number of Ukrainian FDPs living in Germany is difficult to determine due to a lack of clarity regarding the number of returnees. Based on employment rates and the numbers of recipients of different social benefits, he assumes significantly lower numbers, estimating the figure to now be under 1 million (see Tränhardt, 2024).

Notes

1. https://mediendienst-integration.de/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html
2. ibid.

Regardless of the exact number, Ukrainian citizens now amount to the second-largest migrant group in Germany after Turkish citizens.[3] Prior to 2022, 135,000 Ukrainians lived in Germany, their number having increased slightly since 2014.[4] Most Ukrainians have been living huge cities like Berlin and Munich (Lashchuk, 2025). One recent study suggests that Ukrainian FDPs predominantly moved to places where they had social networks with other Ukrainians (Sauer et al., 2023). As of July 2025, roughly 70,000 FDPs are registered in Berlin, which is also home to a significant number of post-Soviet migrants (of which there are 3.5 million in Germany). A significant proportion of these post-Soviet migrants are Russian-speaking German descendants from the Soviet Union.[5]

Due to the restrictions preventing most Ukrainian men from leaving Ukraine, the majority of Ukrainian FDPs are women. The proportion of men has grown only slightly since 2022, with 62 per cent of adult FDPs in Germany in October 2025 being women; 360,000 have been children and youth under the age of 18.[6]

The high expectation among German politicians of a quick labour market integration of Ukrainian FDPs was based on the fact that they are predominantly highly qualified. A survey from late 2023 shows that 75 per cent of Ukrainian FDPs have vocational qualifications or university degrees. That same survey indicates that roughly half of the Ukrainian FDPs in Germany plan to stay in the country (Bartig et al., 2025).

Notes

3. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/ukraine.html
4. https://www-genesis.destatis.de/datenbank/online
5. https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/postsowjetische-migration-in-deutschland.html
6. https://mediendienst-integration.de/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html

Governance and multilevel responsibilities in the implementation of the TPD in Germany

Implementation of the TPD in Germany

The German approach to the reception of Ukrainian FDPs was characterised by an attempt at medium-term integration into the labour market. Germany provided Ukrainian FDPs (unlike asylum-seekers) with immediate access to housing, healthcare, education, the job market and social benefits. The Temporary Protection Directive was implemented via paragraph 24 of the Residence Act. Ukrainian FPDs are entitled to the so-called citizen's benefit, a basic income for jobseekers in Germany who have been unemployed for more than a year. The citizen's benefit comprises a monthly amount of 563 euros for living expenses and covers health insurance and housing costs. The social support granted to Ukrainian FDPs through the citizen's benefit is significantly higher than the support provided to asylum-seekers. Ukrainian FDPs are also entitled to child benefits, and students can receive financial support equal to that available to German citizens. When FDPs have been granted residence status in a particular location, a limited residence requirement applies (BMI 2022a, 2022b).

Decisions about the legal framework for the TPD are made at the federal level in Germany. A central actor at this level is the Ministry of the Interior, though the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development also play a role. Other important actors include the Federal Employment Agency and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. In addition to the central decision-making taking place at the federal level, the states also act as co-legislators, capable of establishing regional migration policies. The states, together with the local level, are also responsible for accommodating protection-seekers. As a federal city-state, Berlin has the same competencies as other states, while the districts bear certain responsibilities for the implementation of migration policies, albeit to a lesser degree than municipalities. Municipalities and city districts are primarily responsible for the implementation of migration policies, as it is in cities and towns where people arrive and seek housing, work, childcare and a social network.

In addition to public-sector actors, private for-profit organisations and non-profit SLOs and CSOs also play a role in the implementation of migration policy, particularly with regard to service delivery. In the German corporatist welfare state, SLOs traditionally play an important role in service delivery (Ratzmann, 2024). Language courses for forced migrations are outsourced to private for-profit organisations. SLOs and CSOs can be funded by public or private sources.

Actors working with Ukrainian FDPs in Berlin

The table below presents an overview of the main actors involved with the reception and integration of Ukrainian FPDs in Berlin.

Table 1 - Overview of Actors Responsible for the Administration of and Services for Ukrainian FDPs in Berlin

Actor	Level	Responsibility
Arrival Centre Berlin Tegel	Federal City-State	• Registration for all Ukrainian FDPs arriving in Berlin
Berlin Immigration Office	Federal City-State	• Administration of residence permits and fictional certificates
District Offices	District	• Residence registration
District Education Authority	District	• School registration for children and youth
District Welfare Agency	District	• Application for social benefits (provisional until the receipt of fictional certificate)
Job Centre	District	• Employment services • Citizen's benefit (including housing payments) and additional social support • Language courses
Street-Level Organisations	Federal City-State/District	• Additional assistance (e.g., education, employment and social benefits, general housing advice) to Ukrainian FDPs • Additional social work at schools
Civil Society Organisations	Federal City/District	• Additional assistance (e.g., education, employment and social benefits, general housing advice) to Ukrainian FDPs • Support with paperwork/bureaucracy

Table 1 Continued

Actor	Level	Responsibility
Street-Level Organisations	Federal City-State/District	• Additional assistance (e.g., education, employment and social benefits, general housing advice) to Ukrainian FDPs • Additional social work at schools
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Source: Author's elaboration

The registration procedure in Germany involves multiple steps—a dynamic that experts criticised as overly complicated, advocating instead for a 'one-stop' system whereby applications for residence status and social benefits can all be submitted in one place (Tränhard 2023). In reality, however, FDPs must first register at the arrival centre: the former Tegel Airport. Those who stay in Berlin apply online for a residence permit and wait for an appointment at the Berlin Immigration Office (LEA). They then wait for a fictional certificate proving that they applied for paragraph 24. In the next step, they receive the residence permit. Ukrainian FDPs must also register their residence in Berlin and, if applicable, register their children for school.

FDPs must wait for the fictional certificate before getting an appointment at the job centre responsible for the citizen's benefit, child benefits, job placement and language courses. In the meantime, Ukrainian FDPs can apply for social benefits at district welfare agencies. Once they have their fictional certificate, the job centres become the main authority for Ukrainian FDPs until they find employment. Registration for schools, for residence and at the job centre all take place at the district level. For Ukrainian FDPs living in the city-state of Berlin, the fact that the district job centres refuse to share data constitutes a major bureaucratic hurdle, forcing FDPs to apply again for the citizen's benefit whenever they move from one city district to another (Interview CSO1).[7]

Notes

7. https://www.berlin.de/ukraine/ankommen/die-wichtigsten-schritte-1372

In Berlin, CSOs play an important role in supporting Ukrainian FDPs in dealing with the complex, localised and district-based arrival infrastructure. Some organisations have been working with Syrian refugees since 2015, others have a background in supporting post-Soviet migrants in Berlin, and others still were newly founded in 2022. At the organisations studied for this report, both part-time employees (often limited to marginal employment) and volunteers provided Ukrainian FDPs with support.

In Berlin, there is extensive cooperation between municipalities and CSOs, including regular exchange meetings. The federal city-state of Berlin and the district councils also launched additional programmes or allocated additional funds for Ukrainian FDPs in the areas of employment, education and social support for SLOs. For instance, the Berlin Senate hired Ukrainian and Russian-speaking employees as part of the 'Integration Guides' programme, which has been in place since 2013 to support migrants' integration. Integration guides are intended to support the integration of migrants and refugees by providing easily accessible points of contact in each district and answering questions related to social assistance, school and daycare attendance. Additionally, in some districts, CSOs offer information directly at social welfare offices, while some organisations also receive financial support from the districts. Additional funds were allocated to support social workers at schools in Berlin.

The future of the TPD

The conditions of state support for Ukrainian FDPs in Germany remained stable between 2022 and May 2025, at which point a new government was formed from a coalition between the conservative Christian Democratic Union, with Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and the Social Democratic Party, with Vice Chancellor Lars Klingbeil. The new government quickly announced the restriction of social benefits for Ukrainian FDPs.

In August 2025, the Ministry of Labour presented a draft bill stipulating that refugees who arrived in Germany after 1 April 2025 would only receive money in accordance with the Asylum Seekers Act. This means basic income support of €441 per month rather than €563 and no health insurance. However, Ukrainian refugees would continue to have a right to work, unlike other asylum-seekers.

The media report also notes that these changes would not result in any savings for the German state due to the higher-level bureaucratic efforts involved with the Asylum Seekers Act.[8] Merz also proposed that all Ukrainians should only receive money under the Asylum Seekers Act, but the Social Democratic Party, alongside Merz's Christian Democrats, immediately rejected the proposal. In Germany, Ukrainians under the TPD may also receive another residence permit if they meet the criteria. Two possible residence permits would be to work or study in Germany. However, at the moment, these two possibilities only apply to a minority of protection-seekers from Ukraine. Work permits are only applicable to migrants who work in qualified positions with a certain salary. While experts have already begun to discuss alternatives to the TPD, there are currently no visible political proposals for the period after the TPD's expiry in March 2027 (Heiermann & Atanisev, 2024; Schneider, 2024).

Methods and materials

For this report, desk research was conducted on legislative texts, government (federal and state) bills and reports, policy briefs, surveys and media reports. In addition, eight interviews were conducted with ten experts who work with Ukrainian FDPs in their everyday lives or possess knowledge about these processes. The interviews were conducted mainly in July 2025 (though one was conducted in October 2025). The interviews served to generate additional insights into the implementation practices behind the housing, employment and education policies for Ukrainian FDPs; experts were asked about their interpretations of challenges and best practices associated with policy briefs and analyses. Therefore, the interviewees were carefully selected after in-depth desk research. The interviews also provided insights into the daily practices of supporting Ukrainian FDPs.

Two interviews were conducted with employees (SLBs) at two different job centres in Berlin. One interview was conducted with two employees of a CSO supporting post-Soviet migrants, which provided job counselling services for Ukrainian FDPs.

Notes

8. https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/buergergeld-aus-fuer-fluechtlinge-aus-der-ukraine-bringt-nahezu-keine-einsparungen-a-f3c503de-b9e8-44b7-a41b-1bc8f84bd071

Two interviews were conducted with representatives from CSOs supporting Ukrainian FDPs with paperwork related to social services and support, especially applications for job centres and local welfare agencies, as well as paperwork in the field of housing and school education. One of these CSOs has been working to support Syrian and other refugees since 2015; the other was newly founded in 2022 to support Ukrainian FDPs. At the first CSO, I also conducted a background interview. Two interviews were conducted with migration guides in two different Berlin districts. Migration guides provide support across the three fields of housing, employment and education. One interview was conducted with two social workers active in welcome classes. Seven interviews were conducted in German, one interview in the Ukrainian language.

The fact that only two interviews were conducted with SLBs when three were conducted with SLOs reflects the above-mentioned importance of SLOs in the implementation of migration policies at the local level. The fact that none of the interviewees was an expert in the field of housing (though several provided general assistance in the field) reflects the fact that no specific support is provided to FDPs beyond their assignment to collective housing. Most interviewees supported Ukrainian FDPs in several fields of everyday life, thereby providing valuable information for cross-sectional policy analysis.

Table 2 - Overview of Expert Interviewees

Abbreviation	Topic	Interviewee's Role
SLB1	Labour market	Migration commissioner at a job centre in Berlin.
SLB2	Labour market	Placement officer at a job centre in Berlin.
CSO1	Cross-sectional (support with bureaucracy/filling out applications)	Representative of a CSO founded in 2016 to support Syrian refugees. One additional background interview (not recorded).
CSO2	Cross-sectional (support with bureaucracy/filling out applications)	Representative of a CSO founded in 2022 to support Ukrainian refugees. Interview conducted in Ukrainian at the request of the organisation.

Table 2 Continued

Abbreviation	Topic	Interviewee's Role
CSO3	Labour market	Two employees/representatives of a CSO working with/supporting post-Soviet migrants. The interviewees work as part of a programme that provides job counselling for Ukrainian FDPs.
SLO1	Cross-sectional (support for FDPs in their everyday lives)	Migration guide in one Berlin district.
SLO2	Cross-sectional (support for FDPs in their everyday lives)	Migration guide in one Berlin district.
SLO3	Education	Two social workers working with students and parents in welcome classes within one district in Berlin.

Labour market integration and social benefits

Early on, Germany pursued a strategy of the long-term integration of Ukrainian refugees into the German job market that put language learning first, the aim being to enable later job placement in accordance with Ukrainians' qualifications. This strategy is meant to prevent de-skilling while aligning with Germany's labour market shortage (Kosyakova et al., 2024; Tränhardt, 2024). Accordingly, for Ukrainian FDPs that receive the citizen's benefits, participation in a language course is mandatory. Integration courses are tailored for protection-seekers, preparing them for an A2 or B1 exam. Besides language, these courses include lessons on German laws, history and culture. In contrast to labour migrants, Ukrainian FDPS did not plan or prepare their stay in Germany, and language skills among the protection-seekers were accordingly low at the beginning (Brücker et al., 2022). For a majority of Ukrainians—those that don't belong to the 16 per cent who indicated being employed in an initial survey conducted between August and October 2022 (Brücker et al., 2022)—this meant that they first had to apply for the citizen's benefit to secure their livelihood and sign up for a language course.

Bureaucratic anxiety and frustration

The job centres are responsible for administering social support, language courses and job placement, making them the central authority for Ukrainian FDPs. In addition to providing workshops, trainings and counselling, CSOs and integration guides serve as buffers between the job centre and Ukrainian FDPs. A representative of a CSO that has been working with refugees since 2015 emphasises that there are very few differences between working with Syrian and Ukrainian protection-seekers despite the former being accepted under the Asylum Seekers Act and the latter being accepted under paragraph 24 of the Residence Act. A volunteer and FDP from Ukraine at a CSO founded in 2022 expressed the effects of the bureaucratic procedures on her fellow citizens as follows:

> *People arrive, of course, without knowing German. They are very confused and frightened because there is a lot of paperwork involved, which is a responsibility, and it causes people to panic when they have to write and fill out forms on their own. […] Each step involves at least one or several applications. The paperwork must be done, and it is extremely important. If you fail to complete one of the forms, it can have serious consequences. And for our people, this causes constant anxiety. (Interviewee CSO2)*

The respondent also reported that job centres (and other municipal authorities) often send her clients. One of the migration guides voiced similar experiences, stressing that she would be able to mediate between a job centre and Ukrainian FDPs. She recounted the example of a Ukrainian mother who came to Germany with her son and was very frightened of not receiving social support:

And she felt completely lost, even frightened, because if she doesn't get any support here—because you have to submit all the documents, perhaps on time or at least ask for an extension of the deadline. So, you have to register and simply fill out all the requirements. That's very important. And, of course, she's afraid that she won't be able to do it. So, on the one hand, of course, she doesn't understand the language, but she also didn't know exactly what some things were, like these documents, what they were about. […] I explained to her that she shouldn't be too afraid of being rejected, because we know what we have to do, and, if we're unsure, we can also turn to a free legal advice service. (Interviewee SLO1)

SLO1 also explained how uncertainty surrounding Ukrainian FDPs arise because their living situation doesn't apply to job centres' expectations, for instance, because they live in a private home for free rather than with relatives or friends—a situation that was not particularly unusual in the first month following Russia's full-scale invasion but apparently in need of an explanation to placement officers at job centres (who pay for the accommodation of unemployed Ukrainian FDPs).

In cases of disagreement with the placement officer, FDPs have the right to object. However, both job centre representatives and integration guides agree that FDPs are hesitant to do so because they fear the consequences (SLB1, SLO1). Two experts reported that they support their clients in entering objection processes and understanding their rights (SLO1, CSO3).

One study that analysed social media discussions of Ukrainian FDPs revealed frustration with the unequal situation regarding the approval of German language courses leading to B2 or C1 proficiency (IQ Fachstelle Einwanderung und Integration, 2024). The perception of unequal approval practices among placement officers was also echoed by a Ukrainian volunteer—one with extensive contacts with other FDPs—at a CSO. She pointed to the frustration resulting from diverse practices in different districts across Berlin (CSO2).

Development of language skills and employment rate

As mentioned, for Ukrainian FDPs receiving the citizen's benefit, participation in integration courses is mandatory. The participation rate of FDPs in integration courses has remained consistently high, and 90 per cent completed the courses at the A2 or B1 level.[9] In accordance with these numbers, Ukrainians who initially arrived with little knowledge of German reported significant progress in their language skills in 2023 (Bartig et al., 2025). The employment rate also grew consistently in 2023, going from 18 per cent at the beginning of the year to 24.4 per cent in the second half.

However, there is a clear gender difference: While 26 per cent of men are working, only 21 per cent of women are. It may be assumed that this difference is primarily due to female FDPs' caretaking responsibilities, which are particularly high for the significant proportion of Ukrainian women who fled without a partner. The influence of caretaking work is also supported by the fact that employment among respondents with small children between the ages of 0 and 6 is significantly lower, while the rate is higher among those who live with a partner. Compared to men, women are also particularly likely to work in unskilled jobs (37 per cent versus 26 per cent) (Bartig et al., 2025). Overall, a trend toward deskilling is visible already in 2023, as only 27 per cent of FDPs work as experts in Germany, while it was 50 per cent in Ukraine (Tränhard, 2024). On average, Ukrainians in Germany are more likely to work in nursing and healthcare professions and in the restaurant industry (Bartig et al, 2025).

Despite progress in language acquisition and employment rates (the former being a prerequisite for the latter in Germany, as most employers require at least a B2 or C1 language level), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs announced at the end of 2023 a change in strategy for integrating Ukrainian refugees into the labour market—Job Turbo—aimed at placing Ukrainians in jobs, even if they have limited language skills, with language learning to take place on the job.[10]

Notes

9. https://mediendienst-integration.de/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html

10. https://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/turbo-zur-arbeitsmarktintegration.html

In May 2025, the employment rate of Ukrainian FDPs was 34.9 per cent. A survey with Ukrainian FDPs in Berlin/Brandenburg suggests that de-skilling has increased further (Günzal & Lushankina, 2025).

Obstacles to labour market integration

Language skills, recognition of qualifications, and childcare

Although some progress has been made, the employment rate is currently still low, beyond initial expectations (Tränhardt, 2024). What factors are preventing Ukrainians from taking up employment in Germany despite a shortage of skilled workers and many of the Ukrainian FDPs having previously worked in in-demand professions? The main factors are insufficient language skills, the slow and bureaucratic recognition of professional qualifications, and a lack of appropriate childcare. According to surveys, the supply of daycare places is sufficient, at least for children over the age of 3 (Bartig, 2025). However, as many women are solely responsible for childcare, more flexible childcare options are necessary, for example, parallel to language courses. This would also help to counteract the gender gap in employment.

In 2022, the European Commission recommended that member states implement a simple, minimally bureaucratic procedure to recognise professional qualifications under the TPD. However, Germany has yet to implement such a procedure; instead, recognition has followed the convoluted guidelines that have long applied to asylum procedures. As a result, recognition procedures take a very long time, and the number of recognitions to date is very low. It is particularly difficult to find work in regulated professions in the health, teaching, legal, social and skilled-trade sectors, even though there is a shortage of workers in these areas in Germany (Tränhardt, 2024). To give just one example, the large number of Ukrainian students posed a major challenge to the German school system, which was already suffering from a teacher shortage. However, only a few federal states decided to hire Ukrainian teachers (Tränhard, 2024). To be certain, there are differences in the Germans' and Ukrainians' qualifications in the aforementioned sectors, and it seems reasonable for some kind of additional qualification to be required for Ukrainian FDPs to integrate into the German labour market (also voiced in an interview with CSO2).

Instead of requiring Ukrainians to complete a multi-year degree or vocational training, a specially designed bridging course could represent a workable and more efficient solution (Tränhard, 2024).

A lack of language skills prevents Ukrainian FDPs from finding work in almost all occupational fields. The A2/B1 level achieved by many falls far short of employers' expectations, who often require at least B2 or C1 German proficiency. These expectations are not in line with Job Turbo's mission to place people with poor language skills in jobs. In general, the possibility of exceeding B1 proficiency has been restricted since the end of 2024, when the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees changed the integration course regulations, removing the possibility of repeating courses to pass language tests and cancelling special occupational language courses. In the same time span, there have been fewer funds available due to the change of government. The new government still must approve a new budget. Accordingly, at a time when many Ukrainian FDPs are increasingly reaching the B1 level, funds are extremely limited for B2 and C1 language courses (a fact that was confirmed in interviews with job centre representatives: SLB1 and SLB2).

Due to the financial cuts, the approval of language courses has become even more difficult since the beginning of 2025. A placement officer at a job centre confirmed that she can only approve B2 or C1 courses for highly qualified clients—and only after rigorous scrutiny (SLB2). While this practice is obviously worsening integration chances for less qualified FDPs (and possibly their children), it doesn't even appear to effectively follow the logic of supporting only what's best for the German labour market, as all experts agree that B2 or C1 levels are required in a majority of fields in Germany. In some cases, CSOs offering job counselling can support FDPs in arguing for the approval of certain language courses or training sessions if they would reasonably benefit the clients' job profiles (CSO3).

Finally, the residence requirement is also an obstacle to employment, as permission is required to move. This bureaucratic process can hinder the successful conclusion of a contract with an employer (CSO2). The residence requirement has also been considered ineffective when applied to other refugee groups (Tränhardt, 2024).

Job counselling

In 2023, 51 per cent of unemployed Ukrainians reported that they needed support to find work and learn German, while 39 per cent and 31 per cent frequently mentioned the insufficient recognition of professional qualifications and trouble finding childcare as factors that hinder their ability to take up employment (Bartig et al., 2025). What support is available to Ukrainians in their job search, and how has this support changed since 2022? Job centres are the main state authority responsible for job placement. Beyond approving language courses and occupational training, they also offer positions directly. Since the implementation of the Job Turbo programme, job centres have been required to make appointments with Ukrainian FDPs every six weeks. To bridge the significant language barrier—as most Ukrainian FDPs arrived without knowing German—most job centres have access to an interpreter hotline (Schreyer et al., 2024). In Berlin, integration guides are physically on site to provide additional support for several hours each week (SLO1, SLO2, SLB1).

The specific ways in which job centres have adapted to the needs of Ukrainian refugees depend on each job centre. For instance, one job centre in Berlin has a special team for refugees and migrants that stems from work done with other refugee groups prior to 2022 (predominantly but not exclusively Syrian refugees). The job centre also decided to temporarily pool its expertise on the topic with a new temporary position since the start of 2025. The interviewed expert argued that, to improve and streamline the work of the placement officers, additional qualifications and particular specialisation would be necessary (SLB1). A placement officer echoed this opinion, stating that a workshop on the Ukrainian education system would improve his work with Ukrainian FDPs (Schreyer et al., 2024).

The cited expert is also responsible for meeting important stakeholders in the district administration and CSOs working with Ukrainian FDPs. CSOs play a crucial role in Germany when it comes to providing services, such as labour market activation measures like coaching and workshops (Honorati, 2024). Experts working at a CSO with long-term experience in supporting migrants' integration into the German labour market reported that placement officers from job centres would send their clients to them more frequently following the introduction of Job Turbo (CSO3).

From the organisations' work with Ukrainian FDPs, several more factors may be identified that hinder quick integration into employment. While the German system places substantial emphasis on degrees and qualifications, Ukrainian FDPs have worked in professions for which they have no training (CSO1; see also Schreyer et al., 2024). The reported experiences of the experts providing advice in both the Ukrainian and Russian languages indicate that much contextual knowledge about the Ukrainian labour market and education system is necessary to be able to determine the required skills and qualifications and translate them into the German system. In-depth knowledge enables the experts to not only streamline their clients' application document but also to motivate them in the event that they receive a high number of rejections (CSO3).

Protracted displacement and TPD

According to surveys, most Ukrainians find work through personal contacts. Only a very small proportion (7 per cent) said in 2024 that they found work through job centres (Ünsal et al., 2024). One of the experts who worked as a job placement officer recounted how she accounted for the importance of social networks and inclusion into the living environment by placing clients into voluntary work:

> *I had a client, a vet, but with A2 [language skills], and now she can't get any further. […] And I also make that clear to her, "well, madam, that's really a long way off [until you reach a B2 language level], let's try something else, I heard that here in [the district] there is an animal park, and they are looking for volunteers". […] I turn my screen, show her the necessary information and send her there. (Interviewee SLB2)*

The expert was exceptionally engaged in her job, reinforced (in her own words) by the fact that she was Ukrainian herself. Assuming, however, that the average SLB doesn't put as much effort into the job, we must acknowledge that, aside from job counselling, social networks play a crucial role for protection seekers aiming to find work.

However, developing local networks requires time. FDPs also need time to settle in and secure their livelihoods in other areas, such as housing and childcare, as emphasised by two experts from CSO3. In their view, counselling must always consider each FPD's family situation, as existing problems in these areas hinder employment (CSO3).

This opinion is further reinforced by the results of an online survey that asked FDPs about their main concerns. Generally, another survey showed that willingness to work is high among Ukrainian FDPs in Germany (Bartig et al., 2025). However, in the online survey of FDPs in Brandenburg and Berlin, finding work only became a major concern in 2024, alongside worrying about family in their home country and homesickness. In 2023, compared to other issues like language and communication problems, housing and health issues all ranked higher (Ünsal, 2024). Another report showed that discussions about how to find work increased on social media over time, substituting discussions about registration or housing problems (IQ Fachstelle Einwanderung und Integration, 2024). Consequently, when studying the labour market integration of FDPs, the time they need to settle in the new environment must be acknowledged as a factor that slows down the uptake of employment. A more realistic consideration of this factor prevents unrealistically high expectations because of other characteristics of FDPs, such as good education, as is the case with Ukrainians.

The temporary nature of their protection is another factor that influences FDPs' integration in Germany. For Ukrainian FDPs, the temporary protection raises the question of whether they are aiming for long-term integration in Germany, which would make it more likely for them to invest time and effort in an apprenticeship that lasts two or three years. This uncertainty regarding Ukrainian FDPs' long-term perspectives impacts the work of SLBs as well. SLB1 argues that his colleagues would not support the idea of further specialisation or special programmes for Ukrainian FDPs due to the uncertainty about how long such special knowledge on Ukrainian FDPs would be required (SLB1). Here, the temporality of the Ukrainian residence permit seems to hinder a change in the job centre's procedures in favour of a better placement service for FDPs. The same applies to local companies, according to the expert, who also expressed uncertainty about how much to invest in hiring Ukrainian FDPs. Therefore, the expert argues that job centres could increase their efforts to cooperate with companies and incentivise them to employ Ukrainian FDPs (SLB1).

In summary, various temporalities impede the integration of Ukrainian FDPs into the German labour market. Overall, it is clear that there are many arguments in favour of seeking more permanent residence solutions for Ukrainian FDPs, allowing for longer-term planning for the FDPs themselves as well as for SLBs and employers.

Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

Generally, in contrast to other refugees, Ukrainians are free to move within Germany and settle wherever they find accommodations. Those assigned to collective refugee accommodations are distributed throughout Germany. The admissions quota is based on the so-called Königsstein Key. Living conditions vary significantly across the country because accommodation is the responsibility of the federal states in cooperation with municipalities (Kühn & Schlicht, 2023).

In the second half of 2023, an 83 per cent majority of Ukrainian refugees in Germany lived in private accommodations and were satisfied with their living situation (Bartig et al., 2025). In big cities, however, FDPs have trouble finding accommodations due to the general housing shortage (Haase, 2024). The citizen's benefit comprises a monthly amount of 563 euros alongside health insurance and housing costs, but the rent must be within a specific range, which is particularly troublesome in large cities. Moreover, research suggests that discrimination is widespread in the German rental market (El Kayed & Hamann, 2018), exacerbating Ukrainian FDPs' chances of finding (affordable) housing.

Early on, private hosts played a crucial role in sheltering Ukrainian FDPs (DeZim, 2022; Haller, 2022). This form of engagement gained prominence through the use of digital platforms. For example, through #UnterkunftUkraine, over 49,000 of the Ukrainian FDPs in Germany were accommodated between March and September 2022. The results of an online survey indicate that hosts also often assisted their guests with registration, other paperwork, and even looking for an apartment (DeZim, 2022). Obviously, private flats and houses carry certain risks. For example, one of the interviewed experts recounted examples of private hosts demanding Ukrainian FDPs do all their housework.

There were also cases of sexual assault (SLO3). More research is needed to determine the scope of such cases, especially considering that several experts emphasised Ukrainian FDPs' fear of “ending up in Tegel” (SLO1), putting them under increased pressure to find private accommodations.

In Berlin, the largest portion of Ukrainian FDPs in collective accommodations live at the former Tegel Airport. Although initially intended as a temporary shelter, Ukrainian FDPs and other refugees often live here for up to a year or longer. The inhumane conditions at Tegel Airport were cited by all CSO interviewees in this study and have also been documented by other experts and media reports (see the extensive report by the CSO Flüchtlingsrat (refugee council), which also covers media reports: Flüchtlingsrat, 2023). Living conditions in Tegel Airport align with the main problems of collective accommodations in Germany identified by Vey (2023): bad infrastructural connection, low quality of counselling and support, a lack of privacy, poor food quality (when food is included in the rent) and poor overall hygiene. The author criticised the lack of a legal basis for defining minimum standards for collective accommodations.

Survey results indicate that it is primarily vulnerable groups who will struggle to find an apartment beyond collective refugee accommodations. On average, people who have found an apartment have a higher level of education and better health status. In addition, a significant majority say they found an apartment through acquaintances who are German citizens (Bartig et al., 2025). For people living in collective accommodations like Tegel Airport, it is difficult or impossible to establish contacts with the local population; they are isolated from the outside world, as argued by one of my respondents from a local CSO . For her, it is a priority to visit the collective accommodation to make people ”visible” and give them the feeling of being seen (CSO1).

The collective accommodations at Tegel Airport offer at least a support programme run by a CSO that supports Ukrainian FDPs in their native languages with the bureaucratic processes. However, neither municipalities, federal states, nor CSOs offer specific support in finding adequate housing. Ukrainian FDPs are eligible for subsidised housing (WBS), which slightly increases their chances of finding affordable housing. However, in Berlin, 60 per cent of the city population is eligible for the WBS.

Accordingly, although data indicate that a majority of Ukrainian FDPs managed to find private accommodations and are satisfied with their living situation, collective housing for refugees, such as Tegel Airport, continues to exist. Support programmes for vulnerable groups that are more likely to live permanently in collective housing should be expanded.

Policies and outcomes regarding the education of youth and children

For children and youth under the TPD, it is mandatory to visit a school. In Germany, the federal states are responsible for education. Therefore, the schooling of Ukrainian children and youth varies greatly – some initially attend special preparatory classes for refugees (known as 'welcome classes', 'refugee classes' or 'newcomer classes'), which focus primarily on language acquisition. Others take the path of full immersion and immediately participate in regular classes, while still others are partially integrated into regular classes and receive additional language training (Winkler & Carwel, 2025).

According to a survey, approximately one-third of school-age FDPs Germany exclusively attended welcome classes in 2022 (Brücker et al., 2022). In a second survey conducted in the second half of 2023, 16 per cent stated that they exclusively attended welcome classes, and 24 per cent stated that they attended additional support classes. This means that 60 per cent exclusively attended regular classes. Among 11- to 17-year-olds, the proportion of those attending regular classes was slightly lower (Bartig et al., 2025). By summer 2024, the vast majority of 11- to 17-year-olds had transferred to regular classes, with only 6 per cent attending a welcome class and 9 per cent attending additional language courses (Bib, 2024). According to the young Ukrainians' own assessment, their language skills have improved significantly since 2022. In 2022, 92 per cent said that they did not know German upon arrival; by 2024, however, half described their German skills as good to very good, and 35 per cent described them as adequate (Bib, 2024).

Generally, Ukrainian FDPs have the right to study for free at a German university and receive financial support (BAFÖG) to cover their living expenses.[11] Many universities have also offered additional scholarship programmes for Ukrainian FDPs. In the winter term 2023/24, 8,329 FDPs were enrolled at a German university.[12]

A report based on interviews with Ukrainian parents in 2022 reveals their disappointment with their children being placed in preparatory classes, which often only teach the German language for a few hours per day. Moreover, several parents mentioned difficulties in registering their children at a gymnasium (the type of secondary school that offers the highest level of education). Research indicates that refugees who are taught in preparatory classes have significantly poorer German language skills and, later, overall academic outcomes than children who were immediately taught German in regular classes (2022 Econ, Winkler & Carwell, 2025). In fact, in 2023, significantly fewer Ukrainian refugees attended a gymnasium than would be expected based on their parents' level of education (Barti et al., 2025). The perception that they wouldn't receive an adequate education in Germany is one reason why a portion of the Ukrainian FDPs continue to attend Ukrainian classes online (ZOiS, 2022). In 2023, about half of the student FDPs took on this double burden (Bartig et al., 2025). In a 2024 survey of Ukrainian youth, only 33 per cent reported still taking Ukrainian classes (Bib, 2024).

An interview with a 16-year-old Ukrainian FDP student, recounted in the same report, illustrates how time-consuming this practice is, forcing her to study all day. However, the student argues that she likes to study because talking distracts her from the fact that she has no close social contacts in Germany (ZOIS, 2022). While the student has only been living in Germany for a few months, a 2024 survey echoes her social isolation, showing that a remarkably high number of Ukrainian students say they do not feel like they belong at their German school. The study's authors noted that the sense of belonging among Ukrainian youth is significantly less strong than it was among Syrian refugees two years post-arrival in Germany (Bib, 2024).

Notes

11. https://mediendienst-integration.de/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html

12. Ibid.

This feeling of non-belonging among young Ukrainian FDPs is also echoed in a qualitative study by Mikheeva et al. (2025), who conclude that, although none of the interviewees reported direct discrimination, a majority reported not feeling accepted at school. In addition, the interviewees described having lost their ties with friends in Ukraine. The two interviewed social workers likewise expressed an assumption that Ukrainians would probably not make many new friends after transferring from their welcome class to a regular class. In their view, students in welcome classes would ideally participate in regular classes from the beginning as well; implementing this idea, however, would depend on exceptionally engaged teachers (SLO3).

The uncertainty felt by Ukrainians about their future likely plays a role in their sense that they don't belong. Many cannot transfer directly to a German university; they must improve their German language skills and attend additional classes. Some perceive this as a loss in status (ZOIS, 2022, CSO3). However, a report shows that there have been mounting tendencies among Ukrainian youth to start an apprenticeship (BIB, 2024). Two interviewed experts confirmed that they put significant effort into explaining the value of an apprenticeship to young Ukrainian FDPs, as such training is marginal in Ukraine (CSO3, SLO3). The two social workers recounted that involving young Ukrainian FDPs in leisure activities would have been a crucial part of their work (SLO3). Two interviewed experts pointed to the discrimination that Ukrainian FDPs experienced at school from Russian-speaking youth (SLO2 and SLO3, in reference to a district with a significant share of Russian-speaking dwellers).

Moreover, the temporality of Ukrainian FDPs' protection has a significant impact on children and youth. It is noteworthy that, in 2024, more young people indicate a desire to return than their parents (BIB, 2024). However, children are dependent on their parents' decisions; according to one of the interviewed experts, unless parents make the decision to stay in Germany, it's difficult for their children to settle down (SLO3). Another expert emphasises that children and youth often miss their fathers who had to stay in Ukraine (SLO2). One of the interviewed social workers explained the dilemma of protracted displacement and undecidedness (in terms of staying or returning) when it comes to the value of welcome classes as a safe space, even when it has drawbacks:

There are people there who may have had similar experiences, and you can gradually enter the world you're now thrown into (i.e., the German world with its school system, with everything that goes with it, including parents and language). […] However, I don't know, integration does have its drawbacks, of course. It has to be said that, in this protected environment, you tend to isolate yourself and then somehow don't really go out […] It's just a question of what the prospects are for staying. So, if the prospect is that I'm definitely going back, then the protected environment is good. If it's clear that I'm staying, then… It's actually less necessary for Ukrainian refugees. (Interviewee SLO3)

In summary, available data and insights from expert interviews collectively indicate that young Ukrainian FDPs face many difficulties in adapting to their displacement in Germany. Many of them do not feel like they belong at their school. The temporality of their protection plays a crucial role in this regard, impeding long-term decisions about education and, presumably, about making friends beyond the classroom.

Conclusions

In Germany, which has taken in the largest number of Ukrainian FDPs of any European country, the TPD has been implemented quite comprehensively overall. However, the basic security for Ukrainian FDPs that have arrived since 1 April 2025 is in jeopardy, and discussions about restrictions on basic security measures for all FDPS are mounting under the new German government led by Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who's been critical of social support for Ukrainian FDPs from the outset.

This report suggests that the initial encounters between Ukrainian FDPs and German bureaucracy have been marked by fear and anxiety. SLOs and CSOs are important buffers between SLBs and FDPs in this regard. It is also worth noting that there is regular dialogue between civil society and the Berlin Senate (even if some interviewees also criticised municipal institutions and expressed a desire for more say).

It should also be emphasised that an organisation newly founded by Ukrainians in 2022 has succeeded in establishing cooperation with municipal authorities and recruiting many Ukrainian FDPs as volunteers. However, negative experiences with bureaucracy have likely undermined Ukrainians' trust in municipal institutions, making them a significant obstacle to their general integration into Germany—including integration into the labour market. Urgent efforts should be made to streamline and better explain the associated bureaucratic processes.

This report has identified several mechanisms that make it difficult for Ukrainian FDPs to find work, including a lack of language skills, insufficient recognition of qualifications, and insufficient support for women with caretaking responsibilities. If labour market participation is to continue to rise, new training opportunities must be created that facilitate the recognition of Ukrainian qualifications without requiring years of retraining. At the same time, employers must be incentivised to hire FDPs. By launching Job Turbo, the German government significantly altered its long-term strategy for labour market integration—at least rhetorically. The report has shown that equating protection-seekers who fled from war with labour migrants gives way to unrealistically high expectations. Ukrainian FDPs first had to secure housing, childcare and schooling and acquire basic language skills, which were very weak in 2022. Only in 2023, when Job Turbo was launched, did FDPs begin to invest more effort into finding work.

Since the start of this war-driven wave of migration, research has pointed to the de-skilling tendencies of employed Ukrainians; further research should explore the extent to which Job Turbo reinforced this trend. The interviews with SLOs and CSOs indicated that job centre employees send their clients to additional counselling services, which the interviewees saw as a positive development. However, one report also suggests that placement officers at job centres put more pressure on Ukrainian FDPs to take low-skilled positions. The most recent financial and legal constraints for language courses at the B2/C1 level have also impeded Ukrainian FDPs' chances to find work in line with their high qualifications.

The temporary protection status constrains the integration of Ukrainian FDPs into the labour market on two levels. First, FDPs are hesitant to invest in long-term integration by, for instance, starting an apprenticeship. Secondly, SLBs and employers are similarly holding back when it comes to launching specific programmes for FDPs.

The uncertainties surrounding temporary protection have a significant effect on young Ukrainian FDPs: At a formative stage in their lives, they are struggling to balance their desire to return home with their pursuit of an education in Germany. Particularly noteworthy is the low sense of belonging among Ukrainian FDPs at their schools. This sense of non-belonging requires further research. In general, however, additional support services, such as those offered by social workers in Berlin, represent a positive practice.

A majority of Ukrainian FDPs quickly found private housing because, unlike other protection-seekers, they could freely choose their place of residence. This is a clear sign that the same rights should be applied to other protection-seekers as well. However, there is a crucial need for more insights into Ukrainian FDPs' trajectories in private shared accommodations, as their dependence on private hosts risks exploitation. It is particularly important to find alternatives to mass refugee accommodations for Ukrainian FDPs, such as those at the former Tegel Airport in Berlin, which offers only inhumane conditions. Data indicate that it is primarily vulnerable groups who find it difficult to secure accommodation and, in turn, end up living permanently in mass accommodations. Thus, there is a need for more affordable public housing, a demand that applies not only to protection-seekers but also to other societal groups in Germany.

Lastly, politicians at the EU level and in Germany should urgently discuss alternative solutions for residence permits for Ukrainian FDPs in the post-TPD era starting in March 2027. Currently available residence permits apply only to a minimum number of protection-seekers. These solutions should offer valid avenues for both those who plan to stay in Germany in the long term and those who want to return to Ukraine after the end of the war to contribute to the reconstruction of their country. Such a dualistic approach will contribute to successful integration in EU countries and to stronger reintegration in Ukraine, thereby facilitating the country’s reconstruction.

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