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HORIZON EUROPE

Executive Summary

This report examines Sweden's reception of Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) under the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EG, TPD) between 2022 and 2025. Sweden received over 70,000 Ukrainian FDPs during this period, although around 40 percent are assumed to have left for other countries. To capture the TPD's practical implementation, the analysis draws on both official policy documents and expert interviews with street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and representatives from street-level civil society organizations (CSOs) – i.e., actors directly involved in the reception infrastructure Ukrainian FDPs encounter. The report focuses on labour market integration, housing, and education.

The report shows that Sweden's implementation of the TPD has been shaped by a shifting and fragmentary reception system, producing significant challenges for Ukrainian FDPs. Until June 2024, Ukrainian FDPs were unable to formally register as Swedish residents, which meant restricted access to state and municipality governed support systems and economic assistance. This excluded them from official establishment programs for new immigrants, including labour market assistance, and left many reliant on civil society support for labour market integration. Primary education was guaranteed for children and young people, while adults lacked rights to language or further adult education. Tuition-free tertiary education, while a possibility, was often practically hindered by bureaucratic and financial barriers. Housing was provided through a system combining municipal operative responsibility with oversight by the Swedish Migration Agency in addition to private individuals hosting FDPs.

In June 2024, Ukrainian FDPs with stays longer than two years gained the right to register with the Swedish Population Register as residents and gain broader access to welfare provisions and social support. From 1 November 2024, the required stay was reduced to one year – although this reform also restricted the welfare provisions available to those registering after 1 November. Ukrainians registered as residents before 1 November received access to official labour market programs, a pathway towards semi-permanent housing, and rights to language studies and adult education. Registration also meant the possibility for more substantial economic transfers from the state and municipalities, including parental allowance and social benefits.

Ukrainian FDPs registered after 1 November 2024 were however denied access to parts of the social insurance system, leaving many to apply for municipal social services.

All in all, Sweden's implementation of the TPD has been characterized by the creation of three different legal statuses that Ukrainian FDPs can hold – statuses entailing different rights, state and municipal support structures and bureaucratic encounters. Unregistered Ukrainian FDPs (status 1) continue to receive a minimal level of state support as a collective right guaranteed by the provisions of the TPD, supplemented by civil society efforts. Registered Ukrainian FDPs – registered either before (status 2) or after (status 3) 1 November 2024 – access a wider set of support structures and more substantial economic transfers, albeit through demanding individualized contacts with various bureaucratic institutions. Further, the report reveals that the registration process, which meant a transfer between these bureaucratic rationalities, often produced gaps and bureaucratic hurdles that created financial and social vulnerability for Ukrainian FDPs.

Looking ahead, the Swedish case highlights the need for more unified and predictable frameworks for implementing temporary protection. Timely access to language training, streamlined labour market services, increased economic support, and simplified bureaucratic procedures could significantly improve integration outcomes.

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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.
RPTP	Residence permit with temporary protection, uppehållstillstånd med tillfälligt skydd
AF	Swedish Public Employment Service, Arbetsförmedlingen
MV	Swedish Migration Agency, Migrationsverket
FK	Swedish Social Insurance Agency, Försäkringskassan
SCB	Statistics Sweden, Statistiska Centralbyrån

SV	Swedish Tax Agency, Skatteverket
SLB	Street level Bureaucrat
CSO	Civil society organization

1. Background

On 4 March 2022, the European Council activated the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD, Council of the European Union, 2001), granting Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) temporary protection in the EU (Council of the European Union, 2022). Sweden had adopted the TPD into national law already in 2003, but it remained inactive until Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Upon activation, Sweden became legally bound to coordinate with other EU member states to provide temporary protection – covering housing, work permits, and basic rights – to Ukrainian FDPs. This allowed them to legally enter Sweden and obtain temporary residence and work permits for the directive's activation, initially until March 2023, later extended to March 2025, 2026, and 2027 (Council of the European Union, 2024; European Commission, 2025a).

As a result, 51,261 Ukrainians entered Sweden and applied for residence permits with temporary protection (RTPs) in 2022, followed by 11,406 in 2023 and 10,682 in 2024 (Migrationsverket, 2025b). Their arrival took place in a context of extensive public and political support for Ukraine. Alongside accepting Ukrainian FDPs, successive Swedish governments provided extensive military and humanitarian aid, reflecting a broad pro-Ukrainian consensus amongst the public. Eurobarometer surveys (European Commission, 2023, 2025c) show that since 2023, 97 percent of Swedish respondents have supported welcoming Ukrainian FDPs to the EU. In a survey from spring 2022, asking more specifically about Ukrainian FDPs in Sweden, 89 percent of Swedes report supporting their entry – the highest rate among surveyed countries (Ipsos 2022). Later surveys show slightly lower, yet still strong, majorities in favour, following similar patterns across other countries (Ipsos 2023; Irastorza 2024).

Despite this public solidarity (Voytiv 2025), the actual conditions for Ukrainian FDPs soon became contested. Researchers, journalists, and NGOs highlighted a gap between the government's proclaimed solidarity and the limited welfare access offered to FDPs. Low economic assistance and restricted access to support measures created precarious living conditions and reliance on civil society support (Hernes & Danielsen, 2024; Pelling, 2023; Rädde Barnen, 2024; Shmulyar Gréen & Odynets, 2024; Tyldum et al., 2023).

While the extension of the TPD to March 2026 in June 2024 improved welfare access (see section 2), problems remain, including complex bureaucratic processes and inequalities between different groups of Ukrainian FDPs depending on arrival date (Aasland & Hernes, 2025; Anisimova et al., 2025; Hevchuk, 2024; Shmulyar Gréen & Odynets, 2024).

This report examines the practical implementation of the TPD in Sweden from 2022 to 2025, focusing on the reception of Ukrainian FDPs and the roles of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) in labour market, housing, and education contexts. Our analysis draws on two sources: 1) official documents – laws, guidelines, and policies defining the de jure reception system; 2) expert interviews with SLBs and CSOs engaged in the de facto implementation of such laws, guidelines, and policies. Building on street-level bureaucracy theory (Jacobsson et al., 2021; Lipsky, 2010; Stray & Jacobsson, 2025) and research on migrant experiences of reception processes (Näre et al., 2024; Schütze, 2020), we stress that migration policy does not automatically translate into practice but is implemented through everyday practices, including decisions taken by and encounters among SLBs, CSOs, and migrants. Analysing these practices reveals how policy materializes on the ground, highlighting institutional constraints and good practices in Sweden's application of the TPD.

The report first summarizes key facts about Ukrainian FDPs in Sweden, based on previous research. Then, Sweden's legal and bureaucratic implementation of the TPD is outlined, followed by discussion of methodology and material. The findings are then presented in three sections on the labour market, housing, and education. The conclusion sums up the findings and identifies good practices and limitations in the current reception system, and hints on Sweden's approach to the end of the TPD in 2027.

1.1 Ukrainian FDPs in Sweden: numbers and characteristics

Between 2022 and 2024 a total of 72,459 Ukrainians applied for residence permits with temporary protection in Sweden, and an additional 7,449 people in 2025. In the first quarter of 2025, 37,028 Ukrainians sought extension of their RPTPs to the expiry of the TPD (Migrationsverket 2025b). This suggests that about half of all applicants remain in Sweden. Most extending their permits have been registered as Swedish residents (folkbokförda), granting them broader welfare access. According to Statistiska Centralbyrån (2025), 29,910 Ukrainian citizens registered as Swedish residents in 2024.

Reliable data on onward movements or resettlements of Ukrainian FDPs leaving Sweden remain scarce. Yet surveys show a low intention to return to Ukraine (Beredskapslyftet, 2025; IOM, 2024), suggesting that most onward migration has been to other European countries.

According to IOM (2024), Ukrainians FDPs in Sweden are predominantly women (64 percent) and the largest age group being between 30-39 years. Most live in family units: 33 percent in a household with two adults and children and 25 percent in single-parent households. 63 percent report having tertiary education. Before coming to Sweden, respondents worked mainly in construction (12 percent), wholesale and retail trade (10 percent), human health and social work (7 percent), manufacturing (9 percent), education (8 percent), and communication (8 percent). In Sweden, 58 percent of Ukrainian FDPs report being employed – primarily in construction (21 percent), service (14 percent), accommodation and food (12 percent) – with an additional 30 percent actively seeking work.

This group differs from Ukrainian migrants who settled in Sweden before 2022 (Shmulyar Gréen & Odynets, 2024; Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2022). Newly arrived Ukrainians are a much larger group than the pre-2022 Ukrainian population in the country, with only 12,891 individuals born in Ukraine living in Sweden in 2021 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2022). Further, unlike the FDPs, Ukrainians arriving in Sweden prior to 2022 mostly arrived as family members, labour migrants, or students. Like the FDPs, however, most of the pre-2022 group are women.

2. Governance and multilevel responsibilities in implementation of TPD in Sweden

The implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) in Sweden can be effectively understood through the framework of multilevel governance (MLG). MLG highlights how decision-making and implementation responsibilities are dispersed across multiple levels of government—supranational, national, and local—as well as between state and non-state actors (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Bache 2012). It is therefore a valuable perspective for examining EU directives such as the TPD, whose practical realisation depends not only on national policy but also on how various levels of government and a variety of actors negotiate and implement these measures in practice.

Applying this lens to the Swedish reception system reveals a complex and evolving picture. At the time of writing (October 2025), Ukrainian FDPs can hold one of three legal statuses in Sweden. Examining how these legal statuses interact with a broader set of factors that shape implementation outcomes, such as institutional capacity, coordination challenges, and the discretionary practices of street-level actors, offers a nuanced insight into Sweden's implementation of the TPD. The three statuses are: 1) residence permit with temporary protection, without registration in the Swedish population register (*folkbokföring*); 2) residence permit with temporary protection, registered as resident before 1 November 2024, 3) residence permit with temporary protection, registered as resident after 1 November 2024 (hereafter status 1, 2, or 3). While all three derive from the same protection status, their differentiation has major implications for Ukrainian FDPs' social rights, economic situations, and everyday lives. Notably, these distinctions are not explicitly codified in Swedish law but have emerged from successive EU and Swedish policy changes since 2022 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Timeline of EU and Swedish policy changes impacting Ukrainian FDPs



As a result of these policy shifts affecting Ukrainian FDPs in different ways, a three-tier system emerged, where FDPs hold distinct levels of rights depending on their arrival date and accumulated time in Sweden. As of 2025, most Ukrainian FDPs in Sweden are registered residents (status 2 or 3). However, all Ukrainian FDPs initially come to hold status 1 upon arrival in Sweden. Furthermore, this was the case for all Ukrainian FDPs between 2022 and June 2024.

Status 1 has been and continues to be granted to all individuals covered by the TPD upon arrival in Sweden and constitutes the standard legal status defined via Sweden’s 2003 transpositions of the EU’s TPD, codified in the Aliens Act (SFS 2005:716) and the Aliens Ordinance (SFS 2006:97). Here, it is stated that subjects falling under the TPD should be granted temporary residence permits with temporary protection (RPTP) and work permits, valid for the TPD’s activation period. Such permits are processed and administered by Migrationsverket (the Swedish Migration Agency, MV), who per the Law on Reception of Asylum Applicants and Others (SFS 1994:37) are also responsible for providing RPTP recipients with housing (either in one of the MV’s own facilities or, after 1 July 2022, in facilities administered by municipal authorities) and a daily allowance (dagersättning).

The MV's reception system is intended to provide FDPs with sufficient assistance to support their daily lives. Thus, FDPs under this status do not ordinarily have access to social insurance, welfare, education, and healthcare systems afforded to regular Swedish residents. However, the MV's provisions are far from sufficient. Housing quality varies, daily allowances are extremely low (at the most 71 SEK, approximately 6 EUR, per day), and FDPs under this status have no right to language education. As a result, the living conditions of FDPs under this status have come under scrutiny from experts and civil society actors (Aasland & Hernes, 2025; Hernes & Danielsen, 2024; Rädde Barnen, 2024; Shmulyar Gréen & Odynets, 2024; Tyldum et al., 2023). Civil society organizations have therefore taken on a significant role by offering language training, labour programs, food, and basic assistance, compensating for gaps in the state's reception system.

Status 2 applies to Ukrainian FDPs registered as residents before 1 November 2024, thus gaining access to the same social services and welfare provisions as all Swedish residents. This status materialized in June 2024, when the EU extended the TPD's activity period until March 2026 (Council of the European Union, 2024). As the Swedish National Registration Act (SFS 1991:481) only allows RPTP recipients to register as residents after an initial two-year legal stay and a legal opportunity for an additional one-year stay, this extension in effect opened a path for residence registration for most Ukrainian FDPs in the country. Holders of status 2 are removed from the MV's reception system upon registration and integrated into municipal and national welfare structures, significantly expanding their rights and shifting administrative responsibility from the MV to a wider set of local authorities.

Status 3 results from the Act on residence registration of foreigners with temporary protection in certain cases (2024:691), part of a legislative package which became effective on 1 November 2024 (Regeringen, 2024, Prop. 2023/24:151). Unlike status 2, which emerged from EU-level decisions, this new package was a Swedish government initiative responding to critique of FDPs' living conditions. It reduced the required residence period for residence registration from two years to one, but simultaneously restricted access to certain benefits relative to regular residents. The law thus created a differentiation between those who managed to register as residents before 1 November and those who registered after, with the latter group having limited rights (cf. Hevchuk, 2024).

A summary of the rights, benefits, and permits available to these different groups of Ukrainian FDPs are presented in Table 1. Those areas where rights differ between status 2 and 3 are bolded.

Table 1 - Overview of Ukrainian FDPs' rights, benefits, and permits per legal status

Benefit/service/right	Status 1	Status 2	Status 3
Work permit	Yes	Yes	Yes
Admission to the Establishment Program (<i>Etableringsprogrammet</i>) ¹	No	Yes	Yes
Establishment allowance (<i>Etableringsersättning</i> , including establishment supplement [<i>etableringstillägg</i>] and housing supplement [<i>bostadstillägg</i>]) ²	No	Yes	Yes
Child benefits (<i>Barnbidrag</i>)	No	Yes	No
Housing benefits (<i>Bostadsbidrag</i>)	No	Yes	No
Parental allowance (<i>Föräldrapenning</i> and <i>VAB</i>)	No	Yes	Yes, but only when employed for six months
Income support for the elderly (<i>äldreförsörjningsstöd</i>)	No	Yes	No
Disability assistance according to the Law on Special Assistance (<i>Lagen om särskild stöd, LSS</i>)	No	Yes	No
Daily allowance from MV	Yes provided certain conditions are met	No	No
Tuition-free post-secondary education	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes

1. The main labor market and integration program for newcomers in Sweden, administered by *Arbetsförmedlingen* (Swedish Public Employment Services, AF). More on this in chapter 4.
2. Economic benefits attached to participation in *Etableringsprogrammet*. More on this in chapter 4.

Table 1 - continued

Right to Swedish language education	No (but, per law change implemented in July 2023, municipalities can choose to provide such education anyway)	Yes	Yes
Right to primary and secondary education for children under 18	Yes	Yes, and participation is mandatory	Yes, and participation is mandatory
Right to adult education on the primary and secondary levels	No	Yes	Yes
Housing in MV units	Yes	No	No
Housing administered by municipalities	Yes. Applicants are placed in municipality-run facilities by MV.	Yes. Applicants are given apartments directly by the municipalities.	Yes. Applicants are given apartments directly by the municipalities.
Healthcare access	Only urgent care for adults (children under 18 are entitled to all healthcare services)	Yes	Yes

In short, status 2 grants full access to welfare provisions and benefits; status 1 entails little to no access; and status 3 falls in between, entailing rights to integration, education, and healthcare services but no access to welfare provisions based on residence. The statuses also determine what authorities FDPs interact with. Those under status 1 primarily engage with MV, while groups 2 and 3 encounter a broader range of institutions (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Overview of actors responsible for administering and servicing Ukrainian FDPs

Actor	Type of actor	responsibility
Migrationsverket (MV)	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admission and processing of Ukrainian FDPs upon arrival - Granting and extension of residence permits and work permits - Housing for group 1 - Economic assistance for group 1 - Placing in municipalities for group 1
Arbetsförmedlingen (Swedish Public Employment Services, AF)	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering and organizing <i>etableringsprogrammet</i> - Further labour market assistance programs
Skatteverket (Swedish Tax Authority, SV)	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residence registration - Personal identification number allocation - Taxation
Försäkringskassan (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, FK)	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social insurance, health- and work-related and allowances - Administers and allocates <i>etableringsersättning</i>, given upon participation in <i>etableringsprogrammet</i>
Universitets- och högskolerådet (Swedish Higher Education Council, UHR)	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admission into higher education - Validation of foreign degrees and diplomas
Pensionsmyndigheten (Swedish Pension Agency)	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pensions and income support for the elderly
Municipal social services	Municipal agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic assistance for groups 2 and 3 - Housing for groups 2 and 3 (and, after 1 July 2022, group 1)
Municipal labour market and adult education services	Municipal agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult education on primary and secondary levels - Civic introduction - Swedish language education - Some labour market programs and guidance counselling
Municipal school services (sometimes split between preschool, primary and/or secondary school)	Municipal agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admission and administration of primary and secondary schools

Table 2 - continued

Aid, charity, activist, community education and diaspora organizations	Civil society organizations	- Independent labour market programs and education initiatives - Providing food and necessities - Arranging social events and other activities
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This institutional variation across legal statuses illustrates the complex MLG structure underpinning the TPD’s implementation in Sweden. Various tiers of government, public authorities and civil society actors jointly shape FDPs’ rights, benefits, bureaucratic pathways and daily lives. These overlapping responsibilities and varied encounters reveal a fragmented arrival infrastructure –one shaped not only by the legal status of the FDPs but also by the interplay between national policy frameworks and local implementation practices. Understanding this multilevel configuration is key to assessing both the opportunities and challenges in Sweden’s reception of Ukrainian FDPs.

2.1 The future of the TPD: what comes after the RPTPs?

At the time of writing, the Swedish government has not stated an official stance on what will happen to Ukrainian FDPs after the TPD expires in 2027. As in many other EU countries, residency with a RPTP in Sweden does not entail qualification for a permanent residence permit (Hernes and Danielsen, 2024, p. 7). Thus Ukrainian FDPs will most probably be required to seek legal residency on other grounds if they wish to remain in Sweden. Consequently, MV and other authorities provide little detail beyond stating that “before [the expiration of the TPD], you will receive information about what you must do when your residence permit expires” (Swedish Migration Agency, n.d.-1). On an EU level, a recent Council Recommendation intended to coordinate the EU’s handling of the post-TPD period provides few answers. Emphasis is placed on the safe and sustainable return of Ukrainians to Ukraine. Ukrainians who wish to remain are instead urged to transfer to pre-existing options for legal stays in the EU (European Commission, 2025b). The Swedish government supports this Council Recommendation (Justitiedepartementet, 2025) but has not implemented any additional measures to ensure the provisions therein.

It therefore seems that Ukrainians, once the TPD ends, will be left with the similar options as other non-EU citizens wishing to reside in Sweden, mainly: 1) asylum based on refugee status, 2) work-based residence permit, 3) study-based residence permit (Swedish Migration Agency, n.d.-2; cf. Ciğer 2023). In practice, the first option will generally only be open to Ukrainians once the TPD expires. As long as the TPD is active, Ukrainians eligible for temporary protection will primarily be issued a RPTP before asylum (Migrationsverket, 2025). It will also entail individualized assessments – typically with long waiting times – which take into consideration individual circumstances and whether the applicant can be safely relocated within Ukraine. Thus, whereas the TPD ensures a collective right to protection based on arrival from Ukraine, the asylum process contains no such guarantees. Hence, it will be of no service to Ukrainians who might have a “safe” place to return but simply wish to continue their lives in Sweden.

The second option could be open for Ukrainians who have secured employment in Sweden but requires a) a wage above 80 percent of the Swedish median wage, b) employment conditions and insurances equivalent to Swedish standards, and c) that the applicant stays abroad during the application process. Not only are many Ukrainians excluded from this option, but it also involves a lengthy application process which might interrupt one’s established life in Sweden. The third option is open to Ukrainians enrolled in higher education but requires full time studies as well as stable means of support for the entire stay, and, again, an application process initiated from abroad.

3. Methods and materials

This report draws on two data sources: policy documents and expert interviews. The document corpus includes legislative texts from the EU and Sweden, government bills and reports, regulatory documents for public authorities, press releases, policy briefs, and online advisory information published by authorities and stakeholders. Systematically collected and analysed, these texts illuminate the legal framework governing the reception of Ukrainian FDPs in Sweden from 2022 to 2025. The interview data consists of six semi-structured interviews conducted in June–July 2025: two on housing, two on the labour market, two on education. For each topic, one street-level bureaucrat (SLB) and one representative from a civil society organisation (CSO) were interviewed. All participants were directly involved in the reception of Ukrainian FDPs and possessed relevant thematic expertise (see Table 3).

Table 3 - Overview of expert interviewees

Number	Type	Topic	Interviewee’s role
1	SLB	Labour market	Case-manager at a state agency, working with Ukrainian FDPs’ labour market integration.
2	CSO	Labour market	Operations manager at a civil society organization, organizer of a labour market program for Ukrainian FDPs.
3	SLB	Housing	Director at a municipal unit in a major Swedish city, responsible for housing Ukrainian FDPs.
4	CSO	Housin	Former manager at a major civil society organization which arranged housing and labour market programs for Ukrainian FDPs in a major Swedish city.

Table 3 Continued

5	SLB	Education	Two case managers/administrators at a municipal unit responsible for allocating newly arrived children to schools.
6	CSO	Education	Employed at a major community education organization, active in a Ukrainian solidarity organization.

Prior to the interviews, interviewees received written and oral information about the project’s aims, questions, and timeline, as well as about their rights as interviewees. Based on this, written informed consent was obtained. The interviews lasted between 1 and 2.5 hours and were recorded, transcribed, pseudonymized, and analysed. They combined features of expert interviews (providing qualified insight into reception process) and in-depth interviews (capturing interviewees’ perspectives and reflections on the reception process). The interviews followed topic-specific interview guides, covering, among other things, the reception system’s functioning, its gaps and affordances, obstacles for Ukrainian FDPs, cooperation between actors and stakeholders, and interviewees’ personal experiences.

4. Policies and outcomes of labour market integration

Survey data consistently report high labour market participation amongst Ukrainian FDPs in Sweden (see section 2), confirmed by our expert interviews. Experts 1 and 2 report that Ukrainian FDPs were highly motivated to work and often found jobs quickly, mainly in sectors with low entry barriers or a prior Ukrainian presence, such as construction or services. Educated Ukrainians with English skills sometimes entered tech or industrial jobs. Experts 1 and 2 also stress deskilling and the temporary or insecure nature of many job contracts. Further, they note that the high labour market participation among Ukrainian FDPs was likely sustained by employer wage subsidies offered by AF under their Introduktionsjobb (Introductory jobs) or Nystartsjobb (Restart jobs) schemes. IOM (2024: 23-24) similarly highlights the challenge of securing stable, skill-matching jobs for Ukrainian FDPs. Thus, it can be argued that high labour market participation does not necessarily reflect secure or well-paid employment.

In many ways, this outcome stems from the weak support structures for Ukrainian FDPs before 2024, which negatively affected living conditions. Until 2024, they were excluded from most AF programs, resulting in very few Ukrainian FDPs being registered with AF (Larsson et al., 2023). Most importantly, FDPs were excluded from the Establishment Program (Etableringsprogrammet), the labour market and civic introduction program ordinarily offered to new immigrants by AF, as this is only available to immigrants discharged from MV's reception system (Arbetsförmedlingen 2024).

Civil society organizations partly filled this gap in state assistance through language and labour market integration projects. As indicated by records of grants, given to such projects by ESF Care, projects mostly took place in or around Sweden's larger cities, but also in small or medium sized towns (Svenska ESF-rådet, n.d.). Expert 2, who led one such project, describes a "hands-on" approach matching Ukrainians directly with employers. With services such as CV translation, contact with companies, and lectures on the Swedish labour market, over 300 participants were assisted by the project, of which 75 were directly provided with jobs – a success, according to our interviewee.

Expert 2 attributes success to three factors: funding from foundations and the European Social Fund (ESF), employers' willingness to recruit specifically Ukrainian FDP workers, and ability to receive wage subsidies. These factors reveal both the potential and limits of the civil society-led approaches. They enable quick and personal assistance but also rely on voluntary/corporate engagement and short-term funding, which is necessarily temporary and contingent. Further, unlike state programs aimed at long-term stability through education and language training, these efforts prioritize immediate relief, potentially leading to less emphasis on the quality and permanence of jobs offered to Ukrainian FDPs.

After this period came June 2024, when Ukrainians with at least two years of residence (later changed to one) could finally gain access to public services available to most Swedish residents, including the Establishment Program. This change also brought higher economic transfers: participants in the Establishment Program receive "establishment allowance" (Etableringsersättning, ~6500 SEK/595 EUR per month), to which "establishment supplement" (etableringstillägg, for parents with children at home, maximum 4500 SEK/410 EUR per month) or "residence supplement" (bostadstillägg, for single households, maximum 3900 SEK/355 EUR) can be added (Försäkringskassan, n.d.).

Whilst the resulting sum is still relatively low, it far exceeds the daily allowance provided by MV, which at the most is 2200 SEK/200 EUR per person and month. The Establishment Program typically consists of two years full-time participation. The content of the program is individually adjusted, although Swedish language education, civic orientation studies and labour market activities, such as internships and coaching, are typically applied. Expert 1, who works with the program, stresses its long-term focus, combining language and civic orientation studies with labour market integration insofar as the former is often a condition for the latter.

However, several experts – including expert 1 – criticize the program as flawed. Mostly, this is framed as a general critique towards AF's recent transformations, which has replaced personal case managing and employer matching with jobseekers' self-management and services provided by contracted entrepreneurs. This shift, they argue, limits the direct, "hands-on" assistance Ukrainian FDPs need. Instead, participants are often urged to attend generic training sessions intended to keep them active rather than to secure concrete job opportunities.

In addition to these flaws, the experts point out some key hindrances, resulting from the fact that FDPs had to transfer between different bureaucratic systems in conjunction with their residence registration. Primarily, there is a time gap between MV's daily allowance, paid in advance, and the establishment allowance, which is paid retroactively. In combination with waiting times, this meant that FDPs could go several months without state economic assistance, causing desperation and a need to turn to municipal social services for temporary, means-tested economic assistance. This period of transfer was thus experienced by many as frustrating and risky, involving not only a risk of economic desperation but also complicated communication with several state agencies which had to be timed and sequenced properly. Paradoxically, Ukrainian FDPs' primary pathway towards improved living conditions is thus experienced by many as an uncertain and potentially destituting endeavour.

Further, differences between legal statuses affect access to economic support from the state. Unlike holders of status 2, holders of status 3 are excluded from residence based social insurance schemes, including the child benefits (barnbidrag) and housing allowances (bostadsbidrag) that many participants in the Establishment Program rely on due to the relatively low establishment allowance.

The expert interviews reveal that it is thus common amongst holders of status 3 to apply to municipal social services for economic support, even when in the Establishment program. Such economic support is strictly means-tested and thereby associated with demanding bureaucratic encounters – encounters further impeded by Ukrainian FDPs' limited Swedish proficiency.

Given Ukrainians FDPs' limited time of participation in the Establishment Program, there has not yet been any formal or systematic evaluation of its effects on Ukrainian FDPs' labour market participation. To what extent the program can be regarded as successful is therefore a question for the future – although it is likely that many Ukrainian FDPs will not have enough time to finish the program before the TPD expires in 2027.

4.1 Discussion and summary

Labour market assistance for Ukrainian FDPs reflects the broader shifts in Sweden's implementation of the TPD: from limited, fragmented support before June 2024 to more regularized – but bureaucratically complex – assistance afterward.

Before June 2024, state assistance was minimal and mostly limited to wage subsidies to employers. Notably, Ukrainian FDPs were excluded from the Establishment Program. This stands in contrast to Sweden's otherwise labour-centric migration regime, which emphasizes wage labour as the route to self-sufficiency and ties integration to employment. Despite this strong labour-centrism, Ukrainian FDPs with status 1 were left with little assistance to achieve long-term stable employment. Instead, most FDPs became dependent on civil society efforts, low-waged or temporary contracts, or excluded from the labour market altogether, becoming reliant on meagre state assistance. Although their legal status is not tied to employment, the low allowance levels made employment crucial and produced similar dynamics of de-skilling and overperformance as seen among labour migrants (Raphason et al., 2025)

After June 2024, however, most Ukrainian FDPs were able to transfer onto status 2 (and, later, 3). This meant expanded and regularized access to labour market assistance, including access to the Establishment Program.

This transformation more adequately integrated FDPs into the overarchingly labour-centric logic of the Swedish reception system and put FDPs – at least in theory – on a pathway towards stable labour market integration. Transferring into the Establishment Program was, however, described by the experts as attached to a multileveled structure of individualized bureaucratic governance, experienced by many Ukrainian FDPs as difficult and risky, insofar as gaps between systems and/or limited communication between agencies could cause periods of economic instability.

In general, then, labour market assistance for Ukrainian FDPs has been characterized by a difficult shift between two bureaucratic rationalities: one marked by sparse collective rights and voluntary engagement, and another by individualized planning, means- and qualification testing. Each has its strengths, but our experts agree that crucial services remain lacking, in addition to being mostly absent for the first two years of the TPD.

5. Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

The housing situation for Ukrainian FDPs has undergone several transformations since 2022, in line with legal changes (see Figure 1). Generally, however, those unable to secure accommodation through relatives, friends, or charity have been guaranteed municipal housing, either free or at low cost. While housing shortages exist, especially in bigger cities, municipalities have generally managed to house Ukrainian FDPs through existing allocation systems or by repurposing disused public facilities.

Upon the activation of the TPD, Ukrainian FDPs were first housed in MV units (“refugee centres” or “asylum units”) – collective units designed to house asylum applicants. In May 2022, however, the Swedish government deemed this solution unsustainable and decided to place Ukrainian FDPs in municipalities, which would offer housing while MV retained oversight (Regeringen 2022). This came into effect in July 2022 and aimed to distribute housing responsibilities evenly across the country, based on municipalities’ housing stocks, labour demand, and general social situation. However, this policy did not apply to all Ukrainian FDPs – according to our experts, approximately 40 percent had found independent housing through personal networks or civil society.

How different municipalities approached this situation varied and depended on their housing stocks and political priorities, as noted by experts 3 and 4. However, as housing allocation and administration were nationally handled by MV, pricing remained nationally consistent (Migrationsverket, n.d.-2): FDPs without income could live in facilities for free, while FDPs with some income were charged 2100 SEK per adult (190 EUR) and 1050 (95 EUR) per child per month. Means-tested food charges also applied.

Some municipalities provided Ukrainian FDPs with apartments. However, in housing shortage-plagued bigger cities – which generally received the largest number of Ukrainian FDPs – more creative and cohesively designed solution plans were mostly applied. In Gothenburg, for example, the municipality’s social services collaborated with civil society organizations to repurpose available apartments and disused public facilities.

Such units were jointly managed by the municipality and civil society organizations as collective residential facilities or as clusters of apartments, each with varying degrees of available service and amenities (Bräcke Diakoni et al., 2025).

In June 2024, most Ukrainian FDPs could register as residents and enter the standard settlement pathway outlined in the Act on reception of certain newly arrived immigrants for settlement (SFS 2016:38). With this pathway, FDPs are discharged from MV’s reception system and assigned to a municipality based on a quota system. The municipalities are then tasked with providing FDPs with long-term housing – typically for two to five years – until FDPs can secure housing themselves. The quality and type of housing offered in this process varies as well, from modular houses with shared facilities to private apartments. Generally, FDPs are expected to pay rent for this accommodation, which the municipality typically draws from its own housing stock or rents secondarily from third-party property owners. Rents vary, according to experts 3 and 4, but are often slightly below ordinary rates.

The routines for placing Ukrainian FDPs in municipalities are slightly different from the ones applied to refugees, however. For example, whereas refugees must often wait for up to two months until they are assigned a municipality, Ukrainian FDPs are immediately transferred to a municipality once eligible for residence registration (SFS 2016:39). They are also more or less guaranteed to remain in the municipality where they reside, something not afforded to refugees (SFS 2016:39)

5.1 Discussion and summary

Throughout the period, municipal authorities have held primary responsibility for housing Ukrainian FDPs, albeit under two different bureaucratic systems: for unregistered Ukrainians (status 1), MV-supervised but municipally operated temporary housing; for registered Ukrainians (statuses 2 and 3), municipally managed housing geared towards giving Ukrainian FDPs the possibility to find permanent housing on their own. While these allocation systems have ensured even geographical spread of housing responsibilities across the country and provided broad housing coverage, it has also meant variation in the type and quality of housing offered to Ukrainian FDPs. As said, under both systems, Ukrainian FDPs can be placed in collective housing solutions as well as in apartments. While there was no single, cohesive strategy in Sweden's solution to housing Ukrainian FDPs, experts 3 and 4 highlight four key observations:

First, collective and individual housing solutions (i.e., shared facilities vs. apartments) each have distinct strengths and weaknesses. For example, experts 3 and 4 note that collective housing facilitates FDPs' contacts with authorities and civil society, which is especially valuable for status 1 holders who have limited resources. But the forced cohabitation of strangers can also result in tensions – from mundane conflicts to ethnic or political tensions, e.g., between Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking FDPs. The concentration of Ukrainians in the same quarters, combined with limited economic means for transportation, can also restrict contact with Swedish society. By contrast, individual housing offers greater independence and continuity with pre-war life but can also – especially in combination with limited language skills and labour market access – exacerbate loneliness and complicate government oversight.

Second, the different systems reflect distinct bureaucratic rationalities, mirroring the different systems for labour market integration rolled out during the period. The bureaucratic system applied to holders of status 1 (i.e., MV-overseen and administered housing operated by municipalities), though often less suited for permanent habitation, entails free or low-cost housing as part of the collective rights granted to all Ukrainian FDPs. The system applied to holders of status 2 and 3, however, means higher costs for the residents and a higher degree of personal responsibility, as it comes coupled with expectations that the resident eventually finds permanent housing on their own.

Third, transitions between housing trajectories are often difficult. Moving from a MV unit to a MV-administered but municipality-run unit could mean a move across the country, while the transfer from MV- and municipality-managed housing to municipal rental contracts entails discharge from MV systems and simultaneous registration with multiple other agencies, thus placing Ukrainian FDPs in what experts 3 and 4 describe as a complex bureaucratic procedure. Further, the time gap, where Ukrainians FDPs lose access to daily allowance from MV whilst waiting for establishment allowance, often coincides with this procedure to create significant economic difficulties for the FDPs. This spurs many Ukrainian FDPs to apply for municipal economic assistance, as expert interviews indicate.

Fourth, differences in economic capabilities and access to social services between different status holders create different levels of economic strain when entering rent agreements after residence registration. As noted, whereas holders of status 2 can supplement their incomes with housing allowances (bostadsbidrag) and thus facilitate rent payments, this option is unavailable to holders of status 3. For many, this means that even the relatively low rents of municipality-provided apartments or rooms are hard to finance. Again, this creates risks of reliance on municipal economic assistance.

In short, Ukrainian FDPs have generally been housed, but arrangements differ substantially by municipality and legal status. Further research is needed for more detailed overviews over how different housing solutions interact with bureaucratic procedures and FDPs' legal statuses and living conditions to create different social outcomes. Moving forward, holders of status 2 or 3 will generally be allowed to stay in their municipal housing for a few years (the exact period differs between municipalities). Experts 3 and 4 expect that the greatest challenge for Ukrainian FDPs and municipalities will come after that, when Ukrainians are expected to enter regular housing or renting markets. In the major cities, queue times for apartments are long and housing prices high. Municipalities will therefore need clear strategies to avoid homelessness when support phases out.

6. Policies and outcomes on education of adults and children

Ukrainian FDPs' access to education has been shaped by legal status, age, residence, and resources. Although both children and adult have had a formal right to education throughout the period (except for municipal adult education, discussed below), their practical access to education varies considerably, affecting their integration trajectories.

6.1 Education for children

Three primary factors shape Ukrainian FDPs' children's access to schooling in Sweden. First, all children in Sweden have a legal right to free education. This applies for all groups of Ukrainian FDPs, regardless of legal status. Second, children with residence registration (status 2 or 3) are legally required to attend Swedish school and can thus not exclusively continue their Ukrainian educational tracks. Third, Swedish schools are municipalized, meaning that responsibility for funding, running, and allocating children to schools falls to municipal rather than state authorities.

Ukrainian children's entry into schooling is therefore administered locally. While concrete processes vary between municipalities, expert 5 described a typical pattern in a major city: first, the municipal authority responsible for allocating newly arrived pupils to schools is informed of a pupil's presence via parents, organizations, or social services. Then, the pupil and their parents are called to a meeting where the family's wishes and needs are communicated, the pupil's prior education is assessed, and a bus pass is issued. Afterward, the pupil is told to wait for school placement. Then the pupil's educational experiences are further mapped, along with an introduction to the Swedish language and school system, either in a two-week introductory course (as was the routine during 2022 and 2023) or in the assigned school (a routine applied from 2023 and onwards). Once entering a school, the pupils are either placed in an introductory class along with other newly arrived pupils (not all schools offer this, however) or in a regular class with other students. As part of their curriculum, children of FDPs study Swedish as a second language (Svenska som andraspråk, SVA), intended to give them proficiency in Swedish.

Expert 5 described Ukrainian children as having relatively quick and smooth access to Swedish schooling, partly because they often arrive with stable prior education, good English and general language skills, and relatively uninterrupted study trajectories. Expert 5 further describes the process as especially well-functioning when the two-week introductory classes were offered.

Language proficiency remains as the main challenge: Swedish as the medium of instruction might limit learning in other subjects, even with support from SVA courses. Another challenge concerns temporary protection versus long-term education commitments. Especially during the initial period of the TPD, when no Ukrainian FDP children were legally required to attend Swedish school, families often debated whether children should be locally enrolled or continue Ukrainian schooling remotely. This is an especially pressing issue for older pupils: unlike Swedish basic education, which entails a nine-year track, Ukrainian basic education is ten years long. Older students thus face a choice between directly moving into Swedish secondary education after having finished year nine or completing the Ukrainian tenth year to qualify for secondary education in Ukraine. In addition to being a practical choice, this is effectively a choice between prioritizing progression in the Swedish school system or envisaging a possible return to Ukrainian school in the near future.

6.2 Education for adults

For adults, two forms of education are relevant: 1) tertiary education (university or vocational education requiring secondary education); 2) adult education (allowing adult students to complete unfinished basic or secondary education or take other non-tertiary programs – such as Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) or some vocational training). Tertiary education is generally state administered, while adult education is municipalized, often with contracted providers from private or civil society sectors.

Ukrainian FDPs' access to these different forms of education depends on legal status. Status 1 holders have no legal right to municipal adult education (SFS 2010:800, chapter 29, 2 §), including SFI and civic orientation studies, although a reform in effect after June 2023 allows municipalities to choose to offer such education to status 1 holders anyway (SFS 2023:655, 8a §).

Access to such education is thus a right only for holders of status 2 and 3, who are generally expected to enrol in Swedish language courses, often as part of the Establishment program. In contrast, all Ukrainian FDPs can apply for university level studies tuition-free (Antagning.se, n.d.).

Expert 6, active in both a Ukrainian-diaspora organization and an education NGO, emphasized Ukrainian FDPs' limited practical access to tertiary and adult education. Of weight is the paradox that most Ukrainian FDPs were only guaranteed access to Swedish language education and civic orientation studies in their third year in Sweden, leaving civil society to fill in the gap with independent courses. As expert 6 remarked: "some Ukrainians could very well teach [the civic orientation courses] by the time they start it", highlighting the irrationality of "introducing" Ukrainian FDPs to a society only after they have lived in said society for two years.

Expert 6 also noted how formal access to university studies does not ensure participation. Key barriers include: 1) Language requirements: Swedish universities require English proficiency levels higher than those typically offered by the Ukrainian education system. Ukrainian FDPs seeking university studies must therefore either take a one-year English course with the municipal adult education services (inaccessible to status 1 holders) or pay for proficiency tests. 2) Credentialing: Official verification and translation of transcripts and diplomas is a time-consuming procedure, especially for Ukrainian FDPs who have limited stays in the country. 3) Funding: Until 2026, Ukrainian FDPs are not eligible for student allowances or loans (Centrala Studiestödsnämnden, n.d.), making full-time studies financially difficult and forcing many into simultaneous part-time work. 4) TPD temporariness: Uncertainty over one's future length of stay deters many from committing to multi-year study programs. Combined, these factors make it difficult for Ukrainian FDPs to enter and finish higher education in Sweden.

6.3 Discussion and summary

While Ukrainian children's access to education is shaped by municipal administration and a universal right of access, generally enabling smooth integration, adults' education is characterized by differentiated access between statuses and practical and bureaucratic hinders for actual participation. Although necessary for most newly arrived migrants' integration, Swedish language courses and civic orientation studies are generally withheld from Ukrainian FDPs until their residence registration (i.e., one or two years into their stay). Access to tertiary education, perceived by many as a path towards labour market integration, is impeded by bureaucratic and financial obstacles.

The case of adult education therefore highlights two broader patterns in Sweden's reception of Ukrainian FDPs. First, restricted rights and allowances given to holders of status 1, which in many cases produce economic hardships and hamper integration. Second, a stark contrast between Ukrainian FDPs' formal level of rights and their actual ability to enjoy such rights. Although FDPs are formally entitled to education and labour market participation, bureaucratic and financial conditions often produce barriers to actual participation. As expert 4 summarized: "They are allowed to stay here. But are they really allowed to live their lives here? Our official reception system seems to imply that they are not. Because they are not given enough support to survive in Sweden." As indicated by this quote, and our analysis in general, the state's role seems to mainly be one of bureaucratic granting of approvals, rather than provision of tangible assistance. Such a role has rather been taken up by municipal authorities and civil society – actors with comparably limited reach and resources. This theme recurs across all our focus areas, but is particularly pronounced in adult education, especially at the tertiary level.

7. Conclusions

In sum, the Swedish reception of Ukrainian FDPs is shaped by two bureaucratic rationalities and by Ukrainian FDPs' movement from the former to the latter as they change status. Together, these rationalities form the reception infrastructure which Ukrainian FDPs encounter in Sweden, significantly shaping their sense of affective citizenship. The first rationality – applied to status 1 holders and thus to all FDPs prior to June 2024 – is defined by collective entitlements to entry, work, and housing, minimal state support and allowances, and comprehensive yet voluntary assistance from civil society and some municipal actors. The second bureaucratic rationality – applied to status 2 and 3 holders – entails more extensive state support and allowances, but also means-testing, individualized planning, and more complex bureaucratic pathways.

In the interviews experts describe these rationalities as perpetuating an ongoing state of precarity, stemming from a) the temporary nature of the TPD, making FDPs uncertain of their future in Sweden and affecting their willingness to invest in long-term integration, and b) Sweden's fragmented, multileveled governance of immigrants. The combination of complex bureaucratic processes, limited economic assistance, and uncertain futures create risks for economic hardship and/or social exclusion. These inconsistencies also shape Ukrainian FDPs' affective citizenship, creating a contradictory sense of belonging. On one side, they encounter solidarity and support from civil society and the public, and, on another, fragmented and limited state support conditioned by the temporality of the TPD status and how it is administered through Swedish policies. While this study has not directly examined FDPs' own perceptions of belonging, experts consistently highlighted the negative consequences of this paradox.

The current three-status system has been developed in an ad hoc manner, resulting from how the TPD was initially implemented in Swedish law in 2003. Then, Swedish politicians did not establish a clear and unified reception system specifically for TPD migrants, instead applying parts of the reception system for asylum applicants, which is designed for short-term applications. When the TPD was activated in 2022 and the war proved prolonged, civil society and municipalities absorbed responsibilities the state had not planned for.

As a result, the official, policy-outlined reception system of TPD migrants remains ad hoc and unrefined in terms of practice and routines and has merely been alleviated through temporary measures. As a result, TPD migrants are left in a limbo state, between a legal status equivalent to that of asylum applicants and a lived reality more closely resembling that of semi-permanent residents.

Given these flaws, it could be argued that a more coherent and long-term system for Sweden's reception of TPD migrants is needed, allowing Sweden to respond more effectively to future activations of the TPD. Such a system should remove obstacles to labour market participation, housing, and education, provide rapid access to labour market services and language education, and simplify bureaucratic procedures. Ideally, it would also foster collaboration with civil society in designing and delivering services.

A cornerstone of this system could usefully be immediate or quick granting of residence registration for TPD migrants. This would likely create better conditions, not only for quickly integrating TPD migrants into e.g., the labour market, but also for providing them with skills necessary for securing long-term employment and housing and creating less reliance on public and corporate engagement. At minimum, raising MV's daily allowance is essential, as experts unanimously described it as inadequate for a decent standard of living.

Efficiency could also be fostered by building from the best practices currently applied. These have mostly been pioneered by civil society, often in collaboration with municipal authorities:

1. Labour market assistance prioritizing direct employer contact. Such assistance would, however, have to be combined with early access to Swedish language education and quick verification of skills, transcripts, and diplomas to facilitate long-term contracts and counteract de-skilling.
2. Joint municipal-civil society housing solutions, as pioneered in Gothenburg (Bräcke Diakoni et al., 2025). This combines municipalities' access to stable funding and a broad housing stock with civil society's flexible and engaged assistance efforts. Allowing civil society a stake in the game enables their direct access to TPD migrants and provides them with a stable source of funding.

3. Universal, rights-based approaches to education, as seen in the current approach to children's schooling. This creates relatively simple bureaucratic paths to access and promotes stability. However, such an approach should be complemented with targeted efforts to ensure participation in education. Giving TPD migrants access to student loans and allowances would facilitate this.

Finally, the current absence of a pre-defined and coordinated framework for reception also creates uncertainties when it comes to Ukrainian FDPs' possibilities for stays beyond March 2027. As remarked by civil society organizations (Lagerkvist et al., 2025), Ukrainian FDPs face unclear pathways: asylum is generally not granted until the TPD ends; work- or study-based residence permits must typically be applied for from abroad; stays in Sweden under the TPD do not count towards the residence period required for a permanent residence permit. An inquiry by the Swedish Department of Justice warns that this situation could lead to a loss of valuable labour power and recommends allowing in-country applications (Regeringskansliet, 2024).

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