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Country Report Lithuania

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HORIZON EUROPE

Executive Summary

This report offers contextual information about forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion and provides an overview of the responsibilities of the government and other stakeholders in implementing the Temporary Protection Directive in Lithuania from 2022 to 2025. It specifically focuses on labour, housing, and education policies. The report is based on desk research (laws, policy reports, and previous studies) and analysis of semi-structured interviews with experts in the labor market, housing, and education who regularly interact with FDPs from Ukraine. To date, approximately 48,000 FDPs from Ukraine have received temporary protection and hold temporary residence permits, which will be extended until March 2027. Since 2022, TP beneficiaries have enjoyed the same rights as Lithuanian citizens in welfare sectors. These rights include access to social welfare and means of subsistence.

Labour market. To improve access to the labour market for Ukrainian FDPs, the government has implemented a comprehensive set of active labour market policy measures, including subsidized wages, occupational training, and Lithuanian language courses. Ukrainian FDPs have also been exempted from the Lithuanian language proficiency requirement and the work permit process. The employment rate of Ukrainian FDPs is high, and their unemployment rate is low. However, some recent developments could negatively affect the welfare of Ukrainians. There is a risk of potential deskilling and downward mobility as individuals often take less qualified or unqualified jobs simply to find work quickly and earn money to cover living expenses. Women are more likely to work in cleaning and retail services, while men tend to work in construction and transportation. However, Ukrainian FDPs, especially women, frequently report difficulty supporting themselves because of low wages and a high cost of living.

Housing. Since February 2022, state and municipal institutions, agencies, private organisations, and individuals have offered housing to Ukrainian refugees. Volunteers from CSOs, the Lithuanian Red Cross Society, Caritas Lithuania, the Order of Malta Relief Organisation in Lithuania, and Save the Children have provided assistance and information on available housing, helping Ukrainian FDPs access accommodation services. Municipalities mostly provide housing for vulnerable individuals, while refugee centres prioritise accepting single mothers with children and people with disabilities. The initial support for housing provided at the beginning of the war revealed its strengths thanks to state support, provided services, and public acceptance. However, certain challenges remain. Housing policy measures have been fragmented and short-term. Long-term housing rentals remain an unresolved issue. There is a tendency for the majority population to be reluctant to rent accommodation to Ukrainians. Landlords often request deposits covering several months in advance and refuse to officially register rental agreements. The high cost of rent often makes it unaffordable, even for employed people.

Education. In Lithuania, Ukrainian FDPs are eligible for state-funded pre-school, primary, general education, vocational training, and higher education. Ukrainian FDPs have been integrated into the public schools. Some schools have been established to provide education in the Ukrainian language. Enrolled in public schools, Ukrainian students are required to study the Lithuanian language, regardless of the language of instruction (state or minority) at their school. Learning the Lithuanian language remains challenging due to the insufficient resources that schools can provide in this process. In the first two years following Russia's full-scale invasion, a specific number of places (quotas) were designated for Ukrainian students at universities in Lithuania; however, they were abolished in 2024.

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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)
FDP*	Forcibly Displaced Person. The term "Ukrainian FDPs" refers to people who have fled to Europe because of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.
PEA	Public Employment Agency
CSO	Civil society organization
SLB	Street level Bureaucrat
RIA	Reception and Integration Agency

Background

On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, causing a large-scale displacement of people from Ukraine to both European and non-European countries. Lithuania, an EU member, borders Latvia, Poland, Belarus, and Russia. In 1940, Lithuania was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union and regained independence in 1990. In 2004, Lithuania joined the European Union and became part of NATO. Its geographical closeness to the Russian Federation, along with its history of Soviet occupation, greatly influences Lithuania's view of Russia's war in Ukraine and its stance on Temporary Protection Directives (TPDs).

This report offers an overview and analysis of the housing, education, and labor policies enacted by Lithuanian authorities and civil society to support Ukrainians who have been forcibly displaced. It primarily focuses on the current situation amid Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine from 2022 to 2025. The report also briefly reviews migration trends to and from Lithuania since the country's independence to provide context for the shifts in migration patterns following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

From 1990 to 2017, Lithuania experienced more emigration than immigration (EMN, n.d.). Between 2004 and 2022, about 818,000 people emigrated from Lithuania (Official statistics cited in EMN, n.d.). The highest level of emigration was in 2010, when 83,157 people left the country (Official Statistics cited in EMN, n.d.). This spike was due to the global economic crisis and its effect on the national economy. Until 2017, most of the immigrants to Lithuania were Lithuanians returning from abroad (EMN, n.d.). However, 2017 saw a major shift in migration patterns, with third-country nationals making up the majority (74 percent) of immigrants (EMN, n.d.). That year, approximately 40 percent of all immigrants came from Ukraine and Belarus (EMN, n.d.).

Migration from Ukraine to Lithuania has been steadily increasing over the years. In 2015, 1,149 Ukrainian citizens immigrated to Lithuania. This number rose to 4,340 in 2017 and reached 8,287 by 2021 (EMN, n.d.). Before the war, many Ukrainian nationals came to Lithuania for employment, particularly in the transportation and production sectors (Petrušauskaitė, Batuchina, 2015: 32-33)

Between February 2022 and mid-October 2025, a total of 99,732 individuals from Ukraine entered Lithuania (Oficialiosios statistikos portalas, n.d.). This number includes all FDPs from Ukraine who arrived and registered at the Department of Migration, including those who have already left Lithuania (Oficialiosios statistikos portalas, n.d.). Of these, 99% were Ukrainian citizens, as reported by the Official Statistics Portal. The statistics show the following distribution of individuals by age group: 4,355 are younger than 6 years old, 22,625 are between 6 and 17 years old, 66,500 are between 18 and 64 years old, and 6,252 are over 65 years old (Oficialiosios statistikos portalas, n.d.). According to the Official Statistics Portal, the majority of forcibly displaced adults from Ukraine—those over 18 years old who arrived after the start of the war or cannot return due to the ongoing conflict—are female, comprising 60 to 80 percent of this group (Oficialiosios statistikos portalas, n.d.).

Currently, about 48,000 FDPs from Ukraine have been granted temporary protection through temporary residence permits in Lithuania (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). There is some mobility among Ukrainian nationals to and from Lithuania; for example, in 2023, around 12,000 Ukrainian refugees who had received temporary protection left Lithuania for Ukraine or another country (MIGRIS, 2024 March 5). However, roughly the same number of new FDPs arrived in Lithuania from Ukraine (MIGRIS, 2024 March 5). As a result, the total number of Ukrainian nationals currently under temporary protection in Lithuania remains fairly stable (MIGRIS, 2024 March 5). Currently, there are no additional detailed statistics available on the mobility of Ukrainians. Additionally, Ukrainians can apply for residence permits based on humanitarian reasons, labor visas, and other permit types (MIGRIS, 2024 August 7).

There is a variety of state, civic society and individual actors who provide/d support for FDPs from Ukraine. Some overview is provided in Table nr. 1.

1. Actors of reception of FDP’s from Ukraine

Sphere	Actors and the type of Support
Education	Public educational institutions, including preschools, schools, and universities, are enrolling forcibly displaced individuals from Ukraine into their education programs. They also offer additional consultations on the Lithuanian language. Various universities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and state institutions offer Lithuanian language courses for adults.
Housing	Public (state) institutions, such as Registration Centers and the Refugee Reception Center (later the Reception and Integration Agency (Priėmimo ir integracijos agentūra), help to find and provide accommodation for Ukrainian FDPs. Municipalities provide housing for Ukrainian FDPs. CSOs such as the Lithuanian Red Cross Society (Lietuvos raudonojo kryžiaus draugija), Caritas Lithuania (Lietuvos Caritas), the Order of Malta Relief Organisation in Lithuania (Maltos ordino pagalbos tarnyba Lietuvoje (maltiečiai), and "Save the Children" (Gelbėkit vaikus) help to find accommodation for FDPs based on their needs. There was also a civic initiative called the 'Strong together' (Stiprūs kartu) platform, which coordinated available registered accommodation and offered the opportunity to register different housing places.
Labour	State: Lithuanian Public Employment Agency (PEA) (Užimtumo tarnyba)– registers unemployed persons, consults about available jobs, social benefits, and legal regulations on employment conditions. PEA provides information on institutions to which an unemployed person can apply for the validation of his/her qualifications and to receive social benefits. Additionally, PEA has a mandate to organize language courses for adults. CSOs: provide information and consultations on employment possibilities, validation of qualifications, and available language courses
Health care	Public health institutions provide services to Ukrainian FDPs equally with Lithuanian citizens.

A survey conducted by "Baltijos tyrimai" in 2021 found that 47% of respondents preferred not to live in the same neighborhood as refugees. This was a significant increase from 2020, when only 27% held the same view (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Diversity Development Group, 2021). Additionally, 85% of respondents believed that the presence of refugees could lead to an increase in criminal activities in Lithuania (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Diversity Development Group, 2021). Despite these concerns, 39% supported the idea that the government should focus more on integrating refugees into Lithuanian society (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Diversity Development Group, 2021).

Public opinion about refugees from Ukraine shows different attitudes compared to those toward refugees from other regions. A survey conducted in September 2022 revealed that 79.7% of Lithuanian citizens support accepting war refugees from Ukraine into their country (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Diversity Development Group, 2022). However, support has declined over the years, as a public opinion survey in March 2025 showed that 61% of respondents support accepting war refugees from countries outside the EU (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Diversity Development Group, 2025). Despite this, there remains high acceptance of FDPs from Ukraine, as a 2025 poll indicates low social distance toward Ukrainian FDPs; that is, Ukrainian FDPs are the group welcomed in neighborhoods or workplaces (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Diversity Development Group, 2025).

FDPs from Ukraine are granted temporary protection in Lithuania through temporary residence permits (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.; MIGRIS, 2024 August 7). These permits can be applied for online and issued in digital format (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). However, after the application is submitted, the applicant must also reserve a face-to-face visit at the Lithuanian Migration Department (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). Ukrainian FDPs are allowed to work or start their own businesses as soon as they submit their application for a temporary residence permit and receive their registration form (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.; MIGRIS, 2024 August 7). Once granted this status and after declaring a place of residence, they may also qualify for additional forms of support. The available provisions may include a one-time settlement subsidy, a social allowance, monthly child benefits, coverage for school meals, and other forms of assistance (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). Ukrainians as TP beneficiaries can prolong the obtained resident permits till March 2027, as the European Commission extends the possibilities to grant temporary protection status to Ukrainians (Migration and Home Affairs, 2025)

Ukrainians who do not qualify for temporary protection—such as those who arrived in Lithuania before the war but cannot return to Ukraine due to the ongoing conflict—are allowed to work as soon as they receive a decision regarding their temporary residence permit (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.).

By registering for temporary protection status, individuals become eligible for a one-time social allowance from their municipality. The amount of this allowance varies by location; for instance, in Vilnius, it is 420 EUR (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). The one-time settlement allowance is granted to individuals who have signed a residential lease agreement for a minimum of six months.

The amount of this allowance depends on the number of foreigners granted temporary protection who are renting the property (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). Additionally, families can apply to municipalities for a monthly allowance for school-aged children, up to 18 years old or older if they are still attending school. Currently, the monthly allowance is 122.50 EUR per pupil, with an additional 70 EUR for children with disabilities or for families with three or more children (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.). FDPs' children attending school are eligible for free food at school. Children in preschool and those in the first and second grades of primary school receive meals at no cost, regardless of family income. For students in higher grades, free meals are available if the family's monthly income is less than 243.10 EUR per family member in 2025 (MiCenter, IOM, n.d.).

Governance and multilevel responsibilities in the implementation of TPD in respective countries

In Lithuania, the roles and functions of state institutions are divided as follows:

- The Migration Department under the Ministry of Interior is responsible for issuing the residence permits,
- The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for access to social benefits,
- The Public Employment Agency under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour – for access to employment, registering the unemployed, and collecting information on available job vacancies
- The Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports - for access to education (UNCHR, 2025)
- Reception and Integration Agency and municipalities - for access to housing

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is mainly responsible for coordinating refugee integration. Integration typically starts and progresses at the local level within municipalities. Therefore, the Ministry collaborates with local governments and civil society organizations, which play a key role in providing overall support for refugees.

The primary goal of integrating Ukrainian refugees is their inclusion in Lithuania's national education system and labor market, along with access to public services (UNCHR, 2025: 103). One potentially significant change has been an increase in the availability of funds for municipal authorities. On February 1, 2023, Order No A1-64 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour approved the description of the procedure for funding the project "Reception and Early Integration of Refugees from Ukraine" (HOME/2022/AMIF/AG/EMAS/TF1/LT/0013). This funding opportunity originates from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund under the measure "Assistance in case of emergency." It allows municipal administrations to apply for funding for integration activities (IOM/EMN, 2024: 30).

Based on this document, the integration measures cover the following: provision of information, consultation, mediation/entrepreneurship, representation, and civil orientation trainings. The measures also include support for integration into the labour market and local communities (State Audit, 2023: 10). There were 48 municipalities out of a total of 60 that applied for this fund. Only 22 municipalities reported that they provided the Lithuanian language courses in cooperation with the Public Labour Service, which organized language courses online (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024: 134).

However, some experts observed that municipalities play a passive role in refugee integration processes (State Audit, 2023:10). For example, in some municipalities, there is no coordinator for foreigner integration, meaning foreigners must apply for assistance through the general process and wait in the regular queue. In others, integration is treated as a form of social assistance and social services for foreigners, which they can access through a municipality. One municipality with a long history of refugee integration provides asylum seekers and Ukrainians with assistance on all matters on a one-stop basis and, where needed, mediates and cooperates with healthcare, education, and other institutions (State Audit, 2023:11).

Additionally, the State Audit indicates that local governmental institutions lack comprehensive data on residents, school children, and employees with TP status in their municipalities. Municipalities struggle to monitor how the integration process unfolds and what new needs and challenges emerge. As a result, municipalities are rarely able to adequately prepare for new integration challenges (State Audit, 2023: 11).

Regardless the attempts of the Lithuanian government to cover the basic needs of Ukrainians, certain challenges remained. Findings of the needs analysis of refugees from Ukraine living in Lithuania show that they lacked clear, streamlined information presented in understandable language about the services they are entitled to, institutional contacts, and the operation of public transportation. Up to 37.36% of surveyed Ukrainian FDPs claimed that the available information was unclear or only partially clear. Remarkably, 63.61% of respondents relied on information obtained through social media and community channels (IOM/EMN, 2024: 31).

- Opportunities and hinders in how the TPD frames the reception and inclusion of FDPs

The 2024 Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS) reveals that while most refugees from Ukraine in Lithuania have stable living conditions and supportive communities, approximately 15-20 percent face challenges that require targeted assistance. These challenges primarily include the need for support with livelihoods, language courses, and housing assistance. Currently, 13 percent of refugees still live in collective housing, and 53 percent of households share a single room. Access to healthcare and medications remains a problem, especially for those with disabilities or chronic illnesses, with 17 percent reporting difficulties in accessing healthcare and 40 percent lacking health insurance. Research indicates that up to 40 percent of respondents remain unaware of the free health services available to them and how to obtain reimbursement for their medications (IOM/EMN, 2024). CSOs also report a continued high demand for humanitarian support and emphasize the importance of ongoing programs, such as individual social counseling, assistance in accessing government services, and cash assistance (UNCHR, 2025: 103).

Learning the Lithuanian language remains a critical issue. There is no provision for who and how language training is to be provided to recipients of temporary protection, nor is there any provision for cultural awareness training, which is important for successful integration (State Audit, 2023). According to evidence from the Public Employment Service, only 3,6 percent of all Ukrainian citizens residing in Lithuania attended language courses in 2023. The majority of those learning the Lithuanian language were women (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024: 134). According to the 2024 Socio-Economic Insights Survey, only 25 per cent of Ukrainian FDPs in Lithuania understand basic Lithuanian. The survey also shows that up to 31 per cent are interested in taking language courses within the next six months (UNCHR, 2025).

The effectiveness of the Lithuanian language training is not assessed (State Audit, 2023). CSOs, engaged in the field of Ukrainian FDPs' integration, play a crucial role in bridging the gap by connecting refugees to resources and offering essential language support (UNCHR, 2025: 104). However, access to language courses remains limited (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024: 134). While most FDPs from Ukraine report positive interactions with local communities, they still struggle to form strong social ties. The 2024 Socio-Economic Insights Survey showed that 31 per cent of Ukrainian FDPs' children have no friends in the host community, and 30 per cent of FDPs experienced discrimination or hostility related to language or nationality. CSOs can help address these gaps by organizing social activities and community-building initiatives that promote understanding between Ukrainian FDPs and local citizens (UNCHR, 2025: 104).

Methods and materials

The report is based on information collected through both desk research and fieldwork. The main sources for desk research consist of:

- Statistics on migration published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Official Statistics Portal (Oficialiosios statistikos portalas), and the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (MIGRIS).
- Statistics on the labour market are published and provided by the Public Employment Agency.
- Press releases and policy briefs at the websites of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Science, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, State Language Inspectorate, Public Employment Agency.
- Transposed Directive of Temporary Protection to the Law on Legal Status of Foreigners, No. IX-2206 and its amendments, No. XIV-2673 (2024) and Decision No. 224 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania On Granting Temporary Protection to Foreigners of the Republic of Lithuania of March 17, 2022.
- Legislation on employment that directly targets FDPs: e.g., active employment measures for faster integration into the labour market (Law on Employment of 2016, amended 2022 and 2023).

- The legislation on housing compensation for FDPs of the Minister of Social Security and Labour; on the activities of the Registration centers of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, and amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners of the Republic of Lithuania.
- The legislation regarding the education of FDPs' children includes, for example, Letter No. SR-2534 dated June 30, 2022, from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, titled “On the education of Ukrainian children in the 2022–2023 academic year” (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerijos 2022 m. birželio 30 d. raštas Nr. SR-2534 „Dėl ukrainiečių vaikų ugdymo 2022–2023 mokslo metais“), which established the framework for working with FDPs from Ukraine.
- The reports and research targeting the FDPs in Lithuania: the Parliamentary Ombudspersons Office in Lithuania, the Lithuanian Red Cross Society, Institute of Sociology at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Science, and the Diversity Development group; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound); International Migration Organization (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The fieldwork was conducted among representatives of street-level bureaucrats (SLB) and civil society organizations (CSO) who have daily primary contact and experience working with migrants in the education, labor, or housing sectors. The composition of the sample is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. The sample of interviewees

Sector	SLB	CSO
Labour	SLB 1 in employment [A face-to-face interview with the consultant of Lithuanian Employment Agency, Vilnius office, responsible for assistance of Ukrainians FDP in Vilnius and Vilnius region. Consultant encounters Ukrainians on an everyday basis. The interview was conducted on June 5, 2025. It lasted 54 minutes.]	CSO 1 in employment [online interview (on Teams platform) was conducted with the employment manager at the CSO, who consults Ukrainian FDPs on an everyday basis. The interview took place on June 13, 2025. It lasted 51 minutes.]

Table 2 Continued

Sector	SLB	CSO
Housing	<p>SLB 1 in housing [Face-to-face interview with the representative of the Reception and Integration Agency in Vilnius. She has been working there since September 2021. The research participant has direct encounters with Ukrainian FDPs on an everyday basis, as they accommodate the migrants (including the FDPs from Ukraine). The interview took place at the center and was conducted on June 18, 2025, lasting 62 minutes.</p>	<p>CSO 1 in housing [A remote (via Zoom) interview with a representative of the Registration Centre in Marijampolė, who has three years' experience (since the Centre opened in 2022) volunteering/working with Ukrainian FDPs on a daily basis and currently coordinates various integration activities for them. The interview was conducted on June 4, 2025. It lasted for 76 minutes.</p>
Education	<p>SLB 1 in education [Face-to-face interview with the headmaster of a school in Vilnius that has Russian as the language of instruction, enrolling students from Ukraine. The research participant has direct encounters with Ukrainian pupils and their parents on an everyday basis. The interview was conducted on May 29, 2025, and lasted for 50 minutes.] SLB 2 in education [A face-to-face interview was conducted at a school in Vilnius that offers education in Russian and enrolls students from Ukraine. The interview took place on May 30, 2025, and included the school head (interviewee No. 1) and two deputy heads (interviewees No. 2 and No. 3). All research participants have direct encounters with school pupils and their parents on a daily basis. It lasted 45 minutes.]</p>	<p>CSO 1 in education [Face-to-face interview with three representatives of CSO in Vilnius, which has long-term experience in daily work with FDPs from different regions and, since 2022, with FDPs from Ukraine. The representatives include the head of some programme at the CSO (interviewee no. 1), the person who is directly involved in the help provision and Lithuanian language courses organization at the CSO (interviewee no. 2), and a person who is directly involved in counseling Ukrainian refugees on various issues, including the ones on requalification possibilities (interviewee no. 3). The interview was conducted on May 20, 2025. It lasted for 50 minutes]</p>

Policies and outcomes of the labour market integration

- Laws and policies in access to the labour market

Since February 2022, the Lithuanian government has initiated certain legal amendments and policy measures to facilitate Ukrainians and other beneficiaries of temporary protection, thereby increasing their possibilities and access to employment. The Law on Employment (Lietuvos respublikos užimtumo įstatymas) was amended on 30 June 2022, adding refugees and persons under temporary protection as beneficiaries of additional support in the labour market. Ukrainians, having the status of temporary protection, fall into this category and could expect additional support in their search for employment (Lietuvos Respublikos Užimtumo įstatymas Str. 25 (10), amended in 2025).

To improve access for Ukrainians to the labour market, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (LR Vidaus reikalų ministerija) adopted temporary measures that a) allowed Ukrainian citizens to be exempt from the requirements for proficiency in the Lithuanian language for a period of two years from the granting of temporary protection, b) exempted them from the work permit procedure, and c) offered the full range of active labor market policy measures, including subsidized wages and occupational training (IOM/EMN, 2024). This increased the possibility of starting work immediately upon finding a job. The regulation exempting individuals from permit procedures was adopted in February 2022 and applied to Ukrainians who did not have temporary protection but were working or had other statuses in Lithuania. This regulation was terminated by the order of the Minister of the Interior on September 1, 2024 (Minister of the Interior, 2024).

The Public Employment Agency under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (Lietuvos užimtumo tarnyba prie LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos) has introduced specific policies that create favourable conditions for Ukrainians and other beneficiaries of temporary protection, as well as for employers who employ them (IOM/EMN 2024: 20).

- Subsidizing wages – employers who employ beneficiaries of temporary protection can apply for a wage subsidy equal to up to 75% of the occurring wage costs. The maximum duration of the subsidy – 36 months. However, the interview with a consultant (SLB 1 in the labour market) mentioned that the subsidies were paid from EU funds received before 2024/2025; however, no funds are currently available to support subsidies (Public Employment Agency, 2025).
- Beneficiaries of temporary protection can receive mobility support – compensation of travel expenses to reach a further-away job or internship for up to four months, or attend up to 5 job interviews or consultation sessions.
- Beneficiaries of temporary protection can get occupational training – persons who are employed can apply to the Employment Agency to obtain funding in order to change their profession or acquire a new qualification. If they meet the criteria, the beneficiaries of temporary protection can receive a stipend for training (EUR 365), reimbursement of travel expenses to and from the nearest training provider, and reimbursement of accommodation costs if their place of residence differs from the location of the training provider.

The Employment Agency can cover the cost of Lithuanian language courses for unemployed people registered with the Agency, including Ukrainians. Those who are actively employed can also attend Lithuanian language courses when they are available. Language courses are organized as a measure within the framework of the Active Employment Policy (Lietuvos Respublikos Užimtumo įstatymas, str. 39/2, 2016). The Lithuanian language is necessary for those who would like to work in the field of services (social, health education). Thus, the motivation to learn a language should be very high, because currently, Ukrainian citizens can work without language knowledge. Nevertheless, the State Language Inspectorate informed in March 2023 that they plan to monitor the implementation of the State Language Law from 2024 and examine whether foreigners working in the service sector are able to provide service in the national (Lithuanian) language (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024: 134-135).

According to the provisions of the State Language Law (1995), employed foreigners are required to learn the Lithuanian language within 12 months and pass the language qualification exams. This provision has been changed for Ukrainians to enable them to learn the language within 24 months (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024: 135). Since 2026, employers will be fined if they employ persons without proficiency in the Lithuanian language (SLB 1 in the labour market). These decisions have burst some public debate as access to language courses remains limited (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024). Ukrainians will be exempt from this request because of their temporary protection status (State Language Inspectorate, 2025).

- Outcomes of the labour market integration

Data from the Public Employment Agency shows the number of Ukrainian citizens employed under employment contracts in Lithuania has increased every year since the start of Russia's war, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Ukrainian citizens working under employment contracts

Year/Gender	Total	Women	Men	no data on gender available
01-04-2022	3 852	2 384	1 468	-
01-04-2023	24 045	12 497	11 480	68
01-04-2024	31 121	12 047	18 930	144
01-04-2025	36 755	14 731	21 850	174

Source: Public Employment Agency (shared by PEA)

Dynamics of employment suggest that women's employment was higher than men's in 2022-2023. The large influx of women fleeing the Russian war against Ukraine in Lithuania could be the reason for this. The male workforce began to grow later. Since 2024, the majority of Ukrainians working in Lithuania under employment contracts are men. As the number of employed people increases, the number of unemployed Ukrainians registering with the Employment Agency is slowly decreasing (Užimtumo tarnyba, 2024: 28).

According to data from the Lithuanian Employment Agency, Ukrainian women comprised the majority of those seeking employment support and also made up the majority of registered unemployed individuals. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate was expected to decrease by 2024. For example, in 2023 there were 7,1 thousand registered unemployed Ukrainians, and this was three times less than in 2022. At the beginning of 2024, the unemployment rate was 18,1 percent, less than a year ago (Užimtumo tarnyba, 2024: 42).

The majority of Ukrainians' employment is in medium-skilled work, accounting for up to 82.3 percent (24,000 persons). There are up to 8,5 percent (approximately 2,5 thousand Ukrainians) occupied in highly skilled jobs such as managers, heads of the division, technicians and junior specialists. Up to 5.3 thousand Ukrainians work in low-skilled jobs. The majority of them are women (up to 3,9 percent) who work in the field of cleaning, kitchen assistants, or packing business (Užimtumo tarnyba, 2024: 43)

Most Ukrainian women work in manufacturing (as assemblers, meat and fish cutters, bakers, confectioners, seamstresses, etc.), accommodation and catering services (cooks, cleaners, kitchen assistants, etc.), and trade (sales assistants, etc). While men occupy different employment. Most of them work in transport and storage (as drivers of heavy transport vehicles) and construction (as workers, bricklayers, plasterers, and electricians) (Užimtumo tarnyba, 2024: 44).

Both the interviewed experts (SLB 1 in the labour market and CSO 1 in the labour market) mentioned that vulnerable groups, namely young women with small children, elderly persons, and persons with disability, experience certain difficulties in finding a job. Women with small children often struggle to balance work and family duties. Elderly people in Ukraine are eligible for a pension at 60 years of age, but in Lithuania, the eligibility age is higher (65 years). These individuals face barriers due to health issues and a limited job market. Similar barriers are faced by people with disabilities. A survey conducted by the Red Cross in Lithuania (Lietuvos Raudonojo kryžiaus draugija) in 2023, which involved 3,569 women and 293 men, indicates that despite high Ukrainian employment rates, more than a third of respondents reported that their monthly household income was less than €500. Up to 10% reported having no income and no savings. The majority of their income comes from benefits from Lithuanian state institutions (Lietuvos Raudonasis kryžius, 2023).

Both interviewed experts (SLB 1 in the labour market and CSO 1 in the labour market) mentioned that Ukrainians choose various strategies and networks to enter the labour market. They try to find a job on their own, using their networks or using the available information about companies that are interested in hiring Ukrainians. Both experts described a general goodwill among companies to hire Ukrainians and provide them with opportunities to work. Employers typically inform the Employment Agency about the positions they are seeking. Specific companies in the food retail and cleaning services sectors are interested in hiring larger numbers of Ukrainian FDPs. This is motivated by both labour shortages and the wish to help Ukrainian FDPs (SLB 1 in the labour market). Additionally, as one interviewed expert mentioned, she always makes an extra effort and calls herself to the employers she knows, inquiring about the possibility of hiring Ukrainians who are visiting her during consultations (SLB 1 in the labour market).

Cooperation among the Employment Agency, employers, and CSOs is often informal. The interviewed experts mentioned that their main function is to provide information and consultations to Ukrainian job seekers and help them find available jobs (SLB 1 in labour market and CSO 1 in labour market). Cooperation then involves exchanging information about available language courses, professional training etc.

The tendency towards deskilling is noted by the interviewed experts. Despite high employment rates among Ukrainian FDPs, concerns persist about potential de-skilling and downward mobility, as many have taken up low-skilled positions as temporary work. Individuals often choose less qualified or sometimes unqualified work simply for quicker employment and getting payments to help them cover everyday needs (SLB 1 in the labour market and CSO 1 in the labour market)

- Main barriers and opportunities in the labour market

Limited Lithuanian language knowledge and inability to communicate in Lithuanian were mentioned by both interviewed experts (SLB 1 in the labour market and CSO 1 in the labour market). Although knowledge of other languages, such as English and Russian, can be very helpful in securing a qualified job (for example, in the IT sector or the healthcare sector), Ukrainians often know only Russian. This is not enough to get a qualified job. Usually, FDPs prefer to start working unqualified work regardless their professional knowledge and skills.

The process of learning other professional skills is also a complicated matter. The courses last at least 6 -9 months or sometimes 12 months. If a person does not know the Lithuanian language, they cannot attend, and in practice, it becomes very difficult to change professional qualifications (SLB 1 in the labour market).

Some research highlights that Ukrainians in Lithuania are abused by employers who pay them less than promised. Employers also provide contracts written in Lithuanian, which Ukrainian FDPs do not understand, or they work illegally without a contract (Eurofound, 2024: 15).

Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

Access to housing for FDPs became available after the Registration Center was established in Alytus (Lietuvos Respublikos Vidaus reikalų ministro įsakymas, 2022, No. 1V-143). Similar centres were later established in Marijampolė, Vilnius, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Kaunas, and Panevėžys, where arriving individuals were registered and provided with accommodation, humanitarian assistance, and health care (LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija, 2022 March 14)

The interviewed CSO expert (CSO 1 in housing) volunteered at the centres in Marijampolė said that Ukrainians were brought there by buses. Due to the large number of arrivals, no statistics were collected on numbers or accommodation. As the interviewed CSO expert highlighted, there was a lack of checks on where Ukrainians were being housed and the conditions in which they were living (CSO 1 in housing).

- Institutions responsible for the settlement of FDPs, allocation of housing, and its financing

The state and municipal institutions, such as Registration Centres and the Refugee Reception Centre (later the Reception and Integration Agency (Priėmimo ir integracijos agentūra), have been responsible for settling FDPs. State and municipal institutions, agencies, private organizations, and individuals offered housing for Ukrainians. The civic initiative 'Strong Together' ('Stiprūs kartu') took on the task of coordinating accommodation for Ukrainian FDPs and registered those willing and able to host them temporarily on its platform (LRT.lt, 2022 February 24).

Volunteers from the Lithuanian Red Cross Society (Lietuvos Raudonojo kryžiaus draugija), Caritas Lithuania (Lietuvos Caritas), the Order of Malta Relief Organisation in Lithuania (Maltos ordino pagalbos tarnyba), and Save the Children (Gelbėkit vaikus) worked in centers located in cities across various Lithuanian municipalities and provided assistance to Ukrainians (LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija, 2022 March 14).

According to a representative from the Registration Centre in Marijampolė, the Registration Centres used the 'Strong Together' database to locate housing for people fleeing the war. This database included private individuals and, later, accommodation offered by municipalities (CSO 1 in housing).

Additionally, accommodation and other integration measures were provided by the Refugee Reception Center (Pabėgėlių priėmimo centras), and starting January 1, 2025, by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), which was established under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. (Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymo „Dėl užsieniečių ...“, 2024, No. XIV-2673). RIA was established following the reorganisation of the Refugee Reception Centre and its branches in Vilnius, Rukla, and Girionys, as well as part of the Foreigners' Registration Centre in Pabradė (which was partly left under the operation of the State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania) (Jurevičiūtė, 2025: 140).

The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) offers social and housing services to asylum seekers, asylum recipients, and their family members in cases of family reunification, unaccompanied foreign minors, and other foreign nationals who qualify for reception services. The Agency also provides for FDPs from Ukraine. The decision to transfer all matters related to the reception of foreigners to the Agency was welcomed by organizations working with foreigners (Jurevičiūtė, 2025: 140).

Upon their arrival in 2022, Ukrainians were accommodated in RIA according to the criteria of vulnerability and priority order. Priority is given to mothers with young children who have employment contracts or who have come to Vilnius for specialized treatment. Centres in other cities, such as Pabradė or Rukla, offer accommodation for men of retirement age or single men (SLO 1 in housing). The most vulnerable group is people of retirement age (65+), since they have nowhere else to go and have been living in the centre for more than six months (SLB 1 in housing).

Those granted temporary protection in Lithuania were provided with free accommodation in facilities run by the state, municipalities, or organisations. The same applied to those awaiting a decision on their application for temporary protection (Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas, 2022, No. 587; Leonaitė et al., 2023: 74-75)

In addition, compensation was paid to individuals and legal entities that provided Ukrainians with free accommodation (Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas, 2022, No. A1-254). Those who accommodated Ukrainians received €150 from the second month onwards, with an additional €50 per month for each subsequent Ukrainian accommodated in the same dwelling. As a result, by the end of 2022, nearly 14,000 Ukrainians had been provided with housing. In December 2022, these compensations were extended until the end of 2023 (LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija, 2022 December 21; Leonaitė et al., 2023: 75)

On 17 March 2022, the Seimas adopted amendments to the legislation governing the legal status of foreigners and expanded the scope of social assistance available to them. Ukrainian war refugees who received an individual decision granting them temporary protection became entitled to cash social assistance, including a social allowance, compensation for housing, heating, drinking water, and hot water, a one-time settlement allowance, compensation for part of the rent, social services, and a funeral allowance (Leonaitė et al., 2023: 76).

According to an interviewed CSO expert, not all landlords want to officially register rental contracts for apartments with Ukrainians, and those Ukrainians have encountered problems with rental compensation (CSO 1 in housing).

- Key trends and changes

The interviewed representative of the Registration Centre in Marijampolė stated that the 'Strong Together' platform ceased operating in 2024. Since then, they have been helping people to find housing through real estate agency advertisements and platforms, such as 'Aruodas' or Facebook groups (CSO 1 in housing).

The integration measures (including housing) implemented by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania since 2022 for foreigners granted temporary protection in Lithuania have remained important.

Currently, they are mainly carried out at the Refugee Reception Centre (from 1 January 2025, the Reception and Integration Agency) and in municipalities (Osičkaitė, 2024: 105).

In 2024, the number of services and measures available to foreigners, regardless of their legal status, increased (e.g., free consultations on work, finding accommodation, taxes, documents for legal residence in Lithuania, etc. at the RIA and on the Micenter.lt website) (ELTA, 2024 October 16).

Information on finding work, housing, taxes, documents for legal stay in Lithuania, and free services is provided by the Micenter.lt website. These services include consultations on integration, career, legal, and life in Lithuania issues, as well as psychological assistance, training, and community events (ELTA, 2024, October 16).

RIA provides social and accommodation services to asylum seekers, asylum recipients, and their family members in cases of family reunification, unaccompanied foreign minors, and other foreign nationals who are entitled to reception services. The Agency also accommodates FDPs from Ukraine. The decision to transfer all matters relating to the reception of foreigners to the Agency was welcomed by organisations working with foreigners (Jurevičiūtė, 2025: 140).

These changes were made to address the growing foreign population and changing demographics in Lithuania. The goal is to facilitate the integration of foreigners in various ways. One of the main needs identified is providing information in multiple languages, including Lithuanian, English, and Russian (ELTA, 2024, October 16). These services and measures were evaluated by the experts positively (Osičkaitė, 2024: 106).

In 2024, a new project called 'Development of Coordination of Integration Processes for Foreign-Born Residents of Lithuania in Municipalities of the Republic of Lithuania' was launched. The project aims to establish a system for coordinating integration efforts in Lithuanian municipalities and to secure the necessary funding for human resources. Sixteen municipalities are participating in the project (Prieglobsčio, migracijos ir integracijos fondas, n.d.; Osičkaitė, 2024: 108).

Nevertheless, the Parliamentary Ombudspersons Office in Lithuania highlighted its critical comment that, despite the significance of such projects, the project-based funding model for services to foreigners may be unsustainable in the long term and lead to a sharp decline in the scope and availability of such services (Osičkaitė, 2024: 108).

According to data from the civic initiative 'Strong Together', Lithuania has managed to provide FDPs with decent living conditions in people's homes, apartments, hotels, and rural farmsteads since 2022, and has found temporary homes in the country for around 60,000 Ukrainians (Stiprūs kartu, n.d.).

In 2023, Ukrainian citizens remained the largest group, accounting for 66.3% of all individuals receiving integration support or services. They utilized social and housing services, as well as government support for integration at the Refugee Reception Centre (renamed the Reception and Integration Agency on January 1, 2025) (Osičkaitė, 2024: 108, 109).

The interviewed CSO expert described that the Ukrainians have had the possibility to choose where to live from the very beginning. However, due to the large influx of FDPs, they later selected housing based on FDPs' needs and available housing descriptions, „such as 'I would accept a family' or 'a woman with a child,'" (CSO 1 in housing).

Registration centers established in various cities coordinated accommodation efforts among themselves through remote meetings and also liaised with ministries and municipalities to distribute Ukrainians more efficiently (CSO 1 in housing).

Various types of accommodation were offered – separate apartments, rooms, houses, and garden houses (CSO 1 in housing). Initially, Ukrainians were mostly housed in accommodations provided by private individuals, but later (after about a year and a half), as fewer people offered their properties for rent, municipalities began to provide their own accommodation more actively, mostly dormitory-style housing, such as vocational schools. This period was referred to as the second stage of accommodation (CSO 1 in housing).

The Reception and Integration Agency in Vilnius accommodates Ukrainians in separate rooms measuring 9-10 square meters in dormitory-type buildings. Each person was allocated at least 4 square metres of space in a room. In addition, large families are accommodated in adjacent rooms on one side of the corridor (SLB 1 in housing).

There is no official information about the types of housing, accommodation quality, or the lack of accommodation for FDPs. According to the interviewed expert of the Reception and Integration Agency in Vilnius, there were cases where Ukrainians were deceived or evicted from dormitory-style accommodation because the rent had increased and the rooms needed to be made available to students (SLB 1 in housing).

The civic initiative 'Strong Together' took on the task of coordinating the accommodation of Ukrainian FDPs and registered those willing and able to temporarily accommodate them on its platform (LRT.lt, 2022 February 24) (see more description above).

According to the interviewed expert of the Reception and Integration Agency, since 2025, they have been accommodating people in Vilnius for half a year and applying minimal fees (47 EUR per month). Those who were accommodated before 2025 have their contracts until February 15, 2026 (SLB 1 in housing). It is claimed that this fee will help Ukrainians develop integration skills (SLB 1 in housing).

- Main barriers and opportunities

The Parliamentary Ombudspersons Office in Lithuania criticized the policies and measures developed and implemented for the reception and integration of foreigners, because of their fragmented nature and availability only to a small proportion of Ukrainian citizens. The integration of foreign citizens in Lithuania reveals its strengths (state support, services provided, public acceptance, etc.) and areas that need to be strengthened (insufficient access to services, long-term housing rentals, challenges of integration into the labor market) (Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, 2024: 128).

The 2023 survey conducted by the Vilnius Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM Lithuania) on the needs and intentions of Ukrainian FDPs showed that the main challenges are financial stability (25%), language barriers (21%), long-term housing rental (19%), and employment (19%) (IOM Lietuva, 2024 February 22).

The report on migrants and asylum seekers in Lithuania shows that finding housing is the hardest part of integration because of discrimination. Migrants, especially from Muslim countries, often face refused accommodation or are asked for higher rents and larger deposits (VŠĮ Žmogaus teisių stebėjimo institutas, 2023: 18).

An interviewed CSO expert pointed out that there are a number of reasons why some people might be hesitant to rent out their homes to Ukrainians, such as the huge demand for housing in the rental market, some bad experiences they had while renting an apartment, but particularly the temporary nature of their stay (CSO 1 in housing).

The current situation shows that Ukrainians are now left to fend for themselves because the cost of renting accommodation in Lithuania is high, even for working people (CSO 1 in housing).

In addition, municipalities can only provide housing for vulnerable individuals, while refugee centres accept single mothers with children and people with disabilities (CSO 1 in housing).

Interview analysis suggests that the Reception and Integration Agency only provides temporary accommodation. After a certain period of time, people have to leave it and live independently. Once they leave, they face challenges: landlords are reluctant to rent any facilities, especially if they have young children. The landlords are also reluctant to register official rental agreements, but request deposits for several months in advance, which amounts to a considerable sum that they do not have. It is often the case that people are reluctant to move out of the Agency's accommodation center in Vilnius because they lack motivation to do so (SLB 1 in housing).

Policies and outcomes on the education of adults and children

Lithuania's school system is structured into several levels: preschool, primary, basic, and secondary education. After completing basic education (which includes 10 grades), students can pursue vocational training or continue their education in grades 11 and 12. Higher education is available for those who complete secondary school (12 grades). FDPs from Ukraine are eligible for state-funded pre-school education, primary education, basic education, secondary education, vocational training, and higher education (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022; Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2023 A, B, C, D).

Enrollment in the school requires documentation of previous education from Ukraine, along with an interview involving the student and their parents. Students may be placed in either a higher or lower grade, depending on the evaluation of their documents and the outcome of the interview (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo..., 2022, 2023 A). Families from Ukraine have the option to select schools based on the language of instruction, as education in Lithuania is offered in Lithuanian, Russian, and Polish (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, 2022, 2023 A). Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the significant influx of Ukrainian FSPs into Lithuania, several schools providing instruction in Ukrainian were established or relocated from Ukraine to Lithuania (see Gravitas Schola n.d.; Herojus, n.d.; Tarptautinė Ukrainos mokykla n.d.). This development allows Ukrainian families to continue their education in these Ukrainian-language institutions.

Non-adults who have been granted the right to stay in the Republic of Lithuania, including those with temporary protection status, are entitled to state-guaranteed access to preschool (ikimokyklinis and priešmokyklinis education), primary, basic, and secondary education (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo..., 2022, 2023 A, B, C). Preschool education is provided in mixed groups of local and Ukrainian children, with instruction in the language of the institution, as preschool education is offered in Lithuanian or minority languages (Russian, Polish) (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo..., 2022).

Temporary groups in the Ukrainian language may be arranged for children arriving after the school year has begun (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). If the children from national minorities attend kindergarten or a preschool (priešmokyklinis) group in either Polish or Russian, at least five hours per week should be conducted in the Lithuanian language; in groups with Ukrainian pupils, it is recommended to employ a teacher who speaks Lithuanian, and this teacher may have an assistant who speaks Ukrainian (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). The subsequent instructions on enrolment of Ukrainian FDPs into the education system refer to the order described in 2022 (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2024)

The Lithuanian language was identified by all interviewed experts in education as a barrier to the successful mobility of FDPs in education. They proposed different and contrasting strategies for overcoming language barriers. SLB 2 experts in education suggested that Ukrainian students arriving in Lithuania should spend their first year studying exclusively the Lithuanian language in separate classes. They argue that since most textbooks used in schools are in Lithuanian, it is very challenging for students to learn other subjects in a language they do not understand. After this initial year, students can then be integrated into regular classes. In contrast, SLB 1 in education, representing another school in Vilnius, prioritized integrating Ukrainian pupils with their local peers from the very beginning.

In terms of school education, FDPs can choose a school where the language of instruction is Lithuanian or in a minority language (Russian, Polish), depending on the area in which they reside (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). They participate in Lithuanian study programs, either through face-to-face learning alongside other students or in classes designed to address gaps between Lithuanian and Ukrainian curricula (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). In rare instances, an option for individualized study may be available, but this is limited to a specific timeframe (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). Students can pursue their education online in Ukraine while residing in Lithuania. In these cases, no additional testing is required upon returning to Ukraine (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). Students also have the option to attend Ukrainian-language schools that follow Ukrainian educational programs and are recognized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education. These schools were established in Lithuania after 2022.

Some notable examples include “Tarptautinė Ukrainos mokykla” (International Ukrainian School), which has branches in thirteen European countries and opened locations in Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys) in 2022 (Tarptautinė Ukrainos mokykla, n.d.), also “Herojus” in Kaunas (Herojus, n.d.), “Gravitas Schola” in Vilnius (Gravitas, n.d.).

Ukrainian FDPs enrolled in schools in Lithuania are required to study the Lithuanian language, regardless of the language of instruction (state or minority) at their school (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022). Language issues are addressed through a personalized language learning process and by planning the study process in collaboration with group learning in the classroom (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2022, 2023 A). However, during the interview with representatives of CSO 1 in education, one of the interviewees (No. 2) expressed her view that the most significant challenge Ukrainian teenagers face in school is learning the Lithuanian language. She noted that there is a shortage of assistants in schools to help students with the language learning process.

The challenges of learning the Lithuanian language were emphasized in the interviews with SLB in education. SLB 1 and 2 in education commented that the hours allocated for Lithuanian language learning for Ukrainian FDPs are insufficient, also there is a lack of Lithuanian language teachers. To improve the situation, they seek various additional ways, such as involving youth from Lithuanian schools in after-school activities with Ukrainian students to assist Ukrainian pupils in advancing their Lithuanian language skills (SLB 2 in education). SLB 1 in education highlighted that the Lithuanian school system, which mandates regular assessments of students’ achievements, presents significant challenges for Ukrainian pupils in relation to the Lithuanian language examination. These students are expected to take the Lithuanian language examination shortly after their arrival, which creates considerable stress and is deemed unreasonable by SLB 1 in education. Furthermore, the SLB 1 in education stated that organizing educational competitions (Olympiads) in the Lithuanian language for top students marginalizes high-achieving students from Ukraine who cannot participate due to their limited proficiency in the Lithuanian language. The interviewees (SLB 1 and 2 in education) identified the requirement of the Lithuanian language as a key challenge for Ukrainian FDPs in the schooling system, which was also linked to insufficient resources to assist FDPs in learning Lithuanian.

Children with special abilities who come to Lithuania's major cities can continue their arts education at specialized gymnasiums (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2023 A). Parents of children with disabilities or those requiring special education are encouraged to contact their municipality's education department to find suitable institutions that offer education (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2023 A).

In the first two years following Russia's full-scale invasion, a specific number of places (quotas) were designated for Ukrainian students at universities in Lithuania. Additionally, students could apply for financial aid to help cover their expenses, including monthly scholarships provided by the state and universities (Ruzgienė, LRT, 2023). Starting in 2024, quotas were eliminated, allowing Ukrainian graduates to compete with local students for state-funded university places (Ruzgienė, LRT, 2023). All graduates must pass the Lithuanian language graduation exam to be eligible for university admission; however, this requirement was not enforced for Ukrainian nationals from 2022 to 2024 (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2023 B, 2024). Starting in 2024, Ukrainian nationals seeking state-funded spots at higher education institutions are required to pass three mandatory graduation exams, including an exam in the Lithuanian language and literature; however, this year, the Ukrainian FSPs were still allowed to have an exemption from the Lithuanian language graduation exam (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo..., 2023 B). Higher education institutions can voluntarily offer financial support to Ukrainian nationals. Overall, the assistance for university-level education for forcibly displaced individuals from Ukraine has been decreasing.

The requirement for Lithuanian language proficiency for employment does not apply to Ukrainian individuals who have temporary protection status, so at the moment, this is not applicable until March 2027 (State Language Inspectorate, 2025). Language courses for adults are offered by some non-governmental organizations, universities, and other institutions (LR Valstybinė kalbos inspekcija, 2025). Interviewees from CSO 1 in education reported a current shortage of free courses available for Ukrainians. In their organization, they facilitate groups led by volunteers who regularly assist Ukrainian temporarily displaced persons (TDPs) with the goal of improving their Lithuanian language skills to levels A1, A2, or B1 (CSO 1 in education).

Ukrainians who wish to work in their profession must have a diploma and undergo the state recognition procedure if their profession is regulated by the government. Examples of such regulated professions include doctors, teachers, and social pedagogues (Ruzgienė, LRT, 2022). The interviewees from the civil society sector (CSO 1 in education) noted that although Ukrainian temporary protected individuals (TPDs) are not legally required to have proficiency in the Lithuanian language, in practice, language skills act as a barrier to employment. It was suggested that this is especially true in sectors that involve direct communication with people and require specific higher qualifications. One expert at CSO 1 in education noted that those who used to work in non-qualified jobs in Ukraine (e.g., cleaners) more easily adapt in Lithuania, as their work sector remains unchanged. Those who seek qualified work in their professional field encounter deskilling due to the Lithuanian language barrier. The interviewee also expressed the opinion that, while there are institutions offering professional re-qualification for Ukrainians, the education is primarily conducted in Lithuanian or English. This poses a barrier for Ukrainian individuals seeking to advance their qualifications (CSO 1 in education, interviewee no. 3).

To summarize, the Lithuanian education system opened its doors to Ukrainian FDPs following the full-scale war initiated by Russia in 2022. Ukrainian FDPs have been integrated into public schools, and universities provided special quotas for them from 2022 until 2024. Additionally, some schools specializing in the Ukrainian language have been established in Lithuania with the support of local authorities. Interviewees at SLB 1, SLB 2, and CSO 1 in education have identified the Lithuanian language as a key challenge within the educational system, particularly given the short timeframe after arrival and the lack of resources.

Conclusions

Best practises in the field of labour market, housing, and education

Initiatives to simplify the entry to the labour market could be mentioned. Several measures have been introduced as part of the active employment policy framework. For instance, Lithuanian language requirements were removed for Ukrainian FDPs. Wage subsidies were developed and implemented for employers hiring Ukrainian FDPs. Opportunities for professional training to improve or gain a professional qualification were also created. These measures have helped improve the integration of FDPs into the labour market based on their professional qualifications.

The civic initiative 'Strong Together' is considered the best practice in the field of housing. It coordinated accommodation for Ukrainian FDPs and registered those willing and able to temporarily host them on its national platform (LRT.lt, 24 February 2022). This platform was used by the Registration centers as it included not only private individuals but also accommodation offered by municipalities (CSO 1 in housing). According to data from the civic initiative 'Strong together', thanks to this campaign, Lithuania has managed to provide all war refugees with decent living conditions in people's homes and apartments, hotels, and rural farmsteads since 2022. Up to 60,000 Ukrainians have found temporary accommodation in Lithuania (Stiprūs kartu,n.d.)

In education, the following could be a good practice. The Lithuanian education system welcomed Ukrainian FDPs following the full-scale war initiated by Russia in 2022. The legislation provides various forms of education for FDPs, allowing them to participate in online learning through Ukrainian schools or to join local school communities. Ukrainian FDPs have been integrated into all levels of education, with the option to choose schools based on the language of instruction, primarily Lithuanian or Russian.

To support their integration, additional hours for learning the Lithuanian language have been allocated, and various initiatives aimed at helping language acquisition have been implemented. Schools have also served as vital centers for providing humanitarian assistance to FDPs. Furthermore, some schools providing teaching in the Ukrainian language have been established in Lithuania with the support of local authorities. From 2022 to 2024, quotas were allocated for Ukrainian FDPs at higher education institutions, enabling them to study at local universities. This demonstrates effective educational policies in Lithuania that promote the inclusion of FDPs from Ukraine.

Main gaps in the integration process in the labour market, housing and education

The reviewed analysis in available research on the labour market does not indicate high territorial or social mobility of FDPs from Ukraine within Lithuania. Ukrainians primarily occupy jobs in services, retail, and transportation, making it challenging for them to secure qualified positions based on their qualifications. The obstacle to this is limited knowledge of the Lithuanian language. Although FDPs from Ukraine with temporary protection status are exempt from the requirement to have proficient Lithuanian language skills, it is challenging to learn Lithuanian due to the limited availability of Lithuanian language courses, which are currently not supported by the state. Thus, the tendencies of deskilling of the Ukrainian FDPs are developing.

The policies and measures in housing demonstrate their fragmented natures and limited accessibility. The available housing is for short-term rentals and lacks long-term options. Municipalities and reception centres can provide housing mostly for vulnerable persons. Research shows the tendencies of discrimination and reluctance to rent apartments for migrants and refugees, including FDPs from Ukraine. There are different reasons for this: high demand for housing in the rental market, high rent prices, bad experiences of renting accommodation for Ukrainians, and the temporary nature of their stay.

In the education sector, a significant challenge remains the limited knowledge and skills of the Lithuanian language within the schooling system. This issue is especially urgent for FDPs with limited time to adapt, as the resources available for language teaching in schools are insufficient. Starting in 2024, the quotas for Ukrainian full-degree program (FDP) students in universities were eliminated, meaning they have to compete for admission alongside local students. As a result, the requirement for a Lithuanian language state exam for school graduation poses a significant barrier to the social mobility of Ukrainian FDP students. The lack of free Lithuanian language courses for adults was identified as an important challenge for FDPs by interviewees at CSO 1 in education, as the demand for Lithuanian language courses was estimated to be increasing simultaneously. The Lithuanian language is recognized as a significant challenge for the successful mobility and integration of Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) into the Lithuanian education system. At the same time, this challenge is not being adequately addressed due to limited human resources and other factors, such as a shortage of language teachers.

Discussions on Ukrainians' stay or return

Reviewed materials from national and international reports, as well as information provided by interviewed experts, did not offer any new insights into the debates or discussions about the long-term prospects for Ukrainian FDPs. Since the beginning of the war in 2022, there has been hope that it would end very soon. As some of the interviewed experts mentioned, Ukrainians were sure that their stay in Lithuania would be temporary. They have remained closely connected to their relatives and friends in Ukraine through various communication channels. However, due to the ongoing war, this perception is changing slightly as hope for a swift resolution to the war is diminishing.

In 2024, the number of services and measures available to foreigners (including Ukrainian FDPs), regardless of their legal status, increased. For example, these included free consultations on work, finding accommodation, taxes, and documents for legal residence in Lithuania. These changes were made to address the growing foreign population in general and the changing demographics in Lithuania. The goal is to facilitate the integration of foreigners in various ways.

One of the main needs identified is providing information in multiple languages, including Lithuanian, English, and Russian. Some initiatives were introduced since 2025. RIA, for instance, introduced the principle for accommodating the Ukrainians in Vilnius for half a year and applying minimal fees - 47 EUR per month. This is to facilitate the development of the integration skills for Ukrainians and prepare them for living independently and not to rely on benefits.

The experts' reflection about their own role in reception of the FDP's

The experts interviewed for this Report described how their work extends beyond their job function description. They become emotionally invested, seek the necessary help and support for Ukrainian FDPs, and proactively engage in this endeavour. For example, experts in the labour market (SLB 1 in the labour market and CSO 1 in the labour market) described that sometimes they feel more like psychologists and carers for Ukrainian FDPs than professional officers or counsellors, providing information and consultation on employment opportunities. They go the extra mile to find proper support by listening to the stories of Ukrainian FDPs, showing empathy towards their survival experiences, and approaching familiar employers to ask if they would consider hiring Ukrainians who are eager to rebuild their lives in Lithuania. Similarly, the experts in housing (CSO 1 in housing) mentioned that their professional role in receiving FDPs is surpassed by their personal assistance to Ukrainian FDPs. For example, one expert explained that she answers questions from Ukrainians about everyday life. She also tries to bring the FDP community together for activities in the city, such as weaving camouflage nets for Ukraine, and has created Facebook groups and Messenger chats. The other expert from the Reception and Integration Agency (SLB 1 in housing) felt responsible for resolving issues that arise for employees when working with refugees, as discussed during meetings and other interactions. The interviewed experts in the education sector referred to the high emotional and psychological pressure at the very start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, when they provided help for FDP pupils and parents not only in questions related to education, but in many situations that required assistance.

However, SLB 1 and SLB 2 in education referred to the rapid and relevant municipal assistance in providing guidance and consultations for teachers and school administrators.

Authors' statement:

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