



[Deliverable D 2.1]

Country-specific reports, based on them a comparative report, on the three key migrant-related policy areas, legislation and policy implementation related to FDPs

[Public title/Title for citation: Ukrainian Forcefully Displaced People under Temporary Protection in the Baltic Sea Region: Labour Market, Education, and Housing in Comparative Perspective]

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Authors: Sophie Schmäing, Oksana Shmulyar Gréen and Andrea Spehar

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Executive summary

This comparative report presents an integrated analysis of how six countries of the European Union —**Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden**—have implemented the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD, Council Directive 2001/55/EC) in response to the arrival of forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) from Ukraine following Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. The report constitutes Deliverable D2.1 within Work Package 2, which focuses on everyday encounters between state actors and migrants across 6 countries in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

. WP 2 forms part of the Horizon Europe project *Migration, Affective Geopolitics and European Democracy in Times of Military Conflicts* (MAGnituDe).

The report draws on six country-specific reports included as Annexes 1–6 (CRs) produced within the same task. It synthesises findings from desk-based analysis of national policies in three key migrant-related policy areas – the labour market, housing and education – i and supported by 41 thematically analysed expert interviews with 49 SLBs and CSO administrators (2 per policy area, 3 per country). The information gathered from experts is a valuable source of insight into the everyday encounters between FDPs, CSOs and SLBs. MAGnituDe emphasises that first encounters between FDPs and receiving states can have a long-lasting effect on how migrants perceive their new states of residence and whether they develop sufficient trust in state institutions to engage in democratic life. The report thus provides both a macro-level analysis of governance and legislation and a micro-level insight into policy enactment and interactional dynamics, contributing to the project’s overarching goal of understanding how European democracies respond to forced displacement under conditions of geopolitical conflict and affective polarisation.

One of the main contributions of this report is that it critically examines the TPD implementation from a multi-level governance (MLG) perspective. It shows that while the Directive has initially received unified support, over time it has produced divergent practices, coordination models, and outcomes across Member States, with pronounced local variations. The centrality of local authorities underscores a key insight of MLG analysis: policy implementation depends as much on local capacity, coordination, and discretion as on national legislation. Taken together, these governance patterns illustrate how a shared EU-level entitlement translated into diverse national and local realities.

The analysis shows that while all six countries ensured legal access to the labour market, housing and schooling, differences in administrative structures, municipal capacity, and discretion among

the front-line actors exposed structural tensions between emergency-driven temporary measures and the protracted nature of displacement. These differences also reflect broader variations in welfare-state and migrant integration regimes, as well as administrative capacities, housing markets, labour market structures, and educational systems. **Germany** and **Finland** relied on long-standing welfare-state and previously developed migrant integration infrastructures. By contrast, **Sweden**—despite having well-developed refugee reception infrastructure and receiving far fewer FDPs—developed a fragmented and ad hoc response, with repeated legal changes producing unequal rights among Ukrainian FDPs. **Lithuania** and **Latvia** demonstrated strong coordination between national and municipal actors, despite more limited administrative capacity, whereas **Poland** faced an ambiguous division of responsibilities between national and local authorities, hindering the development of coherent integration measures.

Based on the comparative findings, MAGnituDe suggests that the following measures should be prioritised:

- 1) aligning short-term protection with longer-term integration trajectories will be essential as the EU and Member States prepare for the transition beyond the expiry of the TPD in 2027.
- 2) supporting municipalities, strengthening CSO partnerships, improving coordination, and ensuring equitable access to education, housing, and labour market opportunities will be critical to safeguarding the well-being of Ukrainian FDPs and enhancing the resilience of European migration governance.

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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:

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
BSR	Baltic Sea Region
CR	Country Report
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EASO	European Asylum Support Office (now European Union Agency for Asylum)
ESF / ESF+	European Social Fund / European Social Fund Plus
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
FDP	Forcibly Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MLG	Multilevel Governance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RIA	Reception and Integration Agency (Lithuania)

SLB	Street-Level Bureaucrat
TPD	Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC)
TSL	Transport-Logistics
TUVA	Preparatory Programme for Upper Secondary Education (Finland)

1. Introduction

This report is the result of collaboration among countries in the Baltic Sea region, which since February 2022 has been particularly affected by Russia's full-scale invasion and still ongoing war against Ukraine. On 31 October 2025, 4.3 million non-EU citizens, who fled Ukraine as a consequence of Russia's war of aggression, were residing in the EU under temporary protection (Eurostat, December 2025). More than 50 per cent of Ukrainian FDPs in the EU are residing in six countries that this report covers. The aim of the report is to synthesize the key points of the desk research and expert interviews regarding the national and local policies, legislation, and implementation practices concerning Ukrainians displaced by Russia's full-scale invasion. The report provides the analysis of the situation in six countries of BSR - **Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden** (CRs: Finland Annex 1, Germany Annex 2, Latvia Annex 3, Lithuania Annex 4, Poland Annex 5, Sweden Annex 6). The analysis covers three key policy areas : labour market integration, housing, and education (for both adults and children). MAGnituDe project argues that these three domains are essential for basic welfare, self-sufficiency, and long-term integration of Ukrainian FDPs, but they are also areas where EU Member States' welfare regimes and administrative systems diverge most sharply. By analysing these policy areas comparatively, the report identifies both gaps in existing legislation and implementation practices related to the specific status of FDPs as well as good practices on the EU level, nationally and locally. Moreover, a comparative angle highlights shared governance challenges and country-specific solutions to managing the reception and inclusion of Ukrainian FDPs under the temporary protection.

Since 2022, a rapidly expanding body of research has examined the displacement of Ukrainians and the responses of receiving states, including analyses of the activation and implications of the Temporary Protection Directive (e.g. European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024; Hernes & Łukasiewicz, 2025; Fink & Kader, 2023; Koikkalainen et al., 2025), as well as studies focusing on labour market participation, welfare access, housing, and changing public attitudes towards Ukrainian FDPs across the EU member states (e.g. Blomqvist Mickelsson, 2024; ECRE, 2025; Eurofound, 2024; Kosyakova, et. al., 2024; EMN, 2024; Vigneri, et. al., 2025). This literature has generated important insights into the exceptional nature of the EU's response, the differentiated treatment of Ukrainian FDPs compared to other protection seekers, and the broader consequences of the TPD for European asylum and migration governance. At the same time, much of this research has focused on legal frameworks, national-level policy design, or single-country cases, with more

limited attention to how policies are interpreted and enacted across governance levels and in everyday institutional practice.

In dialogue with this growing body of research, the comparative report contributes by a novel analytical perspective, namely by combining a multilevel governance perspective with insights from the research on affective geopolitics and frontline implementation. By integrating desk-based analysis of legislation and policy documents with expert interviews with street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and civil society actors (CSOs), the report links macro-level policy frameworks with the micro-level practices, perceptions, and emotional dimensions, through which temporary protection is materialised in practice. This integrated approach highlights how affective factors —such as perceptions of cultural proximity, solidarity, and uncertainty—intersect with institutional arrangements and discretionary decision-making, shaping both policy outcomes and the lived experiences of Ukrainian FDPs across different welfare regimes and administrative contexts (Spehar, 2025a, 2025 b).

This report pursues two main objectives. *First*, it situates national developments and implementation outcomes related to the TPD in six EU Member States within the broader EU framework of the directive, which was activated on 4 March 2022. While the directive establishes a shared minimum standard for legal residence, work, and social support, its translation into national legislation, institutional arrangements, and everyday implementation varies significantly across Member States. Understanding these variations is essential for assessing how the TPD operates as a multilevel governance mechanism, shaped simultaneously by supranational coordination, domestic policy traditions, and local administrative capacities.

Second, the report highlights the role of street-level actors and the affective dimensions of policy implementation. As emphasised by the MAGnituDe project's theoretical framework, migration governance is not only about formal regulations but also about how frontline actors—SLBs, such as social workers, employment caseworkers, and teachers, as well as CSOs, such as volunteers and NGO representatives—interpret, negotiate, and enact these rules in everyday encounters with Ukrainian FDPs. Their practices and perceptions mediate the relationship between the state and migrants, shaping both the effectiveness of policy implementation and the lived experiences of FDPs.

2. Background

Both governments and societies in the countries under analysis expressed eminent solidarity with Ukraine and provided support to Ukrainians seeking protection from the war. Among the six countries that this report covers, **Germany** has taken in the largest total number of Ukrainian FDPs since the start of the Russian invasion, closely followed by **Poland**. **Poland**, however, has hosted the largest number of Ukrainian FDPs per thousand persons of the total population among the six countries, while the number of Ukrainian FDPs in **Sweden** is by far the lowest.

Table 1. Beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of October 2025

Country	Total number	Ratio per 1000 people
Finland	77 335	13,72
Germany	1 229 960	14,71
Latvia	31 280	16,84
Lithuania	50 600	17,50
Poland	965 005	26,44
Sweden	48 315	4,56

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Temporary_protection_for_persons_fleeing_Ukraine_-_monthly_statistics.

Important to underline, six countries covered in the report have very different prior experiences with hosting asylum seekers, refugees and other categories of migrants. In 2015, **Germany** and **Sweden** provided protection to a large number of Syrian refugees (Schierenbeck, et al. 2023; Spehar, 2025b; Vigneri, et.al 2025). In **Germany**, the term “welcome culture” was coined in this context, while **Sweden’s** policy was considered as one of the most generous in the EU. However, over the years since 2015, the increasing number of asylum seekers was largely framed as a ‘migration crisis’ (Triandafyllidou 2018) and the solidarity with incoming migrants has cramped under the pressure of public opinion as well as political and societal challenges (Danielsen& Hernes, 2025; Vigneri et.al, 2025). Prior 2022, **Latvia**, **Lithuania** and **Poland** have had lesser experience with hosting asylum seekers and refugees. While **Latvia** and **Lithuania** received a small number of Syrian refugees, **Poland** together with the other Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) actively opposed the attempt to reallocate Syrian refugees within the European Union (Saatçioğlu 2021).

In relation to migrants from Ukraine, each of the studied countries have distinct histories prior the Russia's full-scale invasion. In all countries, migration from Ukraine has been on the rise since 2014. For instance, in **Poland**, and to some extent **Germany**, **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, labour migration from Ukraine was quite prominent (Lashchuk, 2025; Kubiciel–Lodzińska et al. 2023) At the same time, in **Sweden** and **Finland**, Ukrainians comprised a small diaspora arriving to these countries as students, family members and to some extent workers (Shmulyar Gréen & Odynets, 2024; Koikkalainen et al., 2025). Another important dimension is that there are significant groups of Russian-speaking migrants in **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Finland** and **Germany**, comprising settled minorities living in these countries for a long time.

3. Methodological Note

3.1. Desk Research

Each country report (**Annexes 1–6 (CRs)**) is based on the desk research and expert interviews, providing both documentary and experiential evidence of how FDP-related policies have been designed and implemented. The desk research component involved a systematic review of:

- National and local legislation and policy documents regulating the reception, legal status, and integration of Ukrainian FDPs;
- Government reports, action plans, and administrative guidelines concerning the implementation of TPD;
- Statistical data from official national and EU sources (e.g., Ministries of Interior, Migration Agencies, Statistical Offices, IOM, Eurostat);
- Secondary sources including academic studies, policy analyses, and relevant media coverage.

This analysis focused specifically on three policy domains—labour market, housing, and education (including the education for children)—as these domains represent the key areas of Ukrainian FDPs' everyday well-being and are structured differently across welfare and governance regimes in the Baltic Sea Region. The desk research aimed to identify gaps and inconsistencies in national legislation and institutional frameworks, particularly regarding the status and entitlements of FDPs relative to other migrant groups (e.g., asylum seekers or labour migrants).

3.2. Expert Interviews

To complement and contextualize the documentary analysis, each national team conducted six semi-structured expert interviews—two per policy area—with key actors involved in the practical implementation or support of FDP-related policies. The total comparative sample includes 41 expert interview occasions with 49 interviewees with:

- Street-level bureaucrats (SLBs): representatives of public institutions (e.g., employment offices, municipal housing agencies, education authorities and institutions) directly involved in policy implementation;
- Civil society and non-governmental organisation (CSO) actors facilitating integration support, advocacy, or service delivery for FDPs in collaboration with local municipalities or independently.

The interviews were conducted locally in each country: in **Germany** in Berlin, in **Poland** – Gdansk, Gdynia, and Sopot, in **Latvia** – Riga, in **Lithuania** – Vilnius, in **Finland** – a region in Eastern **Finland**, and in **Sweden** – Gothenburg. The interviews aimed to capture professional interpretations of policies and practices, especially in cases where official regulations were generic, ambiguous, or lacked transparency in implementation. Through these interviews, the research identifies how street-level discretion, institutional coordination, and inter-organisational cooperation shape the actual outcomes of TPD's implementation.

The synthesis of both sources of data points out similarities and variations across national cases to reveal broader regional and local patterns and governance trends. It highlights how multilevel coordination, street-level discretion, and affective engagement together shape the effectiveness and equity of temporary protection in Europe.

4. Policy Context of the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)

4.1. The origins and objectives of TPD

The Temporary Protection Directive was created in the aftermath of the Balkan wars of the 1990s, when large-scale displacement from Bosnia and Kosovo exposed the limitations of existing EU asylum mechanisms (Fink & Kader, 2023; Spehar, 2025b). The Directive was designed to provide a

collective and harmonised legal protection framework for situations of “mass influx” that might otherwise overwhelm national asylum systems (Directive 2001/55/EC). Its core objectives are summarised in **Table 2** which outlines the Directive’s focus on immediate protection, solidarity among Member States, and the safeguarding of national asylum systems.

Table 2. Core objectives of the Temporary Protection Directive

Objective	Policy rationale
Provide immediate and temporary protection	Enable rapid access to legal residence and basic rights for persons fleeing armed conflict or endemic violence
Ensure a balance of efforts between Member States	Promote solidarity by sharing responsibility for reception and support across the EU
Prevent overburdening of national asylum systems	Avoid the collapse of individual asylum systems during simultaneous, large-scale arrivals

The TPD grants beneficiaries a residence permit, valid for one year (renewable up to three years), together with the right to work and access to housing, education, healthcare, and social welfare to the extent provided by national legislation. Importantly, the TPD establishes a form of protection based on *prima facie* group recognition rather than individual asylum claims, enabling a rapid and low-bureaucracy response. Despite its potential utility, the directive remained dormant for more than two decades. Notably, it was not activated during earlier humanitarian crises, such as those of migration from Syria (2015 and onwards), and it was not seriously discussed as a potential instrument for managing those large-scale refugee arrivals. The TPD thus remained a latent but unused mechanism until 2022, when geopolitical and moral consensus around Ukraine finally triggered its application.

4.2. Activation of the TPD in 2022: unprecedented scale and coordination

The Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 triggered the largest and fastest displacement of people in Europe since the Second World War. Within weeks, millions of Ukrainians crossed into the European Union, prompting the need for an immediate and

coordinated legal and humanitarian response. On 4 March 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, thereby activating the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time since its adoption in 2001. This activation marked a watershed moment in EU asylum and migration governance and represented both a humanitarian act and a major test of European solidarity and multilevel coordination. At the same time, the decision embedded the EU's response to displacement firmly within a temporal logic of protection, framing residence and rights as explicitly time-limited. Temporality has become an increasingly important dimension of migration and asylum governance in recent years (Schultz & Vedsted-Hansen, 2025). Scholars describe a “temporary turn,” where migration policies frame protection and mobility as time-bound, exceptional, and reversible. The TPD reflects and reinforces this logic: it guarantees safety and access to rights, but only within a limited temporal horizon. The directive thus institutionalises the notion of temporariness as a governing principle in EU migration policy (Hernes & Łukasiewicz, 2025; Koikkalainen et al. 2025). As the following sections demonstrate, this time-bound framework has had far-reaching implications for policy design and implementation across housing, education, and labour market integration, shaping both institutional responses and the everyday experiences of Ukrainian FDPs.

Following activation, all EU Member States, along with associated countries such as Norway and Switzerland, became legally obliged to transpose the directive into national legislation. Unlike earlier migration crises, political consensus around the decision was exceptionally strong. This reflected broad public solidarity with Ukraine, rooted in geographical proximity, shared democratic values, and the perception of Ukrainians as “neighbours in need” (Spehar, 2025b). The practical implementation of the directive remained primarily the responsibility of national governments and, crucially, of regional and local authorities. This multilevel structure—EU coordination, national legislation, and local and regional execution—became the defining feature of the directive's operationalisation. While the TPD established a shared legal baseline across the EU, its implementation has varied substantially among Member States (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024; Eurofound, 2024; Hernes et al, 2023; Koikkalainen et al., 2025). These differences stem from several interrelated factors, including national administrative traditions, welfare regimes, political priorities, geographical proximity to Ukraine, and pre-existing migration governance systems.

To better illustrate the scope of national discretion embedded in the Temporary Protection Directive, **Table 3** summarises the key policy dimensions in which Member States exercised autonomy when implementing the directive.

Table 3. Areas of national discretion in the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive

Policy dimension	National-level discretion
Legal transposition	Choice of transposition mechanism, including new legislation, amendments to existing asylum laws, or executive decrees
Institutional responsibility	Designation of authorities responsible for registration, residence permits, and access to services
Substantive rights and entitlements	Definition of the scope and form of welfare entitlements, housing support, and labour market access
Role of local authorities and civil society	Allocation of responsibilities to municipalities and civil society organisations in service delivery and integration support

4.3. TPD's duration, extensions, and post-2027 uncertainty

Initially, the TPD was set to provide protection for one year, with the possibility of extending its duration. It was first extended automatically until March 2024 and subsequently prolonged to March 2025, 2026, and most recently to March 2027 through successive Council Implementing Decisions. These extensions reflect the persistence of the war and the continuing need for protection, but they also raise broader questions about the temporal boundaries of “temporary protection” (cf. Sandberg et.al, 2025). As the displacement of Ukrainians becomes protracted, the line between temporary and long-term protection is increasingly blurred. For many FDPs—particularly those now integrated into local labour markets, education systems, and communities—the prospect of return remains uncertain, even though Ukraine wants its citizens to come back (Romashchenko, 2025). At the same time, TPD, by design, provides no explicit pathway to permanent residence or long-term legal status once it expires. At the EU level, the European Commission’s 2025 Council Recommendation on the transition out of temporary protection calls for coordination of exit strategies, balancing “safe and voluntary return” with “continuity of legal stay” for those wishing to remain (Council of the European Union, 2025). However, national governments retain wide discretion over how to operationalise this transition. As evidenced in the six national reports (as Annexes 1–6 (CRs), few Member States have yet developed concrete post-

2027 mechanisms, creating growing uncertainty for FDPs and for the institutions tasked with their support. This uncertainty underscores a broader tension within the EU's governance of displacement: while the TPD demonstrated the Union's capacity for swift and unified action, it also institutionalised temporariness that may be increasingly misaligned with the realities of long-term displacement and integration.

4.4. Governance and multilevel implementation of TPD

MAGnitude's important contribution to an understanding of how the TPD has been implemented is the multilevel governance (MLG) perspective. It is essential for analysing TPD's implementation across the European Union as the migration governance in the EU is characterised by the dispersion of authority across EU institutions, national governments, regional administrations, municipalities, and civil society organisations (Caponio and Jones-Correa, 2018). Rather than working through a hierarchical system, these actors operate through overlapping mandates, negotiated responsibilities, and shared implementation tasks (Hooghe and Marks, 2020). TPD, with its combination of EU-level activation, national-level legal transposition, and local-level service delivery, exemplifies the multi-governance structure.

4.5. Transposition and divergent national architectures

All six countries examined in this report—**Finland**, **Germany**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Poland**, and **Sweden**—activated or transposed the TPD within days or weeks of the EU decision in March 2022. Yet the speed of activation masked significant institutional differences. Each country chose distinct pathways for embedding the directive into domestic legislation, reflecting pre-existing administrative traditions and welfare-state models. **Germany** and **Finland** incorporated the directive into existing asylum and migration legislation, drawing on established governance frameworks with clear divisions of responsibility. **Latvia** and **Poland** enacted dedicated legislation specific to displaced Ukrainians, enabling rapid action but sometimes creating parallel systems that did not fully align with existing structures. **Lithuania** relied on a hybrid approach, combining amendments to its Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners with complementary government decisions. **Sweden** initially relied on its general asylum system before introducing differentiated residence statuses in 2024, which reshaped responsibilities for municipalities and the Migration Agency.

These national differences significantly shaped access to rights, the clarity of institutional mandates, and the stability of coordination mechanisms during implementation. While EU institutions offered strategic guidance and monitoring, national governments played the central role in defining access to services, funding allocation, and responsibility-sharing. The effectiveness of national coordination varied considerably across the six cases. **Lithuania** established a coordinated structure involving the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA). **Latvia** created a similarly clear framework through the State Fire and Rescue Service and municipal civil-protection commissions. **Germany** relied on federal–Länder coordination and existing welfare-state mechanisms, which ensured broad national coverage but produced regional variation in administrative capacity and service delivery. By contrast, **Poland** and **Sweden** experienced more fragmented national coordination. In **Poland**, the Special Act ensured rapid emergency response but left longer-term integration responsibilities unclear, resulting in municipalities, NGOs, and private actors taking on significant tasks without consistent guidance. In **Sweden**, ambiguities regarding the respective responsibilities of the Migration Agency, municipalities, and county administrations persisted until reforms in 2024 clarified the division of labour.

4.6. Local-level implementation and municipalities as de facto integrators

Local implementation is especially important in migration and asylum governance because the practical realisation of protection, welfare access, and integration occurs at the municipal level (Lidén and Nyhlén, 2022). Even when national governments define policies, it is local authorities and frontline professionals—SLBs—who interpret and apply them in everyday encounters with migrants, often in collaboration or partnerships with CSOs (Schierenbeck, Naseef and Spehar, 2023). SLBs exercise considerable discretion in contexts with rapidly changing rules or limited resources, as was the case during the initial implementation of TPD. Their actions shape not only access to housing, education, and employment but also migrants’ experiences of the state and their sense of belonging.

Across all six countries, municipalities became the primary implementers of TPD, regardless of how responsibilities were formalised at the national level. Municipalities provided accommodation, ensured access to schooling, facilitated labour market entry, and coordinated with civil society

actors. In **Lithuania**, municipalities worked closely with RIA to manage housing and early integration. In **Latvia**, municipal commissions served as the central interface for displaced Ukrainians. In **Germany, Finland** and **Sweden** municipalities played well-established roles in welfare and education provision, but the scale of arrivals required intensified collaboration with NGOs and volunteers. Even in **Poland**—where municipalities had limited formal integration mandates—they became focal points for registration, social assistance, and support for families with children.

The centrality of local authorities thus underscores a key insight of multilevel governance: policy implementation depends as much on local capacity, coordination, and discretion as on national legislation.

4.7. Civil society as a bridging and compensatory actor

Civil society organisations, volunteers, and Ukrainian diaspora groups played indispensable roles across all six countries for hosting and supporting Ukrainian FDPs, though the scope and form of their involvement varied according to governance structures and local capacities. In countries where state coordination was fragmented or where integration mandates were weakly defined—most notably **Poland** and, to some extent, **Sweden**—CSOs assumed a compensatory role, providing services such as language courses, psychosocial support, job-search assistance, and legal counselling. Here, NGOs often became the primary entry point into the support system, helping Ukrainian FDPs navigate administrative procedures and providing multilingual information that public institutions could not always offer.

In more coordinated governance environments, like **Lithuania** and **Latvia**, CSOs were embedded into municipal-level coordination mechanisms and acted as operational partners in delivering early integration support. NGOs collaborated with municipalities to organise temporary accommodation, distribute humanitarian aid, and reach vulnerable individuals, such as elderly persons or single mothers. EU emergency funding, particularly AMIF and EFS projects, enabled municipalities in both countries to contract NGOs for language training, orientation sessions, and counselling. **Germany** and **Finland** represent a third pattern, where strong welfare-state structures coexisted with targeted civil society involvement. Although municipalities bore the main responsibility for welfare and education, CSOs provided bridging support by helping FDPs navigate complex registration processes and access entitlements. For example, in Berlin NGOs deployed “integration guides” and language mediators, who assisted individuals at welfare offices, job centres, and schools. In **Finland**,

CSOs played an important role in community-building activities and social support, particularly in rural areas with limited municipal resources.

Across these varied settings, CSOs enhanced responsiveness, offered person-centred support, and extended the capacity of local authorities. However, reliance on CSOs also led to uneven access to services, as the scope and quality of support depended on local NGO capacity, funding availability, and the strength of municipal–CSO cooperation.

4.8. Evolution of migration governance under the TPD over time from emergency response to stabilisation and recalibration

Implementation of the TPD evolved over time, reflecting processes of administrative learning, shifting political priorities, and changing resource needs. Across the six countries examined in this report, three broad phases of implementation can be identified, each characterised by distinct policy priorities. The initial phase prioritised rapid humanitarian response and access to protection, followed by a period focused on institutional stabilisation and integration into mainstream welfare, education, and labour market systems. More recently, implementation has entered a phase of recalibration or restriction, as displacement has become protracted and governments have sought to adjust temporary protection arrangements within existing policy frameworks. **Table 4** summarises this temporal evolution, highlighting the shift in policy priorities over time.

Table 4. Temporal evolution of the TPD implementation

Phase	Time period	Policy priorities	Implementation challenges
Emergency humanitarian response	2022	Rapid protection; emergency housing; access to basic rights	Limited capacity; strong reliance on ad hoc solutions and civil society
Institutional stabilisation	2023–2024	Integration into mainstream welfare, education, and labour market systems; formalised coordination	Uneven municipal capacity; coordination challenges
Normalisation or restriction	2025	Adjustment of entitlements;	Tensions between temporary status and

		planning for post-2027 legal pathways	long-term settlement needs
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5. Main findings

Taken together, this temporal evolution illustrates that the implementation of the TPD has been dynamic rather than static, shaped by changing policy priorities, institutional learning, and shifting resource constraints. As emergency responses gradually gave way to more stabilised arrangements and, more recently, to recalibration or restriction, the implications of temporary protection have become increasingly visible in specific policy domains. The following sections therefore turn to a closer examination of how these governance dynamics have unfolded in three key policy areas that are central to FDPs’ everyday lives and longer-term integration prospects: labour market integration, housing, and education.

5.1. Labour market integration

Access to the labour market is one of core entitlements under TPD. All six examined countries enabled Ukrainian FDPs to access the labour market. Given that the majority of those who arrived from Ukraine were of working age and highly qualified, most having a tertiary education and prior work experience, expectations for rapid labour market integration were high (IOM, 2024; Kubiciel–Lodzińska, et al. 2024; Kosyakova et.al, 2024; Schreyer 2024). However, the different countries’ approaches to labour market integration have shaped FDPs’ de facto access to employment.

In **Finland**, Ukrainian FDPs’ access to the labour market was impeded by stringent requirements, including advanced language proficiency and formal qualifications equivalent to those of the local workforce. The difficult economic situation in **Finland**, along with a high unemployment rate in European comparison, further exacerbated FDP’s chances for rapid employment. High demands regarding language skills and qualifications are similarly characteristic of the **German** labour market. **Germany** placed high expectations on the potential of highly qualified FDPs to address the existing skills shortage on the German labour market. **Germany** pursued a strategy of medium-term integration of Ukrainian FDPs into the labour market, emphasising language learning to enable employment in line with their qualifications. However, at the end of 2023, the “Job Turbo” programme was introduced, marking a shift towards rapid integration and a tendency towards

deskilling. Among the studied countries, **Finland** has the lowest employment rate of Ukrainian FDPs with 28 per cent (CR Finland, Annex 1) and marginal increases over time. In **Germany** the employment rate was comparably low but increased constantly. In May 2025, the employment rate was 34,3 percent (Mediendienst Integration 2025).

Latvia and **Lithuania** both pursued rapid labour market integration and introduced comprehensive sets of measures. For instance, **Latvia** facilitated Ukrainian FDPs' way into employment by introducing tax reliefs, and **Lithuania** introduced wage subsidies for employers. However, due to budget cuts, the Lithuanian approach is currently under question. The Polish labour market likewise provided favourable conditions for a rapid integration of Ukrainian FDPs. **Poland** has one of the most liberal labour markets in Europe. Moreover, labour migration from Ukraine to **Poland** has increased since 2014, and the existing Ukrainian diaspora is likely to have facilitated Ukrainian FDP's chances of finding employment through informal networks. In **Lithuania** and **Poland**, the employment rate is among the highest, with 76,5 (Public Employment Agency/CR Lithuania, Annex 4) and 71,3 (CR Poland, Annex 5) per cent respectively. In **Latvia**, the employment rate is 56 per cent (CR Latvia, Annex 3). In **Sweden**, the employment rate of 58 per cent is remarkably high given that the state only offered fragmented support for Ukrainian FDPs until 2024 (IOM, 2024). While CSOs have partially compensated for the lack of state support in **Sweden**, conditions for Ukrainian FDPs improved significantly in 2024, when they were granted access to the labour integration programme (Etableringsprogrammet). **Sweden** is the only country where the legal status and economic situation among the Ukrainian FDPs has improved since 2022.

The outcomes of labour market integration across the six countries show that rapid integration carries a significant risk of deskilling. The country reports echo previous research and clearly indicate that rapid labour market integration is linked to taking up jobs below FDPs qualifications. In addition to clear deskilling tendencies, Ukrainian FDPs more frequently work in temporary jobs (ENM, 2024; IOM,2024; Kosyakova et. al., 2024; Lashchuk, 2025). Even though employment rates vary greatly across the countries studied, there are clear parallels in the factors that prevent Ukrainian FDPs from finding skilled work that matches their qualifications. These obstacles are discussed in the next section, along with examples of how countries have attempted to counteract them. The second section discusses specific labour activation measures.

5.1.1. Obstacles to labour market integration

5.1.1.1. Language skills

The predominant majority of Ukrainian FDPs arrived in the countries of the Baltic Sea region without the language skills of the respective countries. At the same time, all country reports indicate that knowledge of the local language is the key not only to the labour market but also to integration in a broader sense. There are exceptions for certain sectors, such as IT, and English proficiency has proven important in **Sweden** and **Lithuania**, as has Russian proficiency in **Lithuania** and **Latvia**.

In all countries, experts noted a lack of local language skills as a factor hindering rapid labour market integration, but there are also significant differences across the cases. **Finland** and **Germany** have exceptionally high requirements for language acquisition. According to the interviewed experts, in both **Finland** and **Germany**, language proficiency in the respective country is required even when they are not essential for performing the respective job. However, language skills of Ukrainian FDPs in Finland have increased significantly, and they have also improved in **Germany** (CR Finland Annex 1, CR Germany Annex 2).

In **Poland**, likewise, language skills are essential for pursuing specialized professions. In **Germany**, Ukrainians under the TPD can be granted entitlement to attend integration courses, including language courses and civic training. Ukrainian FDPs, receiving social benefits, are obliged to attend an integration course. However, legal changes and budget cuts have recently significantly reduced opportunities to improve language skills beyond the A2/B1 level offered in integration courses.

Lithuania and **Latvia** have made deliberate efforts to remove the existing language barrier to employment by temporarily waiving the language proficiency requirement that normally applies. In **Lithuania**, foreign nationals are normally required to obtain a Lithuanian language certificate after 12 months. This requirement has been waived for Ukrainian FDPs for as long as they are granted the TPD status (Alfa 2025). **Latvia** has allowed Ukrainians to be hired without any language skills. Still, challenges remain in these countries for Ukrainian FDPs seeking higher-qualified positions, which necessarily require strong language skills, regardless of the regulations. Despite the need to learn the language, however, several country reports indicate a lack of availability of language courses. In **Lithuania**, various institutions and CSOs offer language courses, but the number is insufficient given the high number of FDPs. In **Latvia**, there is a lack of consistent and continuous language practice, which is also due to a funding gap. As a result, Ukrainian FDPs have

to wait several months for a new language course after completing one level. The **Polish** country report paints a mixed picture: on the one hand, the organisation of language course by CSOs is constrained by temporary financial support and FDPs' one-time eligibility for participation. On the other hand, the interviewed experts note the reluctance of some Ukrainian FDPs to invest in learning the Polish language. In **Sweden**, Ukrainian FDPs were only granted access to state-subsidised language courses after two years, following a change in their legal status. Until then, civil society organisations and courses initiated by Swedish volunteers were filling the gap in language provision.

5.1.1.2. Gender barriers

The country reports echoes research pointing to insufficient childcare facilities as a factor hindering female Ukrainian FDPs' labour market integration (Lashchuk 2025; Nowicka et. al., 2025). Experts in **Lithuania**, **Latvia**, **Germany** and **Poland** explicitly refer to the care responsibilities of Ukrainian FDPs, who are often de facto single mothers, as an obstacle to taking up employment. Even when the children are in kindergarten, a lack of social networks limits women's employment possibilities as they can only work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m, as one of the experts in Poland notes.

In addition to the lack of sufficient childcare opportunities, there are also other gender dimensions in the patterns of job entry of Ukrainian FDPs. In several countries under analysis, women and men from Ukraine continue to work in typical gendered occupations, such as care, retail, and services for women, and construction and logistics for men. In **Poland**, where many Ukrainian men used to work before 2022, a lack of men working in typical masculine jobs, such as construction and Transport-Logistics, appeared, with minor attempts to include Ukrainian women in these spheres.

5.1.2. Measures for labour market integration

In most of the studied countries, state or municipal institutions offer support in labour market integration. However, informal networks such as personal contacts or social media are mentioned as more crucial to find employment, for example, in **Poland** and **Germany**. In **Sweden**, CSOs attempted to compensate for the lack of access to the state labour integration programmes for FDPs before 2024 by running EFS financed projects. They pursued a hands-on approach, bringing FDPs and employers together and working on specific issues such as CVs and presentations on the Swedish job market. This approach, which was considered effective in **Sweden**, was also pursued by CSOs in **Germany**. **Lithuania** has introduced monetary support for Ukrainian FDPs by financing occupational training and by subsidising wages as incentives for employers to hire Ukrainian FDPs.

However, these subsidies are currently endangered by budget cuts. **Latvia** introduced a one-off employment or self-employment allowance for Ukrainian FDPs.

5.2. Housing

Providing Ukrainian FDPs with decent accommodation posed a major challenge for the state and civil society actors in the six countries examined in this report. During the first months after Russia's full-scale invasion, responses in **Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany**, and—to a lesser extent—**Finland** were marked by improvised, rapidly assembled arrangements. The scale and speed of arrivals required extensive mobilisation not only of national and municipal authorities, but also of CSOs and private citizens. **Sweden** stands out as a country that was comparatively less strained by the challenge of housing Ukrainian FDPs. Partly, it received a lower number of arrivals than its Nordic neighbours and already had established systems of collective accommodation for protection seekers since 2015, supplemented by municipal housing resources.

In all countries except **Sweden**, the provision of private accommodation by ordinary citizens played a significant role in increasing housing facilities for Ukrainian FDPs. The broad willingness of receiving societies to host Ukrainian FDPs at such a large scale constitutes a new form of civic engagement in the context of forced migration governance (Haller et al. 2022; Haase et. al. 2024). Early on, potential hosts waited directly at the main railway and bus stations to meet Ukrainian FDPs. Later, the matching of private hosts and guests was often mediated through the digital platforms. CSOs were the main actors developing these platforms, sometimes with the support from local municipalities, the state and church institutions. These platforms also aimed at reducing potential risks related to private hosting, such as exploitation and sexual assaults, the latter being particularly important due to the predominantly female composition of Ukrainian FDPs. In **Lithuania**, the developed platform later streamlined the provision of municipal accommodation.

Initially, most hosts did not charge any rent for Ukrainian FDPs. In **Lithuania, Poland**, and **Latvia**, the states provided financial support to private individuals, who hosted protection-seekers from Ukraine. In **Latvia**, the reimbursement was paid during the first month, while Lithuanian citizens could apply for reimbursement until the end of 2023. The reimbursement for Polish citizens lasted the longest until June 2024, echoing the crucial role of activating additional accommodation facilities through private hosts.

Temporary shelter was also provided in collective accommodations. In **Finland**, **Germany** and for a short period of time, **Sweden**, preexisting collective refugee accommodations were activated to shelter Ukrainian FDPs. **Lithuania**, **Latvia** and **Poland** lacked such facilities and had to find alternative solutions. Accordingly, in **Lithuania** and **Poland**, the first months after Russia's full-scale invasion were characterised by emergency solutions, involving several actors such as CSOs, religious organisations (in **Poland**), before the states and municipalities stepped in.

Despite relatively good coverage of housing solutions, the quality of collective accommodation and state support for Ukrainian FDPs in finding accommodation varied significantly across the countries. In **Finland**, only a small share of Ukrainian FDPs were accommodated in reception centres for protection-seekers, while the majority was provided with flats in municipalities. Accordingly, FDPs were offered significantly better conditions than other protection seekers, who were usually placed in reception centres located in rural areas with poor infrastructure and no contact with Finnish society. In **Germany**, a majority of 83 per cent were living in private accommodation at the end of 2023 (CR Germany, Annex 2). The remaining share of Ukrainian FDPs lived in collective refugee accommodation distributed equally across the country. As the responsibility for housing in **Germany** lies with the federal states and municipalities, the quality and type of accommodation vary. However, research shows that refugee housing in **Germany** predominantly has bad infrastructure, lacks privacy and hygiene and has poor quality of food (Vey, 2023). The interviewed experts mentioned the former airport Tegel in Berlin as a deterrent example of inhumane conditions in such accommodations. Ukrainian FDPs in **Germany** therefore had a strong motivation to find private accommodation.

In **Lithuania**, the Special Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) provided dormitory-type collective accommodation to Ukrainian FDPs. Experts report that Ukrainian FDPs in **Lithuania** have been reluctant to move out of such accommodation because of difficulties in finding accommodation through the rental market. RIA developed an elaborate system of providing accommodation to different groups. For instance, priority was given to mothers with small children with a work contract, elderly people and people coming to **Lithuania** for specialised medical treatment. Another difference to **Germany** is that accommodation in public collective accommodation was free of charge for Ukrainian FDPs. In **Germany**, in contrast, collective accommodation is often expensive, including obligatory payment for the provided food.

In **Latvia**, various actors coordinated effectively in providing collective housing. Hotels and guesthouses provided housing opportunities and were compensated by the government. However,

such facilities decreased over time. While there are no insights into the concrete conditions in collective facilities, the **Latvian** report indicates that Ukrainian FDPs had better access to information and local society, as well as better health conditions. **Swedish** experts echoed that collective housing could foster contact with authorities, while living alone could exacerbate loneliness. On a different note, the report emphasises that collective accommodation limits contact with Swedish society, which hinders integration (CR Sweden, Annex 6). At the same time, **Sweden** stands out as the country facing the fewest challenges in providing decent housing for Ukrainian FDPs, although the quality of housing varies across municipalities. In addition to receiving the lowest number of Ukrainian FDPs among the six studied countries, the **Swedish** housing regime is characterised by a significant share of state and municipality-owned housing. Accordingly, Ukrainian FDPs received the most significant municipal support in finding housing in **Sweden** for free or at low costs through existing allocation systems. In bigger cities, public facilities were repurposed for Ukrainian FDPs. One notable example is the co-management of a repurposed public facility by the municipality and CSOs. In **Sweden**, Ukrainian FDPs were accommodated in “refugee centres” and “asylum units” only until May 2022 and subsequently evenly distributed across the country. Approximately 40 per cent found independent housing, reinforcing the centrality of municipal housing (CR Sweden, Annex 6). In **Poland**, the share of Ukrainian FDPs living independently is significantly higher, with 61 per cent. Due to the lack of specialised housing programmes for Ukrainian FDPs, they were dependent on the free rental market (CR Poland, Annex 5).

The importance of emergency responses decreased over time, not only among the private hosts but also among temporary shelters of collective accommodation. Crucially, in all six examined countries, Ukrainian FDPs could choose freely where to live and, unlike other protection seekers, did not depend on reception centres.

5.2.1. Obstacles and opportunities in housing and living conditions

The challenges Ukrainian FDPs face on the rental market are quite similar across the cases. High rental prices and a lack of housing capacity are particularly impeding Ukrainians’ ability to find affordable housing in larger cities (Haase et al., 2024). Ukrainian FDPs’ income or social benefits are mostly insufficient to cover high housing costs. On a more positive note, most countries pay a housing allowance. In **Latvia**, a housing allowance was paid in the first month for all Ukrainian FDPs. In **Finland**, Ukrainian FDPs receive a housing allowance after getting a municipality of residence. However, the allowance is too low to cover costs in larger cities. In **Poland** and **Lithuania**, FDPs are

likewise eligible for a housing allowance. In **Germany**, recipients of the citizens' benefit receive a housing allowance within a predetermined limit.

All in all, the country reports suggest that Ukrainian FDPs' living conditions have stabilised. It should be emphasised, that a minority of Ukrainian FDPs are forced to live in low-quality collective accommodation. In **Lithuania**, data from the civic initiative "Strong together" indicate decent living conditions of Ukrainian FDPs, as do reports by **Polish** experts. A survey conducted amongst FDPs in **Germany** at the end of 2023 shows that an overwhelming majority of FDPs state satisfaction with their accommodation (CR Germany, Annex 2).

Beyond these insights, there is little systematic evidence or research on Ukrainian FDPs' living conditions in the six examined countries. In **Lithuania**, **Poland**, and **Finland**, there are some indications of discrimination against FDPs on the rental market. For Ukrainian protection-seekers in **Lithuania**, it can be challenging to obtain an official rental contract, which rules out FDP's ability to receive a housing allowance. Landlords in **Finland**, in some instances, exploit Ukrainian FDPs' misery by issuing unofficial or precarious contracts. Research on the trajectories of Ukrainian FDPs in **Poland** also documents landlords' discriminatory behaviour towards FDPs. It is also worth noting that in **Poland**, **Finland** and **Germany**, experts report that Ukrainian FDPs live with several families or multiple generations in one flat to share the cost of high rent, or, in **Germany**, avoid living in a collective accommodation.

5.3. Education

Access to education has been central to stabilising the lives of Ukrainian children and adults across the six countries examined in this report. While all countries guaranteed legal access to schooling within the national compulsory education system, the scope, speed, and quality of educational provision varied substantially depending on governance structures, municipal capacity, and school-level practices. Experts across several countries highlighted that many young Ukrainian FDPs face difficulties adapting to displacement and often struggle to develop a sense of belonging in their schools. The temporariness of their protection plays an important role, as it delays long-term educational decisions and affects social integration, including their ability to build relationships outside specific preparatory or welcome classes. Adult FDPs face different challenges related to language acquisition, recognition of qualifications, balancing work with study, and limited access to state-supported adult education programmes.

5.3.1. Governance patterns and systemic barriers

Across the six countries, education for Ukrainian FDPs has been shaped by multilevel governance structures in which national legislation defines entitlements, but municipalities and schools carry primary responsibility for implementation. Despite substantial variation in administrative systems, the national reports reveal a number of common governance patterns and structural barriers. In **Finland, Germany, and Sweden**, municipalities function as the key organisers of compulsory school education for children, responsible for school placement, staffing decisions, and support measures within nationally defined frameworks. In **Lithuania and Latvia**, national ministries issue central guidelines but delegate day-to-day implementation to municipalities and individual schools, creating a similar localised dynamic within more centralised welfare regimes. **Poland's** Special Act ensured universal access to education for Ukrainian children, yet the practical organisation of school admission and support was left primarily to municipalities and school directors, in a context where no coherent national integration strategy was established.

The comparative analysis shows that local capacity emerged as one of the most significant constraints across the six countries. Municipalities reported shortages of teachers, Ukrainian-language specialists, school psychologists, and special-needs staff, combined with pressure on physical infrastructure. In **Germany**, district-level authorities highlighted the strain caused by rapid enrolment and large numbers of newly arrived pupils, which exceeded existing support resources. In **Poland**, schools faced difficulties absorbing large numbers of Ukrainian pupils due to pre-existing staff shortages and limited classroom space. **Lithuanian** schools reported similar challenges, especially regarding Lithuanian-language learning support and limited dedicated resources for language acquisition. Even in **Finland and Sweden**, the sudden increase in pupil numbers required municipalities to reorganise staffing and expand preparatory or transitional classes.

Another cross-cutting feature was the central role of school-level discretion. Decisions about whether pupils should enter mainstream classes directly, be placed in preparatory or language-support groups, or receive psychosocial assistance were largely determined by individual school principals or municipal coordinators. In **Germany's** welcome classes, school-level actors determined not only placement but also the degree of integration into regular instruction, leading to substantial variation across districts. In **Lithuania**, headteachers similarly exercised discretion in adapting school practices to accommodate Ukrainian pupils, including those attending Russian-language schools. In **Poland**, school directors implemented the Special Act's provisions unevenly

depending on local resources and existing practices. This discretionary space enabled flexible, context-sensitive solutions but also contributed to unequal access to support both within and between countries.

Finally, temporality emerged as a key systemic barrier across all contexts. The uncertainty surrounding the duration of temporary protection influenced both school planning and family behaviour. The **German** report emphasises how the temporariness of protection shapes the experiences of Ukrainian youth, many of whom struggle with belonging and hesitate to make long-term educational decisions while hoping to return to Ukraine. Similar dynamics are noted in **Poland**, where some parents perceived their stay as temporary and therefore deprioritised long-term educational engagement. For adults, temporality affected participation in language courses or vocational training, as individuals were reluctant to invest in lengthy programmes amid uncertain prospects. Municipalities in several countries also highlighted difficulties, designing sustainable support measures when pupil turnover remained unpredictable.

Civil society organisations played an essential role across countries in filling gaps in adult education—especially language training. In **Sweden** and **Poland**, CSOs provided the primary source of language instruction during the first years. In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, CSOs delivered municipal-funded courses, particularly for adults with caregiving obligations or limited digital skills. In all cases, CSOs also offered orientation sessions, job-search assistance, legal counselling, and peer-support groups. However, reliance on CSOs also produced variation in access between municipalities, as provision depended on organisational capacity and external funding cycles.

Together, these governance patterns illustrate how a shared EU-level entitlement translated into diverse national and local realities. While all six countries ensured legal access to schooling, differences in administrative structures, municipal capacity, and school-level discretion produced highly uneven educational environments for Ukrainian FDPs. The interaction between multilevel governance arrangements and temporal uncertainty shaped not only institutional responses but also the everyday educational trajectories of Ukrainian children and adults.

5.3.2. Children's education

All six countries provided Ukrainian children with access to primary education, but the ways in which education was organised for this group diverged significantly. Three broad organisational models emerged. **Germany** and **Latvia** relied heavily on preparatory or transitional classes, which

offered intensive language training but at times resulted in social segregation and slower integration into mainstream education (CR Germany, Annex 2; CR Latvia, Annex 3). **Finland, Poland, and Sweden** more frequently adopted direct integration into mainstream classrooms. Such strategy allowed for age-appropriate class placement, combined with additional language instruction, although the capacity to provide adequate support varied across municipalities. **Lithuania** used a hybrid model, combining preparatory instruction with gradual integration based on local capacity and student needs (CR Finland Annex 1; CR Lithuania Annex 4; CR Poland Annex 5; CR Sweden Annex 6;

In general, schools exercised significant autonomy in decisions regarding grouping, support, and the pace of integration. In **Poland**, only 2.4 per cent of pupils from Ukraine attended preparatory classes. In **Finland**, municipalities decided whether students received targeted preparatory teaching or support within mainstream classrooms. In **Sweden**, temporary measures such as interim study groups emerged in some municipalities during delays in formal placement. The **German** report indicates that many adolescents, particularly those placed in segregated preparatory classes, reported limited interaction with local peers, contributing to weak feelings of school belonging. In all countries studied, the temporality of the TPD protection discouraged long-term educational planning, with some students uncertain whether they should pursue host-country educational pathways or maintain ties to Ukrainian curricula. Teachers across several countries reported that students experienced anxiety related to separation from family members, war-related trauma, and the disruption of their educational trajectories (Petäjämäki et. al., 2024).

Psychosocial support was a recurring challenge. **Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland** emphasised shortages of school psychologists and social workers, which limited the ability to respond to trauma-related needs. Teacher shortages, especially in language instruction, were reported in **Finland, Sweden, and parts of Germany**. As a result, schools frequently relied on Ukrainian-speaking assistants, volunteers, or CSO-provided mediators to support communication and classroom management.

5.3.3. Adult education: language learning, and access to tertiary studies

Adult Ukrainian FDPs faced a more uneven landscape of educational opportunities than children. Although all countries formally allowed participation in adult education, access in practice was

shaped by municipal capacity, temporary legal status, language requirements, and the role of civil society organisations. Access to language learning differed considerably across countries. In **Finland** and **Germany**, (CR Finland Annex 1; CR Germany Annex 2) adults could participate in municipal or publicly organised language courses, but demand frequently exceeded available places, and participation was often hindered by childcare or employment obligations. The **Finnish** report notes that many adults enrolled in vocational programmes or the TUVA preparatory track, which is designed for individuals who do not hold a secondary qualification (upper secondary school or vocational education) but wish to obtain one. This choice was partly driven by the fact that recognition of Ukrainian degrees is slow, costly, and administratively demanding, prompting even highly educated adults to restart education at lower levels. (CR: Finland Annex 1)

In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, municipalities and CSOs worked together to expand language provision, although the Latvian report highlights that courses were often project-based and lacked continuity. **Lithuania** offered state-funded adult education and vocational training, but limited availability of Lithuanian-language instruction constrained participation. (CR Latvia Annex 3; CR Lithuania Annex 4). The **Polish** report shows that state-funded language learning for adults was largely absent, leaving NGOs, churches, and diaspora organisations as the main providers of Polish-language courses. ESF-funded vocational courses and work-placement schemes supported some adults, but access varied by region. In **Sweden**, access to municipal adult education depended on legal status: adults without municipal registration were initially excluded from formal language programmes and relied heavily on CSO-run courses until eligibility expanded in 2023–2024. (CR Poland Annex 5; CR Sweden Annex 6).

Across all countries, adults faced similar barriers to participation. Temporary protection discouraged investment in multi-year programmes, as many were unsure how long they would remain in the host country. Caregiving responsibilities, especially for women, limited the time available for study. Recognition and validation of qualifications was a major challenge. Due to the lack of adequate retraining opportunities to align Ukrainian qualifications with those in the receiving countries, FDPs often have to obtain an entirely new degree or complete an apprenticeship. However, completing an apprenticeship or degree requires a long-term investment, which FDPs are often reluctant to make due to their temporary residence permits. In **Finland**, **Germany**, and **Lithuania**, lengthy and complicated procedures for recognising Ukrainian FDPs' qualifications impede their labour market integration (CR Finland Annex 1; CR Germany Annex 2; CR Lithuania Annex 4). In **Finland**, many adults abandoned recognition efforts because

procedures were expensive and slow, while in **Poland**, cumbersome validation processes constrained access to vocational or higher education pathways (CR Poland Annex 5). Participation in higher education was formally possible in most countries but practically limited. In **Sweden**, tuition-free university access did not translate into enrolment due to language requirements, credential verification, and ineligibility for student financial aid until 2026 (CR Sweden, Annex 6). **Finland** reported only a small number of Ukrainian students in universities in 2024, while thousands enrolled in vocational tracks, reflecting linguistic and recognition barriers. In **Lithuania** and **Latvia**, Ukrainian adults could apply for state-funded study places, yet limited language preparation restricted entry into both vocational and tertiary education. In **Poland**, universities allow Ukrainian FDPs to enroll even without full documentation, but participation still depends on completing Polish-language training and navigating recognition procedures. (CR Lithuania Annex 4; CR Latvia, Annex 3; CR Poland Annex 5)

Civil society organisations have once again played an essential role in filling the gaps in educational field, especially in **Poland** and **Sweden**, where early state provision for education was limited. CSOs offered language courses, orientation sessions, job-search support, and legal counselling. In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, CSOs cooperated with municipalities to provide more flexible training formats. Yet reliance on CSOs resulted in uneven access, as availability depended on local organisational capacity and short-term project funding. Overall, adult education across the region was characterised by formal access but limited participation. Language demands, administrative requirements, financial constraints, and the uncertain temporal horizon of temporary protection all shaped the educational trajectories of Ukrainian adults, reinforcing inequalities between municipalities and across countries. (CR Poland Annex 5; CR Sweden Annex 6; CR Latvia Annex 3, CR Lithuania Annex 4)

6. Conclusion

This comparative report analysed how six EU countries—**Finland**, **Germany**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Poland**, and **Sweden** (CR Finland, Annex 1; CR Germany, Annex 2; CR Latvia, Annex 3; CR Lithuania, Annex 4; CR Poland, Annex 5; CR Sweden, Annex 6)—implemented the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) in response to the arrival of forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) from Ukraine following Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. The directive provided an immediate and harmonised legal framework, yet its translation into national policies and local practices resulted in markedly divergent outcomes. These differences reflect broader variations in welfare-state and migrant

integration models, administrative capacities, housing markets, labour market structures, and educational systems. **Germany** and **Finland** relied on long-standing welfare-state and migrant integration infrastructures. By contrast, **Sweden**—despite having well-developed refugee reception infrastructure and receiving far fewer FDPs—developed a fragmented and ad hoc response characterised by repeated legal changes and unequal rights among Ukrainian FDPs. **Lithuania** demonstrated strong coordination among national and municipal actors despite its smaller administrative system, whereas **Poland** faced ambiguous division of responsibilities between national and local authorities, hindering the development of coherent integration measures.

Across all countries, local municipalities emerged as central implementation actors. They provided accommodation, managed school placement, facilitated labour market access, and cooperated with civil society organisations (CSOs). CSOs played important roles everywhere, although their involvement differed considerably. In **Germany**, **Finland**, **Latvia**, and **Lithuania**, they complemented municipal systems by offering specialised or bridging support. In **Sweden** and **Poland**, they compensated for gaps in state provision, particularly in areas such as language training, psychosocial support, and assistance with administrative procedures.

Despite divergent legal and institutional frameworks, Ukrainian FDPs faced similar challenges in all three focus areas - labour market integration, housing and education. Labour market integration was significantly constrained by language barriers, insufficient recognition of qualifications, and a lack of targeted training programmes. High employment rates in **Poland**, **Lithuania** and **Sweden** were accompanied by significant de-skilling. Women with care responsibilities faced particular obstacles due to limited access to childcare and the need to prioritise their children's schooling and wellbeing. Housing shortages—especially in large cities— posed major barriers to securing adequate accommodation. For young FDPs, the uncertainty generated by temporary protection was especially destabilising. Adolescents faced dilemmas about educational pathways, unsure whether to commit to integration in the host country or retain ties to the Ukrainian system. Adults similarly hesitated to invest in long-term education or requalification programmes, given the unclear future of TPD. In some contexts, complex bureaucratic processes strained trust in state institutions and hindered FDPs' engagement with available services.

Nonetheless, the report identified several good practices. They include personalised coaching and job-matching programmes in **Sweden** and **Germany**; employer incentives introduced in **Lithuania**; and improved procedures for recognising qualifications in **Latvia** and **Poland** in key sectors, such as healthcare and education. Such practices demonstrate the value of tailored, person-centred

support, closer cooperation between municipalities and CSOs, and targeted interventions that respond to specific local needs.

6.1. Policy Recommendation

In light of the impending end of TPD, the policy recommendations below follow from the comparative findings of the country reports as well as ongoing research in the project. They aim at improving both the current implementation of the TPD and long-term preparedness for possible future displacement scenarios.

On the EU level, coordinated guidance on post-TPD transition should be provided, enabling Member States to balance voluntary return with stable residence options for those, who intend to remain in host countries. Strengthening minimum standards for access to labour market measures, education, and decent housing would reduce inequalities observed across Member States. Multi-annual, flexible funding through instruments such as AMIF and ESF+ should be expanded to support municipalities and CSOs, which are the primary implementers of reception and integration measures.

On a national level, national governments should clarify mandates and improve cooperation among ministries, migration agencies, and municipalities. Predictable, need-based funding formulas would enable municipalities to plan beyond emergency cycles. Expanding and strengthening language-learning provision and simplifying qualification recognition procedures — especially in shortage occupations — are essential to reducing de-skilling. Policies should invest in childcare and flexible training options to support women with care responsibilities. National education authorities should offer clearer guidance for school integration of Ukrainian children and youth to reduce disparities across municipalities. In the housing sector, governments should support municipalities with targeted funding for increasing the availability of affordable and decent housing.

Municipalities should formalise partnerships with CSOs to ensure continuity of services and avoid overreliance on short-term projects. Investment in training for street-level bureaucrats — especially in trauma-informed approaches and intercultural communication — would strengthen frontline capacity. Improved information provision and coordinated case management across employment, housing and education services would reduce administrative burdens for Ukrainian

FDPs. Municipalities should also expand psychosocial support, including school-based counselling, to address the stress and uncertainty experienced by both children and adults.

Uncertainty about future legal status remains a structural barrier. Clear policy guidance should reduce this uncertainty where possible, acknowledging that many Ukrainian FDPs will wish to remain for the medium term, even as return remains an option for others. Targeted requalification and job-matching programmes are needed to prevent de-skilling and foster upward mobility. Vulnerable groups — including single parents, elderly, persons with disabilities, and youth transitioning into adulthood — require tailored support. Finally, improved statistical data collection on housing, employment, and educational outcomes across the EU is essential to monitor evolving needs and support evidence-based policymaking

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8. Annexes Country Reports, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden 1-6

Annex 1 CR Finland

Annex 2 CR Germany

Annex 3 CR Latvia

Annex 4 CR Lithuania

Annex 5 CR Poland

Annex 6 CR Sweden.

ANNEX 1 CR Finland



[Deliverable D2.1]

[Country report Finland]

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Havukainen, Lauri; Senja Ylipekkala; Olga Davydova-Minguet; Olga
Filippova University of Eastern Finland

Corresponding author: Lauri Havukainen, Karelian Institute, University of
Eastern Finland (Lauri.havukainen@uef.fi)

Executive Summary

The report aims to study the integration of Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons into Finnish society through three different topics: labour market, housing and education. This is done through data collected from previous research done on Ukrainian integration, national legislation and interviews we conducted with street level bureaucrats and representatives of civil society organizations. The results vary depending on the topic, but there were certain common challenges that connected experiences of Ukrainian FDPs in Finland.

Language barrier together with the lacking language skills are a major issue in both integration to the labour market and education. Finland has very unfriendly labour market for those who do not speak Finnish and a clear majority of the degree programs in Finland have knowledge of either Finnish or Swedish as an entry requirement. From both from our interviews and studies done among Ukrainians, we have seen a gradual increase in language skills. Together with other migrants, Ukrainians also have issues in getting their degrees and past work experience recognized. This has caused many to just start over with their studies, even if they already have a tertiary education degree.

When it comes to childhood education and housing, the Finnish system has mostly been able to adapt well. Finnish comprehensive school system together with the flexible preparatory education programs have been able to handle the massive influx of Ukrainian students. In housing things have mostly gone smoothly as well. The system has been able find accommodation quite flexibly, first through the reception system and then mostly through subsidized housing. This also helped by the social security benefits Ukrainians have eligibility for after living in Finland for a year and getting residency in a municipality.

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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)
TPS	Temporary protection status
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.
SLB	Street level Bureaucrat
CSO	Civil society organization
KELA	Social Insurance Institution of Finland
Migri	Finnish Immigration Service
VATT	Institute of Economic Research
DVV	The Digital and Population Data Services Agency

Background

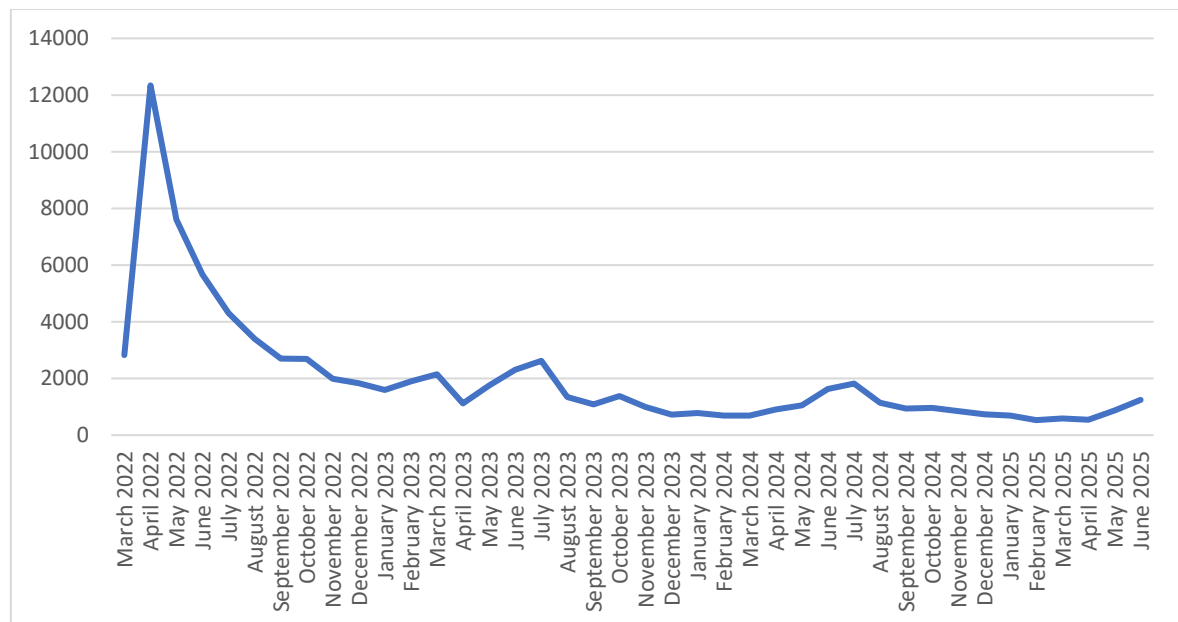
While Ukrainian issues may have historically been seen as distant to Finland, both the long history and border with Russia have made the Ukrainian case much closer to average Finns. This has been the case especially after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The war made Finland rethink its historic geopolitical positions in a swift manner. Most of the economic ties Finland had been building with the Russian state after the fall of The Soviet Union went under reconsideration, that is if they hadn't already been cut since the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Finland started the process of joining NATO almost immediately after the invasion started, a notion that would have been inconceivable just a couple of months earlier (Lehto and Kauranen, 2022). The country was officially ratified as part of the alliance in April 2023. Since December 2023 the almost 1300-kilometer land border with Russia has been closed for all crossings, a policy that will continue at least until end of the year 2026 (INTERMIN, 2025). When the invasion started, Finland as well as other European countries, also saw an unprecedented number of Ukrainians fleeing the war come to seek shelter.

Before the war Ukrainian citizens made only a small but growing minority of Finnish immigrant population. At the end of 2021, the 7202 Ukrainian citizens living in Finland made up only the 11th most common foreign nationality in the country, though their number had been growing constantly in the last years before the war (OSFd; Migri, 2025b). All visa groups combined, Ukrainians made up the second largest migrant group to move to Finland between 2018 and 2021 with about 12 percent of all granted visas and the largest group when it came to labour migrants, with a share of about 28%. Most Ukrainians that migrated to Finland before the war were labour migrants and visas based on international protection were basically non-existent. Marriage migration has also contributed to the number of Ukrainians living in Finland, pre-war. At the end of 2021 there were 850 families where one of the spouses was Finnish and the other Ukrainian. About two thirds of these families had a Finnish husband and a Ukrainian wife. (OSFb). As most of the Ukrainians were labour migrants, about two thirds of Ukrainian citizens living in Finland at the end of 2021 were between the ages 25 and 50, with a slight majority of them being men. Area of immigration where Ukrainians were most visible was temporary labour migration. Between 2018 and 2021 there were between 461 and 1411 yearly Ukrainian labour migrants with 3-to-6-month temporary visas and between 6684 and 13 287 with visas for less than 3 months (Migri, 2025b). The number of Ukrainians with temporary labour visas was increasing each year and they made up a clear majority of all migrants with such visas. Most of these migrants came to work in the agriculture and forestry sector (Eronen et al. 2022).

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine started in February 2022, the profile of Ukrainians living in Finland changed rapidly as Ukrainian FDPs fleeing the war started arriving to the country in a major way in March (Migri, 2025b). Finland had faced major influxes of FDPs before, for example in 2015 -2016, but the scale and pace in which the events unfolded was new (Migri, 2023). Between

the start of the war and end of June 2025 Finland has received 83 640 temporary protection applications of whom 1346 where non-Ukrainian residents who had lived in Ukraine. Out of the applicants, 81 000 received a TPS in Finland with 80 120 of them being Ukrainian citizens. Over half of them came in the year 2022, with about one third coming in between the months of March and May. After the first months the number of Ukrainians applying for temporary protection has gone down gradually, with minor bumps in the summer season in each year. About 60% of the recipients have been women and about 70% being between the ages 18 and 64. Children under the age of 18 make up about 28% of all TPSs. Most of the applicants who did not receive a TPS were those whos' application was deemed expired. Most of these cases happened between September of 2023 and the end of 2024. Only 153 applications have ever been denied entirely. (Migri, 2025b.) During 2022 most Ukrainians fleeing to Finland came from the eastern oblasts most affected by the invasion as well as Kyiv oblast (Svynarenko & Koptsyukh, 2022).

Figure 1. Monthly TPS recipients from March 2022 to June 2025



After arriving in Finland many Ukrainians were settled in reception centres all over the country. Most of the centres were established when the war started, as the population within the reception services quickly grew from about 5000 to over 40 000 (Migri, 2023). In total 85 new reception centres were founded in 2022 on top of the 27 that had already existed, with capacity within the reception centres themselves being around 28 000 at the end of the year. Of those Ukrainian FDPs arriving in the first months of the war, about 70% managed to find housing outside of reception centres with the number settling at about 40% by the end of 2022. Many of the reception centres were so-called apartment-based centres meaning they did not have a central location but were apartments rented by the organization responsible for running the centre. (Migri 2023.) Ukrainians have been able to apply for municipality of residence after staying in Finland for a full year after which they move from reception services organized by Migri (and its partners) to municipal services. Because of this, those with a TPS started to be recognized in the official immigration

statistics from March 2023 onwards. After applying for municipality of residence started to be an option, Migri started downsizing and shutting down reception centres. At the end of September 2025 there were 51 reception centres in Finland, down from the peak of 112 at the end of 2022 (Migri, 2023 & 2025a). This development is set to continue in the beginning of 2026, as almost all Ukrainian FDPs currently in Finland will at that point meet the criteria for residency in a municipality (Löf, 2025).

Because of the policy of being able to apply for municipal residency only after a year of staying in Finland, and many Ukrainians not reporting if they move out of the country, the total number of Ukrainians residing in Finland has been difficult to estimate (Seppä, Alasalmi & Korpela, 2025). Still, most estimates round up to little under 50 000 Ukrainian FDPs currently living in Finland. At the end of 2024, Statistics Finland (OSFf) registered 41 403 Ukrainians living in Finland. According to the Institute of Economic Research (VATT) the number of working aged Ukrainian FDPs residing in Finland was between 27 000 and 49 000 at the end of 2024. An article by the Finnish newspaper Karjalainen in September 2025 (Löf, 2025) combined the number of people who had already applied for municipal residency and those Ukrainians currently in the reception system was about 52 000 in July-August of 2025. According to the Ministry of the Interior (Koptsyukh & Svyrenko, 2025) the number in autumn 2025 is about 48 500, with 14 000 still in the reception system and 34 500 with a residence in a municipality.

Ministry of the Interior (Koptsyukh & Svyrenko, 2025) estimates that over 30 000 Ukrainians have left Finland after they have received their TPS. Still, as with the number of Ukrainians currently living in Finland it is difficult to get exact data on this. For example, Statistics Finland does not release emigration statistics based on nationality, just movement between countries. Between 2022 and 2024, the total number of people moving from Finland to Ukraine was just 260 (OSFb). This however only counts those who already had municipality of residence in Finland. The data also does not show if these were Ukrainian citizens. The estimation is also made difficult by many Ukrainians not sending an official notice of removal to Migri when they emigrate out of Finland (Seppä, Alasalmi & Korpela, 2025). There is also no available statistic on the number of people who have had their temporary protection withdrawn. In general, in the beginning of the war most Ukrainians thought that they will be either returning to Ukraine or were yet unaware about what they will do, but as the conflict has continued without an end in sight, many have started and want to build their lives in Finland (Koptsyukh & Svyrenko, 2025).

When it comes to domestic migration, Statistics Finland does not release statistics that can be sorted by nationality or language. This means it is difficult to get exact data on the movement of different migrant groups within the country. In general, domestic movement of foreign-born residents in Finland has historically been very much focused from the periphery to the south of the country. Between 2018 and 2023 about two thirds of foreign-born movement happened towards or within the regions of Uusimaa, Southwestern Finland and Pirkanmaa, which house the three largest metropolitan areas in the country: Helsinki, Turku and Tampere (OSFb). During that time only Uusimaa (Helsinki) had any major net growth of foreign-born population through domestic

migration. However, when looking at the geographical distribution of Ukrainians between the years 2023 and 2024, this pattern is not visible (OSFf). The share of Ukrainians, at least for the moment, mostly correlates with general population distribution of Finland.

In Finland, while under reception services TPS recipients are entitled to a reception allowance, housing and basic health and social care. They are also entitled to employment and integration services, which since the beginning of 2025 have been run by the municipalities and employment areas formed by multiple municipalities. Children are also entitled to educational and childcare services (in most cases). After becoming a resident of a municipality, those with TPS transfer from services organized by the reception services to municipalities and other public actors. Those with residency have to move out of the accommodation provided by the reception system and can apply for social security benefits through KELA (Social Insurance Institution of Finland) or the municipal social services. The healthcare service provider will from now on be Wellbeing services counties. We will go through the services and rights Ukrainian FDPs are provided more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Governance and multilevel responsibilities in implementation of TPD in respective countries

The implementation of TPD (Directive 2001/55/EC) in Finland is done through the Aliens Act (301/2004) that legislates the entry, status and rights of immigrants in Finland. Temporary protection has been part of the Aliens Act since it came into effect in 2004. Officially the decision to give TPS to those fleeing the war in Ukraine was done through the Government decision 149/2022. Originally TPS could be given to Ukrainian nationals and to anyone who had residence or was receiving international protection in Ukraine. This also included Ukrainians who already lived in Finland before the war began. In September 2023 this was restricted through the Government decision 936/2023, which took away the ability to apply for new TPS for third country nationals other than Ukrainians and those who had come to Finland but had not applied for TPS before the implementation of the decision. The status ended for these groups all together in March 2025 (Government Decision SM/2025/9). For Ukrainian citizens and those who were receiving international protection in Ukraine before the start of the war, TPS is valid until the end of temporary protection offered by the European Union (Amendment to the Aliens Act, 64/2025).

The rights and services TPS recipients have access to differ substantially whether they have just arrived in Finland or have a municipality of residence in the country. These differences are described in Table 1. In general, those who receive TPS in Finland generally have very broad rights, but with a lot of them coming to effect after the person has applied and received a residency in a municipality. Still, even before residency in a municipality, those with TPS have the right to work freely, they can apply to study for a degree, and their children can receive educational and daycare services. Both groups also have access to employment services that up until the end of 2024 were operated by state after which the organization was transferred to the employment areas formed

by municipalities (380/2023). This coincided with the transfer of integration services from the state to the municipalities and the Wellbeing regions (1100/2024).

Table 1. Services and rights Ukrainian TPS recipients have directly in arrival and after receiving the municipality of residence status.

Service/right	Responsible organization(s)	On arrival after receiving TPS	After receiving municipality of residence (after one year of stay)
TPS application	Police/Border Control Authority/Migri	Apply with the police or BCA, Application handled by Migri	-
Residence Permit card and social security number	DVV	Will receive automatically after getting the TPS	-
Municipality of Residence	DVV	Can apply after one year of stay	-
Work permit	Migri	no restrictions.	no restrictions.
Changing immigration status	Migri	Can switch to other forms of visa if conditions are met.	Can switch to other forms of visa if conditions are met.
Permanent residency and citizenship	Migri	-	Permanent residency after 4 years of continuous stay on a residence permit other than through TPS. Citizenship can be applied for after 8 years of stay if requirements are met.
Employment services	Municipalities/employment areas	Access to employment services.	Access to employment services.

Unemployment benefits	KELA or unemployment fund if the person is using one.	No access unless the person meets the work requirement (12 months).	No access unless the person meets the work requirement (12 months).
Other forms of social security	Mostly KELA, municipality/wellbeing region in supplementary social assistance.	Access to Reception allowance.	Access to Social assistance, Housing allowance, Child benefit.
Studying (early childhood and childhood education)	Municipality	Municipality has an obligation to provide comprehensive education and are encouraged to offer daycare services.	Municipality has an obligation to provide daycare services and comprehensive education.
Studying (adult education)	Municipalities, regional educational operators, educational institutions.	Unrestricted right to apply to study. No access to student allowance or loans. No tuition fees for degree education.	Unrestricted right to apply to study. No access to student allowance or loans.
Housing	Municipality, private providers, Migri (reception centres)	Reception centres or private housing.	private housing or subsidized housing
Healthcare	Migri (reception centres), Wellbeing regions	Through the reception centre, emergency care through the public services. Access to public/private services if employed.	Complete access to public services
Voting rights	Government	No voting rights.	Voting rights in municipal and regional elections after having residency for 781 days. Voting in national and EU elections after getting citizenship.

The application for TPS is first done after arriving to the country either through the police or border control authority (Migri, n.d.b). The application is handled by Migri. After receiving the TPS, the person will receive a Residence permit card and social security number from The Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV). (Migri, n.d.b.) Municipalities are not technically obligated to provide daycare services for those Ukrainians who do not have municipality of residence yet but are encouraged to do so by the government (OPH, n.d.). During the first year TPS recipients can get housing through the reception system and receive reception allowance if other means of providing are not available (719/2018; Migri, n.d.a). The amount of reception allowance varies between 191 and 300 Euros¹ per person per month if the person does not receive meals from the reception centre, or between 57 to 88 euros if meals are provided.

The application to receive municipality of residence is done through DVV after staying in Finland for a full year. As stated before, when a person with a TPS transfers to a municipality, the actors in charge their services change and also expand substantially. After going under the umbrella of municipal services, those with TPS can apply for a social security card as well as social security benefits like social assistance, housing allowance, child benefit from Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA (Kela, n.d.c). Health care and social services are provided by the wellbeing services counties, which in most of Finland operate under the same geographical boundaries as the regions. The level of these services is similar with Finnish citizens and most other migrants². People with TPS can vote in local elections after 781 days with municipal residency³. These rights have not seen any major changes since their implementation. On the local level, the municipalities and wellbeing services counties were later given the right to reimburse the cost of TPSs services from the government (681/2023).

Social assistance is the last tier of social security in Finland that is available for anyone who cannot provide for themselves through other means including other forms of social security payments (Kela, n.d.a). Social assistance can range from 314,58 to 676,65 Euros per month⁴ depending on the recipient's age and family status. General housing allowance is a subsidy paid to those who are not able to pay for the full price of their accommodation. Kela can pay up to 80 or 70 percent of rental costs depending on region and income of the recipient's household (Kela, n.d.b). Child benefit is paid universally for each child living in the household who is under the age of 17. The amount ranges from 94,88 Euros from the first child to 192,69 Euros from fifth child onwards (796/1992, 7§). Only

¹ Depends on the age and potential roommates of the recipient.

² Excluding other forms of temporary migration and students.

³ However, this made it so that even the first arriving and residency applying TPSs could not vote in the spring 2025 local elections held 13th of April as no one had yet had residency for 781 days at that point.

⁴ 2025 level. Source: KELA website

major restriction Ukrainian FDPs have when it comes to social security payments is the inability to receive student allowance or loans, as it is only given to those with permanent residency or citizenship (Act on Student Financial Aid, 65/1994), which means that Ukrainians who want to study for a degree have finance themselves through work or social assistance. They are, however, exempt from paying tuition fees for university degrees (Universities Act 558/2009) unlike student migrants from outside of the EU/ETA area.

Temporary protection status holders can also apply to change the reason for their residency, for example to residency based on labour, studying or family. This is also something those with TPS must do after the temporary protection for Ukrainians ends (Koptsyukh & Svyrenko, 2025). When applying for residence permit based on other means than temporary protection the applicants need to meet the requirements for the specific permits (301/2004, 39§, 71§; 719/2018, 7a§). Labour migrants need a job, and their applications must meet other preconditions set up to ensure worker rights (301/2004, 71§, 72§). Student migrants must be approved as a student in a particular educational institution⁵ before applying (719/2018, 7a§). Both labour and student migrants have to meet certain income thresholds that are dependent on the size of their family living with them (301/2004, 39§, 72§ & 1290/2002, 4§). From March 2022 up until August 2025, almost 3000 Ukrainians have applied for residence permit based on work, studying or family, over 70%⁶ of which through employment (Migri, 2025b). Over 83% of these applications have been approved. Person under TPS can apply for asylum, but its handling is frozen for the duration of the temporary protection in most cases (301/2004, 111§). This also is the case for those who already had pending asylum applications before the war started. As TPS is separate from refugee status and other forms of residency permits, living in Finland with the status does not count towards the four years of continuous stay in the country necessary for permanent residency (301/2004). Citizenship will become a possibility for Ukrainian FDPs after they have stayed in Finland for 8 years and meet the other criteria for citizenship (359/2003). Ukrainians and other migrants can vote in the local elections even without a citizenship, after two years⁷ with a municipal residency.

Methods and materials

The data for the report mainly comes from four sources: policy documents and reports, official national statistics, six interviews conducted for this report and previous research on the topic. The policy documents and reports consist of legal documents and reports from the government,

⁵ Degree education only.

⁶ Note : Out of the 2132 applications made based on employment 447 (21%) were made for seasonal work. Most of these were done in during the spring 2022.

⁷ 781 days to be exact

government agencies and local administration. Official statistics are mostly collected from Statistics Finland's open database, but Migri statistics service and Education Statistics Finland database Vipunen were also used. The interviews were done on three different topics: labour market, housing and settlement and education. While the topic of this report investigates the case of Ukrainian FDPs on a national level, 5 out of 6 of the interviews were done in a single mid-sized city. This makes the interview data somewhat attached to local circumstances but when compared to the other data used, the experiences of Ukrainian FDPs within the fore-mentioned fields are somewhat similar all-around Finland.

Because Statistic Finland has multiple ways of calculating people with foreign descent, we have to be careful on what metrics we use when looking at data on Ukrainians living in Finland. Statistics Finland, for example, does not allow us to separate immigrants already living in Finland by reason of immigration⁸, which would make it simple to just use those with TPS as our main classification. This means we needed another way of separating TPS recipients from the data. Of all the options that are imperfect in their own way, we have chosen to citizenship. Native language is not suitable as many Ukrainians have Russian marked as their native language and taking it into consideration would expand our focus outside of Ukraine. Country of birth is also not suitable because a lot of Ukrainians are registered as being born in Soviet Union or other post-Soviet countries. This leaves us with citizenship, that in our opinion is the best classification to use, even though not every TPS recipient coming to Finland from Ukraine is a citizen of that country.

When selecting and contacting the informants (see table 2) we wanted to interview, we first established the extent of the geographical area we wanted the informants from. While the scale of the project concerns the whole country of Finland, we knew that we could not interview on national scale if we wanted the participants to be as close to street level as possible. Also, because our previous knowledge and experiences, we decided to focus on a single region in Eastern Finland. That is why, as stated before, five of the six interviews were done with the participants coming from a single city. All of the four public sector workers (SLBs) we interviewed were working for the city or an entity owned by it. One of two NGOs (CSOs) we decided to include in our research was also operating in the same city and the region around it. When looking for an NGO operating in housing, we had to look for national scale as there was no local NGO that had a major role in the field of housing. In total we interviewed 3 informants from two NGOs. The housing NGO requested to have two people join the interviews to give us a broader picture of the situation as the other informant had not worked for the NGO for a long time. We did not find an NGO to represent education sector, but we got useful information on the field from the CSO working in labour market integration (CSO1). This decision was also made because we wanted an informant from both a degree

⁸ Migri statistics only lists applications and arrivals, not those who are staying in the country (Migri, 2025b).

education provider and someone working in children's education. We chose a representative from vocational school to represent degree education as that is the most popular form of degree education among Ukrainians living in Finland.

Table 2. The interview informants and their roles within their affiliated institutions.

Number	Topic	Organization and role
CSO1	Labour market	The informant is working as a career coach in an NGO that among other things helps immigrants in integrating to the labour market.
SLB1	Housing	The informant is working for a city owned housing company that rents for both students and those in need of subsidized housing.
SLB2	Labour market	The informant works for the regional public employment services provider and specializes in immigrants.
CSO2/1	Housing	The informant works as a customer guidance specialist for a housing sharing NGO operating nationally.
CSO2/2	Housing	The informant works as a director for a housing sharing NGO operating nationally.
SLB3	Education	The informant is an official in a vocational school, who works specifically with international students and matters.
SLB4	Education	The informant works as preparatory teacher for comprehensive school aged (7- to 13-year-old) immigrant children.

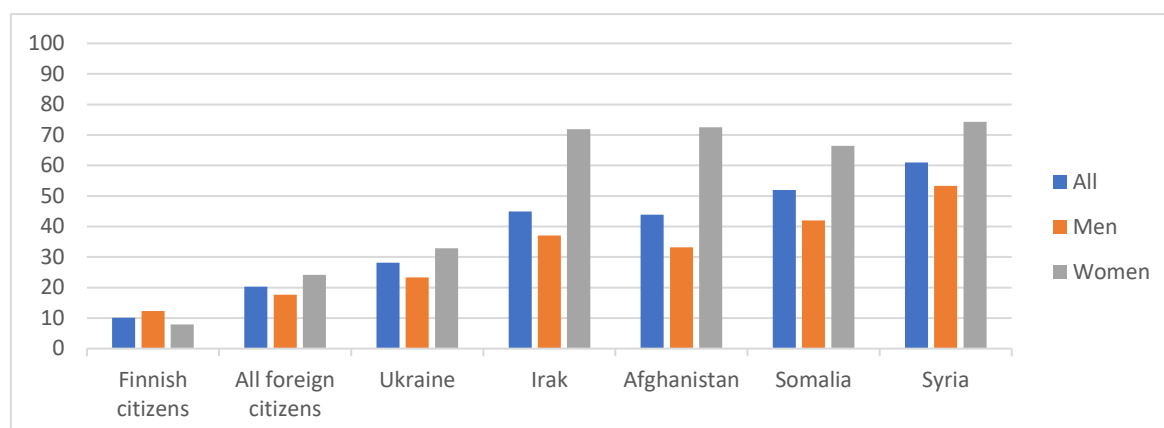
The interviews were conducted in June and August 2025 by Lauri Havukainen and Senja Ylipekkala. Three were done in person (CSO1, SLB2, SLB4) and three through Teams (SLB1, CSO2, SLB3). Five of the interviews were done in Finnish and one in English on the interviewees' request. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the interview citations used in this report were translated. For this report we have anonymized the interviewees by removing the names of their organizations and in most cases the locations of where they operate.

Policies and outcomes of the labour market integration

According to previous research, statistical data and our interviews, the labour market access to Ukrainian TPSs in Finland does not seem to differ from most other migrant groups. If the migrant is not already in the country with a labour migrant visa, the Finnish labour market for migrants can be summed up with one word: difficult. According both our interviews and past research, the combination of high language barriers and overall economic situation makes the labour market very inaccessible for non-natives (e.g. Himanen, Eteläaho, & Malinen, 2025 Koptsyukh & Svyrenko, 2025).

The growth of Finnish economy has been meagre at best for the last few years. This lack of economic development can be even more drastic depending on the region. For example, the region where we did most of the interviews, the unemployment rate was the worst in the country at 15,2 percent at end of June 2025 (OSFc). Still, it can be said that the unemployment rate has risen in all regions since the beginning of 2023. In the Summer 2025 Finland's unemployment rate was the second highest in EU, at 9,9% (YLE News, 2025). When it comes to looking at unemployment rates, the complete picture is hard to see as statistics comparable to the official unemployment rate based on nationality are not available. The official unemployment rate is counted from 15- to 75-year-olds that are part of the workforce (OSFc), while the only employment statistic based on nationality counts the workforce participation from 18- to 64-year-olds (OSFa). Still, through this we can get at least somewhat of an estimate on the employment of Ukrainians living in Finland (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Unofficial unemployment rate among the largest FDP groups in Finland at the end of 2023.



By the end of 2023, the last full year with available Employment statistics (OSFa), there were 28100 Ukrainian citizens living in Finland with either TPS that had applied for municipal residency or had lived here before the war. Just under half (12 956) of those were considered as part of the workforce, and of those, about 28% (9311) were unemployed compared to the overall rate of 11%⁹. This means that at that point the Ukrainian unemployment rate was lagging all foreign nationals' unemployment rate of about 20% but was clearly ahead of the other large nationality groups that have mostly come to Finland as FDPs. The unemployment rate among women is also comparatively better among Ukrainians than in these other groups. (OSFa.)

We can compare the previous number of Ukrainians working to the estimate by VATT (Seppä, Alasalmi & Korpela, 2025) at the end of 2024 when around 10 000¹⁰ Ukrainian FDPs residing in Finland received monetary compensation in form of a salary. This means that the number of Ukrainians that were employed rose quite slowly between 2023 and 2024. The rate of Ukrainians working has been higher during the summer as a lot of them work seasonally in agriculture, the field where many Ukrainians came to work before the invasion. Most common fields, outside season agricultural work, are in cleaning, manufacturing and construction. The median salary was about 2000 euros per month, which is clearly below the national median of about 3300 Euros per month. (Seppä, Alasalmi & Korpela, 2025.)

The language barrier as entry threshold into the labour market can be even higher for Ukrainians, as when they first come to the country many could not even speak English. This is seen both in past research (e.g. Svynarenko & Koptsyukh, 2022) and in our interviews (CSO1, SLB2, SLB4). For example, according to the Ministry of the Interior (Koptsyukh & Svynarenko, 2025) the lack of Finnish/Swedish language skills is the most common reason why Ukrainians that have never applied

⁹ The official unemployment rate in Finland at the end of 2023 was 7,1% (OSFc).

¹⁰ Between 8000 and 13 000 depending on the season during 2024.

for a job in Finland have not done so. In the Helsinki Metropolitan area (Himanen, Eteläaho & Malinen, 2025), 75% Ukrainian FDPs said that the lacking language skills in either of the native languages hindered their employment chances. The language barrier can also vary regionally. For example, one interviewee saw the local language requirements in his rural region even higher than those in bigger cities in the south.

***CSO1:** ...we, especially in [name of the region], have perhaps higher than average language requirements, even though the job may not necessarily always require a high level of Finnish. Generally, here we want people to speak Finnish fairly well or very well in order to get a job. We have seen that in other parts of Finland these language requirements are often lower...*

While the language barrier is still seen as a major problem it has decreased over time as Ukrainians have lived in the country for longer. According to the studies done by the Ministry of the Interior (Svynarenko & Koptsyukh, 2022; Koptsyukh & Svynarenko, 2025) the number of Ukrainian FDPs stating that they have good enough Finnish skills to work or study has risen from under 1% in 2022 to 38% in 2025. One practice that has been created to lower the language barrier is the integration courses organized by the employment areas (SLB2). These often combine language learning with work life focus.

Degree recognition and de-skilling also play role in the difficulties Ukrainian TPSs face in the Finnish labour market. Both Ukrainian degrees and work experience often go unrecognized in Finland. These topics are discussed more thoroughly in the chapter about education.

Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

One thing that separates the topic of housing from the topic of labour market integration and education is the fact that there is very little in form of openly available statistics based on citizenship. This is why we have had to rely on the few surveys (e.g. Svynarenko & Koptsyukh 2022; Koptsyukh & Svynarenko, 2025) that have asked about it and our interview data. The living situation of Ukrainian FDPs migrating to Finland is unique in comparison to other FDP groups Finland has had before. This was due to changes made in how the reception centres are set up and the housing desires of the newcomers. Most Ukrainians did not move to centralized reception centres but much more often to private housing or rental housing provided to them through the reception centres (Migri, 2023). Some Ukrainians also used their previous ties as temporary seasonal workers in Finland and first moved into the dormitories close to the farms they have worked in previously (Penttilä, 2023). This is very different to the previous times Finland has received a major influx of FDPs in short time frame, when most were housed in the centralized reception centres, often in rural areas outside of major population centres (e.g. Pöllänen, 2020).

Both according to our interviews and previous research, when Ukrainian FDPs started coming to Finland in March 2022, they either figured were to live on their own or moved to reception centres (CSO2/1, CSO2/2 & SLB1). At the beginning, most Ukrainian refugees found housing in private accommodation with friends, relatives or volunteers instead of staying in reception centre. Those who went to live in reception centres seemed to want to move to their own accommodations as quickly as possible (Svynarenko& Koptsyukh 2022; Rimpiläinen, 2023). For most with TPS this is possible only after getting municipality of residence, after which they can apply for social assistance and general housing allowance. As many Ukrainians are dependent on subsidized housing paid by these social security benefits (CSO2/1), the housing provider after getting municipal residency is often the same provider as through the reception system. In the case of the city we did most of our interviews in, most of these apartments were rented by the actor¹¹ running the reception centre from the city's own subsidized housing company (SLB1). Often family units rented from this company housed multiple separate families, meaning the apartment could get quite crowded (SLB1, CSO2/1). In the Greater Helsinki area, the lack of available housing and expectation of being able to sign and move in very short period of time, has also led to grey market renting with unofficial and precarious contracts (CSO2/1).

The third option for housing is home accommodation where Ukrainians would live with locals in their own homes free of charge (CSO2/1, CSO2/2). This kind of housing was organized by the NGO we did one of our interviews with. Voluntary based accommodation was especially common in the early months of the war, but it waned as the number of both the volunteers and new arrivals dwindled and Ukrainians wanted a more permanent form of housing. Home accommodation was meant to be housing option just on arrival as the person applying for this type of housing has to be a client in reception centre. (CSO2/1, CSO2/2.)

Another unique factor about Ukrainians fleeing the war was that many of them brought their pets with them (CSO2/2), which was something Finland had not experienced in previous influxes of refugees such as in 2015-2016. Finnish reception centres would not allow animals in their facilities, which meant if Ukrainians wanted to live there, they would have to be separated from their pets. In one region it took lobbying from NGOs to finally have one established, few months after the Ukrainians started arriving to Finland (CSO2/1, CSO2/2.)

The Ukrainians can get support from Kela for housing and overall living costs after getting their municipality of residence. They are eligible to get general housing allowance, social assistance and supplementary social assistance. Supplementary social assistance given by the municipality can be used for example to buy new furniture. (Kela, n.d. & CSO2/1, CSO2/2.) Recent cuts to general housing allowance have put pressure on Ukrainians to find cheaper housing (SLB1, CSO2/1, CSO2/2). This, together with the rising rent levels, has led to situations where accommodation

¹¹ At first, by the Red Cross and later by a private company.

cheap enough to meet Kela standards has been difficult to find (SLB1). Also, while over time the desires for quality of housing have increased among Ukrainians, many of them are still stuck in subsidized housing unit as it much cheaper than living in completely private accommodation (SLB1).

Policies and outcomes on education of adults and children

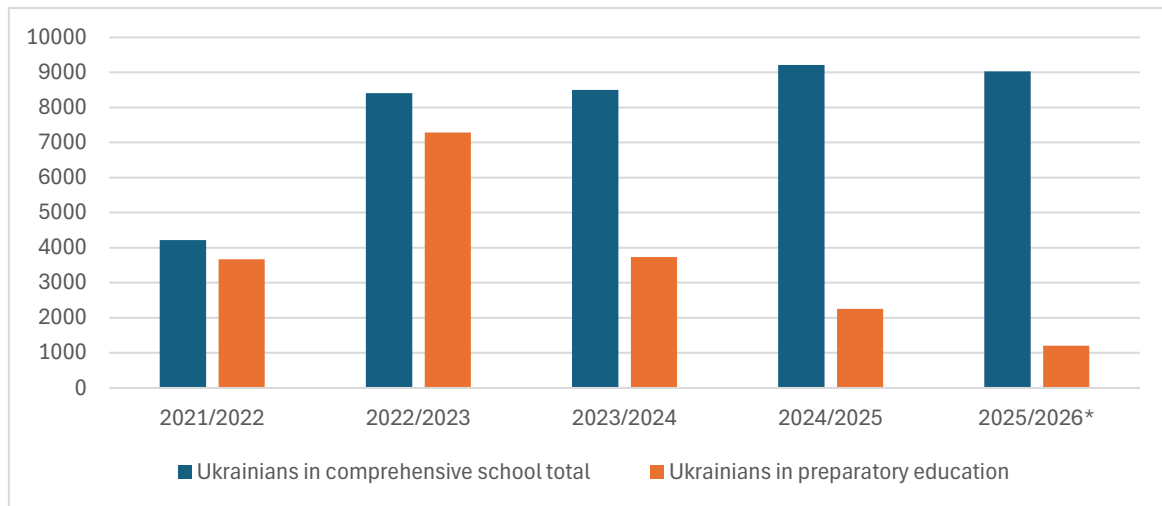
Accessing education for children is made easy in Finland. This also applies to immigrants. In comprehensive school (1st to 9th grade) all immigrants go through a year of preparatory education (valmistava opetus in Finnish) where they are slowly introduced to the Finnish system and language. This happens in separate classrooms with teachers specialized in immigrant education, especially teaching of Finnish as a second language. They start to integrate students into normal Finnish classrooms as soon as the first week. This usually happens through going to certain classes during a school day or, for example, one day a week. With Ukrainians the integration in comprehensive school system started almost immediately after arrival. In the city we did our interviews in, first Ukrainian FDPs started in preparatory education in April of 2022, just a month after they first started arriving in Finland. While the situation in Ukraine was well known, the suddenness of it did strain the system somewhat.

Interviewer: *Did this affect your work in any way when things like this happened so quickly?*

SLB4: *It had an effect. So in a way, the fact that in April you're already planning a little bit... you already have the spring planned and you're sliding towards the summer holidays and then suddenly you practically have almost a class full of new students, who are probably coming from quite traumatic circumstances. So of course you won't slide towards the summer holidays after all...*

As the preparatory education lasts a year and the overall number of the new Ukrainian arrivals has been decreasing from the beginning of the war, the number of Ukrainians in preparatory education has also gone down (Vipunen, 2025a). As can be seen in the figure 3, the number of Ukrainians in comprehensive school seems to have stabilized to around 9000 pupils. Ukrainians in adult comprehensive education are not counted in the statistic. (Vipunen, 2025a.)

Figure 3. The number of Ukrainians in comprehensive education and preparatory education between the schoolyears 2021 – 2022 and 2025 -2026. The numbers for the last schoolyear are only preliminary.



When it comes to adult education, the situation for Ukrainians is more complicated. While technically Ukrainian FDPs with TPS have right to apply to study for free, the language is one of the main obstacles in the way of access. Most programs have language requirements in Finnish or Swedish. It does not help that only 43% of Ukrainians feel they have good enough English language skills to study with it (Koptsyukh & Svynarenko, 2025). The lack of English skills was also noted in our interview with the preparatory teacher (SLB4). When it comes to representation in different levels of degree education, it is clear that Ukrainians favour vocational education.

First of all, the number of Ukrainians within Finnish tertiary education is small. In 2024¹² there were only 114 Ukrainian students in Finnish universities, and another 174 in universities of applied sciences (OSFg). It must be said though, that compared to 2023, the number of Ukrainians in universities of applied sciences nearly doubled from 90. In 2024 there were 4 772 Ukrainians in vocational schools up from 2 529 in 2023 and 306 in upper secondary schools, up from 205. (OSFg.) This means that vocational school is clearly the most popular form of degree education for Ukrainian FDPs. Its popularity can partly be explained with TUV¹³-training, which is a program for those without secondary degree (high school or vocational) but wish to get one. Outside of summer

¹² Situation in 20th of September

¹³ Stands for Tutkintokoulutukseen Valmentava koulutus, roughly translates to preparatory training for degree education

months there has been around 1000 Ukrainians attending TUVA each month since August 2023 (Vipunen, 2025b). In TUVA, each student is provided with a personalized study plan based on their needs and skill deficits. According to the primary school teacher working in preparatory education we interviewed, most immigrant students need extra education before they can go forward from comprehensive school.

SLB4: *So, based on last spring, it's a fact that there's a very small percentage of immigrant students who leave [comprehensive] school and are able to apply directly to vocational school or upper secondary school, so they do need some adult primary education or some kind of training...*

Interviewer: *TUVA education?*

SLB4: *Yes, TUVA. ...*

Those Ukrainians who are studying for full degrees, make just under half of Ukrainian vocational school attendees, and the rest are studying for parts of a degree or in some other specialty program. Open university courses have been free for TPS recipients in most universities (OKM, 2022), but statistics on them based on nationality are not available. Some of these programs are ending in 2026 (e.g. University of Helsinki, 2024). As it has been just over three years from the beginning of the war, the number of those who have graduated from degrees is small, as most degree programs take at least 3 years to complete. In the year 2024, 180 Ukrainians completed a vocational degree, with the combined number of university degrees being given was just 30.

The popularity of TUVA and studying for parts of a degree in vocational school brings us back into de-skilling and hardships concerning degree recognition. The degrees required in many fields of Finnish labour market are highly regulated¹⁴ and thus need the applicant to go through degree recognition, which cost hundreds of Euros. According to one of our interviewees this difficulty and cost is what pushes many migrants, Ukrainian FDPs included, to just start over with their studies (CSO1). This is also visible in previous research. In the study made in the Helsinki area (Himanen, Eteläaho & Malinen, 2025) one third of Ukrainians required more assistance with the recognition of their qualifications.

Both the popularity of vocational education and need for additional training and degree recognition are in stark contrast with the educational background of Ukrainian FDPs. According to the surveys made by the Ministry of the Interior (Koptsyukh & Svyrenenko, 2025) around 60%¹⁵ of Ukrainians

¹⁴These include most jobs in education, health and social care, logistics and construction. Finnish National Agency for Education has a full list of professions needing degree recognition on their website.

<https://www.oph.fi/en/services/recognition-qualifications/regulated-professions-finland>

¹⁵ Down from 66% in 2022 (Svyrenenko & Koptsyukh 2022).

living in Finland in 2025 have a tertiary degree. The high share of Ukrainian FDPs with tertiary education has also been noticed elsewhere, as in multiple surveys the number has been even higher than in Finland (OECD, 2023). Considering all of this, it is clear that Ukrainian FDPs face major de-skilling when they come to Finland. Difficulties with language skills as well as degree and experience recognition play part in this. There have been attempts to combat this, for example, through degree programs with language support in Russian in the university of applied sciences (SLB2) and in vocational degree programs in English and Russian (CSO1, SLB3). The problem with the vocational school programs was that many Ukrainians could not apply to the English language programs due lacking language skills (CSO1). In the city we did our interviews in, most of the English language programs ended in spring because of the bad economic and employment situation in the region. Moreover, the Finnish language education in the regular programs was deemed inadequate, which left lot of the responsibility of learning to the students own motivation and to pastime activities. (SLB3.)

Conclusions

When it comes to the three topics through which we have looked at the integration of the Ukrainian FDPs into Finnish society, the situation is different depending on the topic and the lens we look at it. While the lengthened time of stay has brought up Ukrainians Finnish language skills, they still face language barriers based on language as do all other migrant groups. These barriers are visible especially in labour market integration and in education. Still the rate Ukrainians finding work has increased over time and many have found their way into degree programs, especially in vocational education. Housing has been much smaller issue for many as it is often organized through or with the assistance of different public actors.

Labour market integration of Ukrainians has been quite difficult, as it is for most migrants. The Finnish economy has been in a slump in previous years. This has been felt even harder in the border region where we did most of our interviews in. In this and other border regions the sanctions on Russia and border closure have had even worse effect than in other regions of the country. Finnish labour market is also quite closed to non-Finnish (or Swedish) speakers, with the opportunities being even lesser regionally. System-wise the unemployment system has been under massive changes for the past few years as the role of running the services has been transferred from the state to the municipalities (or regional operatives in some cases). Still, the overall economic situation and language barriers play a much bigger role in difficulties in accessing the labour market than any systemic change. More openness in hiring people with lacking language skills is definitely needed in order to integrate Ukrainians and other immigrants into the Finnish labour market in a more meaningful way.

Educational system, especially in its early stages, have adapted quite quickly to the influx of Ukrainians. Finnish preparatory education programs tend to be quite flexible in situations like this and has, for the most parts, been able to integrate all the newcomers, even if it has meant establishment of new classes mid school year. In adult and youth education the situation is more complex. While technical and financial barriers are much easier on Ukrainians TPS recipients compared to most other migrant groups, there still major hurdles in language acquisition and degree recognition. There are programs, like language supported degree programs, set up to combat these. The overall effect of these is yet to be seen. Over time more Ukrainians have acquired enough language skills to feel confident in both working and studying in Finland and it is likely that this will lead to better integration in these fields of life.

Housing has not been a major issue for Ukrainians in Finland, as first the reception system played a major role in settling them, and later, when the Ukrainians have gotten residency in municipalities, they have been able to receive quite ample social benefits. In the beginning voluntary accommodation played a larger role in the housing of Ukrainians, but its role has been diminished after Ukrainians have gotten residency in municipalities. Still, there are uncertainties caused by cuts

to the benefits and many still lack the opportunity to pay for their own housing, and maybe through that, to move out of the subsidized housing system.

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ANNEX 2 CR Germany

MAGnituDe

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Sophie Schmäing, University of Greifswald

sophie.schmaeing@uni-greifswald.de

Executive Summary

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

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

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

The temporary nature of Ukrainian FDPs' protection constrains them from making long-term investments in the labour market integration strategies that would be necessary for them to work according to their qualifications. At the same time, SLBs and employers are hesitant to support retraining or other tailored programmes for Ukrainian FDPs due to uncertainty around how long they will remain in the country. Young Ukrainian FDPs, in particular, struggle with the uncertainty of the TPD and the need to strike a balance between a desire to return home and a drive to pursue education in Germany, leading to a low sense of belonging in schools.

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

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

integration in EU countries and stronger reintegration in Ukraine, thereby facilitating the country's reconstruction.

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Abbreviations

Project abbreviations

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

Other

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

Background

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

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

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

At the same time, alongside these positive attitudes towards Ukrainian FDPs, right-wing and far-right forces like the Alternative for Germany (AfD) have been fuelling critical moods on war migration from Ukraine. Representatives of conservative parties also engaged in such rhetoric, as seen in current chancellor Friedrich Merz's derogatory remarks accusing Ukrainian FDPs of engaging

in social tourism and taking advantage of social benefits (Riese, 2022). Although Merz later apologised for his statement, it is unsurprising that he later proposed cutting social benefits for Ukrainians. After taking office in 2025, Friedrich Merz's government introduced a law to cut the social benefits provided to Ukrainians who have arrived in Germany since 1 April 2025. Criticism of social benefits is also growing due to the initial high expectations of both the previous and current German governments regarding the rapid integration of Ukrainian FDPs into the labour market not being met.

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

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

Ukrainian FDPs in Germany

As of October 2025, a total of 1,292,122 FDPs from Ukraine are registered in Germany, 97 per cent of whom are Ukrainian citizens. 1,106,204 FDPs have a residence permit under paragraph 24 of the Residence Act, which implements the Temporary Protection Directive. There are 51,727 FDPs from Ukraine with a provisional certificate, meaning that they are still waiting to receive TPD status.¹ Since Ukrainians can travel freely within the EU, it is more difficult to determine the number of FDPs

¹ <https://mediendienst-integration.de/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html>

who have returned to Ukraine or moved on to another country. In August 2025, the Federal Ministry of the Interior estimated that 438,410 of those who fled Ukraine to Germany had already returned to the country or moved to another country.² Migration researcher Franck Duevell believes that the number of Ukrainian FDPs living in Germany is difficult to determine due to a lack of clarity regarding the number of returnees. Based on employment rates and the numbers of recipients of different social benefits, he assumes significantly lower numbers, estimating the figure to now be under 1 million (see Tränhardt, 2024).

Regardless of the exact number, Ukrainian citizens now amount to the second-largest migrant group in Germany after Turkish citizens.³ Prior to 2022, 135,000 Ukrainians lived in Germany, their number having increased slightly since 2014.⁴ Most Ukrainians have been living in huge cities like Berlin and Munich (Lashchuk, 2025). One recent study suggests that Ukrainian FDPs predominantly moved to places where they had social networks with other Ukrainians (Sauer et al., 2023). As of July 2025, roughly 70,000 FDPs are registered in Berlin, which is also home to a significant number of post-Soviet migrants (of which there are 3.5 million in Germany). A significant proportion of these post-Soviet migrants are Russian-speaking German descendants from the Soviet Union.⁵

Due to the restrictions preventing most Ukrainian men from leaving Ukraine, the majority of Ukrainian FDPs are women. The proportion of men has grown only slightly since 2022, with 62 per cent of adult FDPs in Germany in October 2025 being women; 360,000 have been children and youth under the age of 18.⁶

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

² Ibid.

³ <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/ukraine.html>

⁴ <https://www-genesis.destatis.de/datenbank/online>

⁵ <https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/postsowjetische-migration-in-deutschland.html>

⁶ <https://mediendienst-integration.de/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html>

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

Implementation of the TPD in Germany

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

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

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

Actors working with Ukrainian FDPs in Berlin

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

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

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

Source: Author's elaboration

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

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

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

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

The future of the TPD

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

In August 2025, the Ministry of Labour presented a draft bill stipulating that refugees who arrived in Germany after 1 April 2025 would only receive money in accordance with the Asylum Seekers

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

Act. This means basic income support of €441 per month rather than €563 and no health insurance. However, Ukrainian refugees would continue to have a right to work, unlike other asylum-seekers. The media report also notes that these changes would not result in any savings for the German state due to the higher-level bureaucratic efforts involved with the Asylum Seekers Act.⁸ Merz also proposed that all Ukrainians should only receive money under the Asylum Seekers Act, but the Social Democratic Party, alongside Merz's Christian Democrats, immediately rejected the proposal. In Germany, Ukrainians under the TPD may also receive another residence permit if they meet the criteria. Two possible residence permits would be to work or study in Germany. However, at the moment, these two possibilities only apply to a minority of protection-seekers from Ukraine. Work permits are only applicable to migrants who work in qualified positions with a certain salary. While experts have already begun to discuss alternatives to the TPD, there are currently no visible political proposals for the period after the TPD's expiry in March 2027 (Heiermann & Atanisev, 2024; Schneider, 2024).

Methods and materials

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

Two interviews were conducted with employees (SLBs) at two different job centres in Berlin. One interview was conducted with two employees of a CSO supporting post-Soviet migrants, which provided job counselling services for Ukrainian FDPs. Two interviews were conducted with representatives from CSOs supporting Ukrainian FDPs with paperwork related to social services and support, especially applications for job centres and local welfare agencies, as well as paperwork in the field of housing and school education. One of these CSOs has been working to support Syrian and other refugees since 2015; the other was newly founded in 2022 to support Ukrainian FDPs. At the first CSO, I also conducted a background interview. Two interviews were conducted with migration guides in two different Berlin districts. Migration guides provide support across the three

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

fields of housing, employment and education. One interview was conducted with two social workers active in welcome classes. Seven interviews were conducted in German, one interview in the Ukrainian language.

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

Table 2 - Overview of Expert Interviewees

Abbreviation	Topic	Interviewee's Role
SLB1	Labour market	Migration commissioner at a job centre in Berlin.
SLB2	Labour market	Placement officer at a job centre in Berlin.
CSO1	Cross-sectional (support with bureaucracy/filling out applications)	Representative of a CSO founded in 2016 to support Syrian refugees. One additional background interview (not recorded).
CSO2	Cross-sectional (support with bureaucracy/filling out applications)	Representative of a CSO founded in 2022 to support Ukrainian refugees. Interview conducted in Ukrainian at the request of the organisation.
CSO3	Labour market	Two employees/representatives of a CSO working with/supporting post-Soviet migrants. The interviewees work as part of a programme that provides job counselling for Ukrainian FDPs.
SLO1	Cross-sectional (support for FDPs in their everyday lives)	Migration guide in one Berlin district.
SLO2	Cross-sectional (support for FDPs in their everyday lives)	Migration guide in one Berlin district.

SLO3	Education	Two social workers working with students and parents in welcome classes within one district in Berlin.
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Labour market integration and social benefits

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

Bureaucratic anxiety and frustration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Development of language skills and employment rate

As mentioned, for Ukrainian FDPs receiving the citizen's benefit, participation in integration courses is mandatory. The participation rate of FDPs in integration courses has remained consistently high, and 90 per cent completed the courses at the A2 or B1 level.⁹ In accordance with these numbers,

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

Ukrainians who initially arrived with little knowledge of German reported significant progress in their language skills in 2023 (Bartig et al., 2025). The employment rate also grew consistently in 2023, going from 18 per cent at the beginning of the year to 24.4 per cent in the second half.

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

Despite progress in language acquisition and employment rates (the former being a prerequisite for the latter in Germany, as most employers require at least a B2 or C1 language level), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs announced at the end of 2023 a change in strategy for integrating Ukrainian refugees into the labour market—Job Turbo—aimed at placing Ukrainians in jobs, even if they have limited language skills, with language learning to take place on the job.¹⁰ In May 2025, the employment rate of Ukrainian FDPs was 34.9 per cent. A survey with Ukrainian FDPs in Berlin/Brandenburg suggests that de-skilling has increased further (Günzal & Lushankina, 2025).

Obstacles to labour market integration

Language skills, recognition of qualifications, and childcare

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

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

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

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

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

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

Job counselling

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

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

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

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

Protracted displacement and TPD

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

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

The expert was exceptionally engaged in her job, reinforced (in her own words) by the fact that she was Ukrainian herself. Assuming, however, that the average SLB doesn't put as much effort into the job, we must acknowledge that, aside from job counselling, social networks play a crucial role for protection-seekers aiming to find work. However, developing local networks requires time. FDPs also need time to settle in and secure their livelihoods in other areas, such as housing and childcare, as emphasised by two experts from CSO3. In their view, counselling must always consider each FDP's family situation, as existing problems in these areas hinder employment (CSO3).

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

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

invest in hiring Ukrainian FDPs. Therefore, the expert argues that job centres could increase their efforts to cooperate with companies and incentivise them to employ Ukrainian FDPs (SLB1).

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

Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

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

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

Early on, private hosts played a crucial role in sheltering Ukrainian FDPs (DeZim, 2022; Haller, 2022). This form of engagement gained prominence through the use of digital platforms. For example, through #UnterkunftUkraine, over 49,000 of the Ukrainian FDPs in Germany were accommodated between March and September 2022. The results of an online survey indicate that hosts also often assisted their guests with registration, other paperwork, and even looking for an apartment (DeZim, 2022). Obviously, private flats and houses carry certain risks. For example, one of the interviewed experts recounted examples of private hosts demanding Ukrainian FDPs do all their housework. There were also cases of sexual assault (SLO3). More research is needed to determine the scope of such cases, especially considering that several experts emphasised Ukrainian FDPs' fear of “ending up in Tegel” (SLO1), putting them under increased pressure to find private accommodations.

In Berlin, the largest portion of Ukrainian FDPs in collective accommodations live at the former Tegel Airport. Although initially intended as a temporary shelter, Ukrainian FDPs and other refugees often live here for up to a year or longer. The inhumane conditions at Tegel Airport were cited by all CSO interviewees in this study and have also been documented by other experts and media reports (see the extensive report by the CSO Flüchtlingsrat (refugee council), which also covers media reports: Flüchtlingsrat, 2023). Living conditions in Tegel Airport align with the main problems of collective accommodations in Germany identified by Vey (2023): bad infrastructural connection,

low quality of counselling and support, a lack of privacy, poor food quality (when food is included in the rent) and poor overall hygiene. The author criticised the lack of a legal basis for defining minimum standards for collective accommodations.

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

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

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

Policies and outcomes regarding the education of youth and children

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

According to a survey, approximately one-third of school-age FDPs in Germany exclusively attended welcome classes in 2022 (Brücker et al., 2022). In a second survey conducted in the second half of 2023, 16 per cent stated that they exclusively attended welcome classes, and 24 per cent stated that they attended additional support classes. This means that 60 per cent exclusively attended regular classes. Among 11- to 17-year-olds, the proportion of those attending regular classes was slightly lower (Bartig et al., 2025). By summer 2024, the vast majority of 11- to 17-year-olds had

transferred to regular classes, with only 6 per cent attending a welcome class and 9 per cent attending additional language courses (Bib, 2024). According to the young Ukrainians' own assessment, their language skills have improved significantly since 2022. In 2022, 92 per cent said that they did not know German upon arrival; by 2024, however, half described their German skills as good to very good, and 35 per cent described them as adequate (Bib, 2024).

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

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

An interview with a 16-year-old Ukrainian FDP student, recounted in the same report, illustrates how time-consuming this practice is, forcing her to study all day. However, the student argues that she likes to study because talking distracts her from the fact that she has no close social contacts in Germany (ZOIS, 2022). While the student has only been living in Germany for a few months, a 2024 survey echoes her social isolation, showing that a remarkably high number of Ukrainian students say they do not feel like they belong at their German school. The study's authors noted that the sense of belonging among Ukrainian youth is significantly less strong than it was among Syrian refugees two years post-arrival in Germany (Bib, 2024). This feeling of non-belonging among young Ukrainian FDPs is also echoed in a qualitative study by Mikheeva et al. (2025), who conclude that, although none of the interviewees reported direct discrimination, a majority reported not feeling accepted at school. In addition, the interviewees described having lost their ties with friends in Ukraine. The two interviewed social workers likewise expressed an assumption that Ukrainians would probably not make many new friends after transferring from their welcome class to a regular class. In their view, students in welcome classes would ideally participate in regular classes from

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

¹² Ibid.

the beginning as well; implementing this idea, however, would depend on exceptionally engaged teachers (SLO3).

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

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

There are people there who may have had similar experiences, and you can gradually enter the world you're now thrown into (i.e., the German world with its school system, with everything that goes with it, including parents and language). [...] However, I don't know, integration does have its drawbacks, of course. It has to be said that, in this protected environment, you tend to isolate yourself and then somehow don't really go out [...] It's just a question of what the prospects are for staying. So, if the prospect is that I'm definitely going back, then the protected environment is good. If it's clear that I'm staying, then... It's actually less necessary for Ukrainian refugees. (Interviewee CSO3)

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

Conclusions

In Germany, which has taken in the largest number of Ukrainian FDPs of any European country, the TPD has been implemented quite comprehensively overall. However, the basic security for Ukrainian FDPs that have arrived since 1 April 2025 is in jeopardy, and discussions about restrictions

on basic security measures for all FDPs are mounting under the new German government led by Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who's been critical of social support for Ukrainian FDPs from the outset.

This report suggests that the initial encounters between Ukrainian FDPs and German bureaucracy have been marked by fear and anxiety. SLOs and CSOs are important buffers between SLBs and FDPs in this regard. It is also worth noting that there is regular dialogue between civil society and the Berlin Senate (even if some interviewees also criticised municipal institutions and expressed a desire for more say). It should also be emphasised that an organisation newly founded by Ukrainians in 2022 has succeeded in establishing cooperation with municipal authorities and recruiting many Ukrainian FDPs as volunteers. However, negative experiences with bureaucracy have likely undermined Ukrainians' trust in municipal institutions, making them a significant obstacle to their general integration into Germany—including integration into the labour market. Urgent efforts should be made to streamline and better explain the associated bureaucratic processes.

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

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

The temporary protection status constrains the integration of Ukrainian FDPs into the labour market on two levels. First, FDPs are hesitant to invest in long-term integration by, for instance, starting an apprenticeship. Secondly, SLBs and employers are similarly holding back when it comes to launching specific programmes for FDPs. The uncertainties surrounding temporary protection have a significant effect on young Ukrainian FDPs: At a formative stage in their lives, they are struggling to balance their desire to return home with their pursuit of an education in Germany. Particularly noteworthy is the low sense of belonging among Ukrainian FDPs at their schools. This

sense of non-belonging requires further research. In general, however, additional support services, such as those offered by social workers in Berlin, represent a positive practice.

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

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

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Authors: Dr. Oksana Žabko (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Latvia, sub-contracted),
PhD candidate Dmytro Mamaiev (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Institute for Sociology)
Corresponding info: Dr Kristina Šliavaitė (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, kristina@ces.lt)
Dr Vilana Pilinkaitė Sotirovič (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, vilana@ces.lt)

Executive Summary

The report provides an overview and analysis of the migration trends of forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine to Latvia, as well as governance and multilevel responsibilities in the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in Latvia, with a particular focus on the situation in housing, education, and labour policies. The report covers the period from the onset of full-scale war in 2022 up to the end of 2025. The report is based on desk research (statistical data, laws, policy reports, previous research) and analysis of semi-structured interviews with experts in education, housing, and the labour market who, in their professional sphere, are in everyday contact with FDPs from Ukraine.

Since the full-scale invasion, Latvia has implemented a special policy to support Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs). This policy is outlined in the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians (*Ukrainas civiliedzīvotāju atbalsta likums*). As of January 1, 2025, the Ministry of the Interior reported that there were 48,093 Ukrainian FDPs registered in Latvia.

In the labour sector, the Latvian state introduced several exceptions for Ukrainian FDPs, such as unrestricted employment rights, waiving language requirements in non-essential roles, and offering start-up allowances. Additionally, the government established favorable conditions for recognizing professional qualifications for Ukrainian FDPs in regulated professions such as healthcare, education, sports, and pharmaceutical care, allowing these professionals to continue working in their fields. These measures enabled rapid, yet to a large extent, low-skilled labour market entry, while language courses, recognition pathways, and coordination mechanisms gradually support upward mobility, although structural barriers (such as housing and transport) continue to constrain full integration.

In the housing sector, the State Fire and Rescue Service coordinated the allocation of temporary housing in hotels and guesthouses for those without a pre-existing shelter in Latvia (Ministry of Interior, 2022a, 2022b). The coordination of various stakeholders by the state and municipalities, who have been involved in housing provision for Ukrainian FDPs since 2022, appears to be a highly effective measure that has ensured broad access to housing nationwide. This housing was provided on a free-of-charge basis, and the accommodation's owner was compensated by the government. Until 31 December 2025, Latvia maintains a regulation that housing for displaced Ukrainians is reimbursed for up to either 60 or 120 days, depending on the municipality's capability, or more than 120 days for specific target groups (Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, Article 12).

In the education sector, Latvia relies on the public provision of education for Ukrainian FDPs at all levels, with some participation by private service providers. In Latvia, Ukrainian children have been allowed to choose whether to enter the local educational system. As of 13 February 2025, 4,203 Ukrainian children were attending Latvian schools or kindergartens, 178 were attending vocational schools, and 382 were studying in higher education institutions (Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia, 2025). Some estimations indicate that approximately one-third of Ukrainian children were outside the Latvian education system in 2024. Special attention is given to facilitating language

training for both Ukrainian children and adults. However, interviews with experts reveal that the key issue is that the language courses lack certain consistency and continuity.

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Abbreviations

Project Abbreviations:

HUG	Help Ukraine Gothenburg
UPF	Universidad Pompeu Fabra
LSMC	Lietuvos Socialiniu Mokslu Centras
KKNU	Karazin Kharkiv National University
UEF	University Of Eastern Finland
UG	Uniwersytet Gdanski
UGR	Universitaet Greifswald
ZAVOD APIS	Zavod Za Avtorsko Produkcijo Izobrazevanje Inovativnost In Sodelovanje-Slovenia
UGOT	University Of Gothenburg

Other:

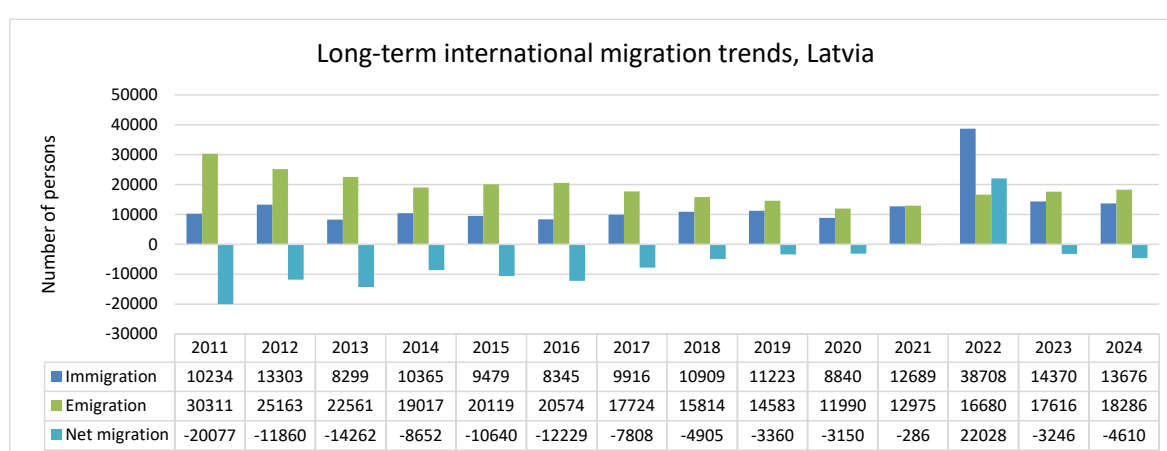
TPD	Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC)
SEA	State Employment Agency
SLA	State Language Agency
UNHCR	United Nations Higher Commissioner on Refugees
RCS	Riga Centre for Support of Ukrainians
FDP	Forcibly Displaced Person. The term “Ukrainian FDPs” refers to people who have fled to Europe because of Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022.
TCN	Third Country National
IO	International Organization

Background

Migration from Ukraine to Latvia before 2022

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to significant changes in migration patterns in Latvia. Prior to 2022, the number of immigrants was relatively low, and net migration was on a downward trend. However, this situation changed dramatically in 2022, when a positive net migration was recorded due to the influx of forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine (see Figure 1). In 2023 and 2024, net migration trends returned to negative due to a significant decrease in the influx of Ukrainian FDPs (European Migration Network Latvian contact point, 2025).

Figure 1. Long-term international migration trends in Latvia, 2011-2024



Source: Official Statistical database. Population, Migration, Emigration, and immigration. Table. IBE081. Long-term international migration in regions, State cities, and municipalities 2011 – 2024.

Prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian citizens, regarded as third-country nationals, faced a highly restrictive immigration policy in Latvia (Basak & Gorgerino, 2025; BISS, 2017; Žabko, 2024a). Entry was permitted under specific, defined circumstances, such as investment in real estate, an invitation from a single employer, or enrollment in tertiary education institutions. Each reason required proof of eligibility based on several criteria, including a certain level of personal income, evidence of labor shortages, the obligation to pay migrants' wages significantly higher than local wages, and limited social protections for migrants, among others. The data on the arrival of third-country nationals in Latvia indicates that Ukrainians were a significant source of migrant labour (Žabko, 2024a). Approximately two-thirds of their legal arrivals (around 70%) were for employment reasons. The other most common motivations were family reunification (for the spouse of a Latvian resident, including both citizens and non-citizens) and investment in real estate. Pre-war arrivals from Ukraine were dominated by men, aged 25-54 and working in medium-skilled jobs in manufacturing, construction, and transportation industries (BISS, 2017).

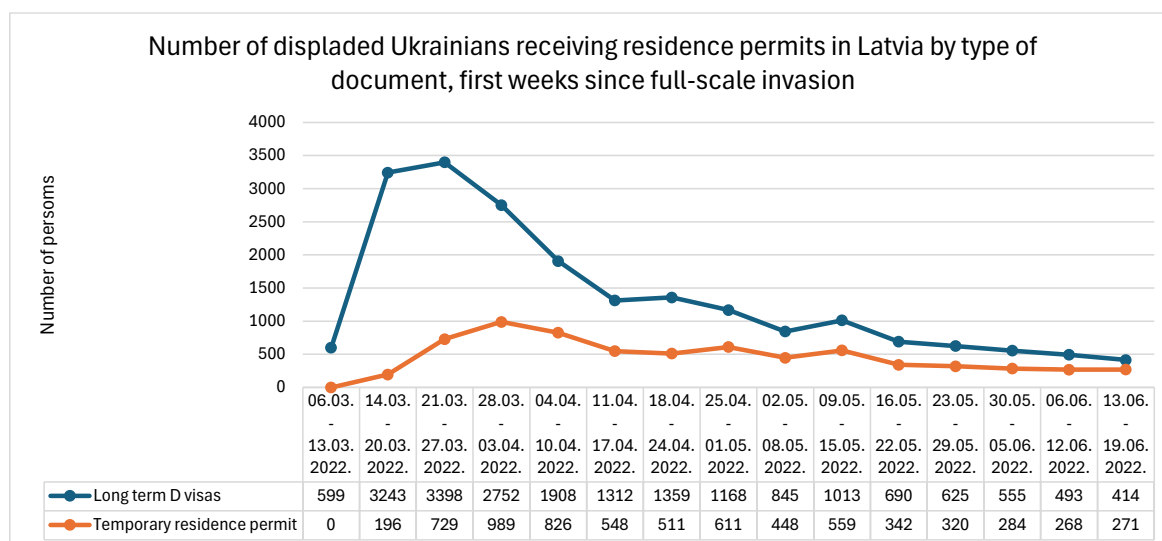
Before 2022, very few third-country nationals sought international protection (asylum) in Latvia. Several factors contributed to this trend. Latvia has maintained a generally restrictive immigration policy, particularly towards asylum seekers (Basak & Gorgerino, 2025; Raubiško & Pelse, 2022).

Additionally, the country has a relatively low level of economic development compared to the EU average and offers limited social support to migrants. Following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, Latvia took a proactive approach and expressed its willingness to host Ukrainians seeking refuge from the conflict. However, the government deemed the existing asylum application procedure, outlined in the Asylum Law (Patvēruma likums), inadequate for accepting Ukrainians. As a result, a specific exemption, the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians (Ukrainas civiliedzīvotāju atbalsta likums), was adopted by the Parliament at the beginning of March 2022. The regulation for the reception of Ukrainians remains in force in 2025 and will continue until the armed conflict caused by the Russian Federation ends. This law specifically governs the status and conditions of stay for Ukrainians in Latvia. It allows for a more favorable approach regarding employment requirements and provides broader rights in housing and healthcare compared to the treatment of refugees in Latvia (Žabko, 2023) and EU level TPD (Eglīte, 2023).

Migration from Ukraine to Latvia after 2022 and types of permits

According to the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, Ukrainians who arrived in Latvia in 2022 could obtain legal residence status either through a long-term D visa for humanitarian reasons or via a temporary residence permit (TRP). Visas were issued to Ukrainians holding a foreign passport (as specified in the law, “a document valid for travel”), while Temporary Residence Permits (TRPs) were granted to those who traveled with a Ukrainian ID card or internal passport (according to the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, Article 3, dated 5 March 2022). The eligibility for children to stay in a country depended on the documents held by their parents. If the parents possessed a foreign passport, the child would receive a visa. If not, the child would be issued a Temporary Residence Permit (TRP). Both the visa and the TRP provided the same rights and a personal identification number. Visas were initially presented as the easiest application option, featuring quicker processing times, a shorter application form, and less detailed information required. However, the visa requirements made it challenging for individuals to access e-government services. Therefore, starting from January 1, 2023, all displaced Ukrainians in Latvia were issued temporary residence permits (TRPs).

Figure 2. Number of displaced Ukrainians received legal ground to stay in Latvia, 06.03.-19.06.2022.



Source: Ministry of Interior, Government Reports “Par aktuālo situāciju atbalsta sniegšanā Ukrainas civiliedzīvotājiem 2022. gada 12. Aprīlī” and “Par aktuālo situāciju atbalsta sniegšanā Ukrainas civiliedzīvotājiem 2022. gada 21. Jūnijā”.

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics of arrivals in the first month following the start of the full-scale invasion, broken down by the type of documents issued to individuals upon arrival. To obtain the total number of arrivals, one can sum the two figures presented. However, there is a lack of publicly available data on the number of arrivals in the subsequent periods, which hampers the ability to evaluate continuous trends for the latter half of 2022, as well as for 2023 and 2024.

The validity periods of documents issued to Ukrainians have been extended automatically several times, and the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians has been amended accordingly. As of March 4, 2025, the current validity period for Temporary Residence Permits (TRP) issued to displaced Ukrainians is three years, an increase from the previous two-year period. Consequently, there is limited data available to track whether displaced Ukrainians have settled permanently in Latvia. It is also quite rare for Ukrainians to officially declare an interruption in their residency in Latvia. As of January 1, 2025, the Ministry of the Interior reported that 48,093 Ukrainian civilians were registered in Latvia. This includes 28,954 women, accounting for 60%, and 19,139 men, making up 40%, who are currently receiving temporary protection in Latvia. 31,977 individuals, or 66%, were aged between 18 and 65 years, representing the working-age population (see Ministry of Welfare, 2025).

Actors of reception

The organization of support for Ukrainian FDPs involved national and local authorities. Non-governmental organizations, along with individuals and private companies that were not previously recognized as resources for supporting migrants, have provided assistance to Ukrainians. This support has primarily focused on housing and social services, including food and clothing. Ukrainians arrived in Latvia from two main routes: through the eastern border with Russia and the

southern border via neighboring Ukrainian countries and Lithuania. Non-governmental organizations and volunteers provided assistance at both the border with Russia and the Riga Central Coach Terminal.

Most Ukrainians arrived in the Latvian capital, Riga. Following this, the Single Support Centre for Ukrainians was established in the city center on March 7, 2022. This center operates on a one-stop shop principle, providing all essential services in one location (Žabko, 2024b). Since the arrival of Ukrainian FDPs was significantly lower, the support centre was moved to smaller premises located outside the city centre. At the end of June 2025, the center in its current form closed, and the provision of basic support services was transferred to two branches of the Riga Neighbourhood Population Centre Customer Service Points. In other municipalities, essential information for displaced Ukrainians and applications for crucial services such as housing and social assistance are available through Single State and Local Government Customer Service Centres, which are general services and not specific to refugees. Additionally, the Integration and Inclusion Agency of Latvia provides support for displaced Ukrainians alongside other third-country nationals. This government agency offers general informational support, legal assistance, and psychological consultations, while also organizing integration courses and language training.

Attitudes towards FDPs from Ukraine

Volunteers assisting Ukrainians come from various nationalities, and in Latvia, most of them are not part of the Ukrainian diaspora. While there is strong support from civil society, there is limited capacity to assess the overall attitudes of Latvian society towards the influx of refugees, mainly due to a lack of quantitative data on the subject. Following Russia's full-scale invasion, regular surveys are conducted to assess public security concerns, along with occasional questions about attitudes toward Ukrainian refugees. The results indicate a decline in support for Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) within Latvian society. In 2023, a public opinion poll reveals that 23% of respondents agree with the statement that Latvia should accommodate as many displaced Ukrainians as possible, while an additional 27% remain neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. In 2024, 19% of respondents agreed with the statement that Latvia should accommodate as many displaced Ukrainians as possible, while another 26% expressed a neutral stance. Support for this position was slightly higher among the Latvian-speaking population compared to the Russian-speaking population in the country (Berg Research, 2023, 2024). Additionally, the 2024 survey results indicate that about 20% of the Latvian population is concerned that Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) may permanently settle in Latvia (Berg Research, 2024).

Third-country nationals entering Latvia have very limited legal rights and social protections. In contrast, refugees and individuals granted asylum enjoy a broader range of rights (BISS, 2017). Among these groups, displaced Ukrainians in Latvia have the most extensive rights (Žabko, 2023). In many areas, displaced Ukrainians have comparable social protection rights to those of Latvian citizens. However, in terms of employment, they benefit from specific exemptions that are not available to Latvian citizens. These special employment privileges for Ukrainians include an employment start-up allowance and the removal of the requirement to speak Latvian for hiring purposes.

Governance and multilevel responsibilities in implementation of TPD in respective countries

Since the full-scale invasion, Latvia has implemented a special policy to support Ukrainian forcibly displaced persons (FDPs). This policy is outlined in the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians (Ukrainas civiliedzīvotāju atbalsta likums). The TPD has already been integrated into the Asylum Law (Patvēruma likums), which governs the admission of asylum seekers in Latvia. The creation of the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians was necessitated by the need for more flexible regulations than those outlined in the Asylum Law. During their stay in Latvia, individuals have the option to apply for a residence permit that is not temporary protection. This includes a temporary residence permit (TRP) or a long-term visa that grants the right to work, similar to the situation prior to the full-scale invasion. Although these options are still available, they are rarely used, accounting for only 0.2% of cases in the first half of 2025, according to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. As of January 1, 2023, only TRPs are being issued. The Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians also includes a special provision for cases where a travel document (passport or ID) issued in Ukraine has expired. In such instances, Latvian government authorities consider the expired document to be valid until February 28, 2026.

In Latvia, the temporary protection is granted rarely when persons are not able to provide the necessary documents for TRP (passport, ID, as mentioned earlier). In 2022, a significant challenge faced by the authorities was the influx of Ukrainian FDPs without a valid identity entering through the Latvia-Russia border, for example, coming to the EU through Russia from the Donetsk region (such as the city of Mariupol, etc.). To address this challenge, individuals entering Latvia without valid identification documents are required to apply to the Embassy of Ukraine in Latvia, where their identity will be verified (European Migration Network Latvian contact point, n.d.). Another challenge for the authorities, especially, during first half of 2022, was granting temporary protection status to persons who had been residing outside the territory of Ukraine for a long period of time before the full-scale invasion or who entered for economic purposes from regions of Ukraine perceived as comparatively safe (e.g., Transcarpathian region) (European Migration Network Latvian contact point, n.d.).

The provision of support to displaced Ukrainians is regulated by the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, adopted on March 3, 2022. Since its adoption, the law has been amended 17 times as of 1 June 2023 (Žabko, 2023), and a total of 26 times. The amendments were made in response to the actual needs and problems faced by the authorities involved in receiving Ukrainian citizens, as well as in response to NGO criticism of the short-term nature of the support provided in the spring of 2022 (Žabko, 2023). Since the general framework of support provision was established between spring and summer of 2022, no substantial changes to the rights or conditions of support provision

have been made since then. A summary of information on the division of responsibilities among government and municipal authorities is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Division of responsibilities across different governance levels in relation to the support of displaced Ukrainians

Area of regulations/ support	Responsible institutions
Registration, issue of legal status to stay in Latvia	Civil Protection Commission for the Municipal Cooperation Area (Sadarbības teritorijas civilās aizsardzības komisija) State Fire and Rescue Service
Housing	Civil Protection Commission for the Municipal Cooperation Area (Sadarbības teritorijas civilās aizsardzības komisija) State Fire and Rescue Service
Employment	State Employment Agency (SEA)
Education	Municipality level through the Civil Protection Commission for the Municipal Cooperation Area Educational institutions (schools, kindergartens, etc.)

Source: Author, based on the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians with amendments taken over time.

Methods and materials

The desk research report is based on (1) analysis of statistical data, (2) review of various documents, policy reports and previous research, and (3) semi-structured interviews.

Sources of the statistical data:

1. Official Statistical database: population statistics, long-term immigration trends, average wage;
2. Government reports on the current situation regarding the provision of support to Ukrainian civilians (TPDs) collected from various government authorities: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education and Sciences, Ministry of Welfare, State Revenue Service etc.;
3. Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs on temporary residence permits.

The analysis includes following laws of the Republic of Latvia:

1. Asylum Law (*Patvēruma likums*);
2. Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians (*Ukrainas civiliedzīvotāju atbalsta likums*).

Policy reports:

1. Government reports on the current situation regarding the provision of support to Ukrainian civilians (TPDs): description of policies applied;
2. Ministry of Welfare, Report on employment of Ukrainian civilians in 2022-2024;
3. European Migration Network Latvian contact point;
4. European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2024). The Inclusion of Displaced Children from Ukraine in EU Education Systems – 2023-2024.

Previous research has allowed us to describe:

1. General immigration and asylum policy in Latvia (see following references: Basak & Gorgerino, 2025; BISS, 2017; Raubiško & Pelse, 2022);
2. Surveys allowing for the description of attitudes of Latvian population (Berg Research 2023, 2024);
3. Studies analysing reception of displaced Ukrainians (Dupate et al., 2024; Eglīte, 2023; Providus, 2024; Žabko, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

The main source of **the statistical data** provided is regular government reports produced for the meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers (i.e., Latvia's supreme executive authority). The reports contain the data collected by the respective government body according to the area of their responsibility (arrivals of Ukrainian citizens, provision of housing, social services, employment, access to education, etc.). The reports have been produced under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior and are considered the most reliable source of data.

The **documents and policy reports** include primary sources, such as legal texts and action plans produced by government authorities, as well as secondary sources like previous research and the corresponding authorities' websites.

One more source of empirical material is qualitative semi-structured interviews among representatives of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), who have daily contact and experience working with FDPs from Ukraine in the education, labour, or housing sectors. The expert interviews took place from 26 to 30 May 2025 in Riga. The composition of the sample is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Composition of the interview sample.

SECTOR	SLB	CSO
Education	SLB 1 [Face-to-face interview with a methodologist of Latvian language learning]. SLB 2 [A face-to-face interview with a headmaster of one of Riga's schools].	CSO 1 [Online interview with two project managers at CSO that provides Latvian language learning courses]. CSO 2 [A face-to-face interview with an international organization officer in Riga.]
Labour	SLB 1 [A face-to-face interview with a consultant]	CSO 1 [A face-to-face interview with the representative of the CSO]

	responsible for assistance to Ukrainian FDPs.]	who had a program on labor market integration for Ukrainians.]
Housing	SLB 1 [A face-to-face interview with the municipality officer responsible for housing assistance.]	CSO 1 [A face-to-face interview with an NGO representative who was running a housing program for Ukrainian FDPs]

Policies and outcomes of the labour market integration

Access to labour market

To facilitate the employment of displaced Ukrainians, since the adoption of the first draft of the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, the government introduced several exceptions not applied to refugees. While third-country nationals typically face restrictions linked to a single employer, both asylum seekers and displaced Ukrainians are granted unrestricted employment rights. Uniquely for Ukrainians, employers (including state and municipal enterprises) can hire individuals without Latvian language skills if this does not hinder job performance (Žabko, 2023, 2024a, 2024b).

Furthermore, the government established favorable conditions for recognizing professional qualifications for Ukrainian FDPs in regulated professions such as healthcare, education, sports, and pharmaceutical care, allowing these professionals to continue working in their fields. In this case, professionals in the relevant fields had to obtain permits for temporary professional activity; however, the Latvian Medical Association provided additional support for recognizing doctors' qualifications (Žabko, 2024b). The interviewed SLB 1 and CSO 1 in labour expressed the opinion that professionals in healthcare and education are in high demand in Latvia, and those professionals receive more attention and support in language facilitation and qualification recognition compared to other professions. SLB 1 in education expressed the opinion that numerous Ukrainian doctors are already included as professionals in Latvian hospitals, and some of them are even able to communicate in Latvian. As for regulated professions, however, these exemptions correspond only to the TPD minimum requirements (Dupate et al., 2024). In addition to legal requirements, the government introduced a single employment start-up allowance equivalent to the minimum wage of the respective year to facilitate the rapid entry of displaced Ukrainians into employment.

Actors in labour market

The government body responsible for implementing and integrating labour market policy is the State Employment Agency (SEA). After the first Ukrainian FDPs arrived, SEA encouraged employers to inform them about available job opportunities. Although the initial response was high, by the end of 2023, the number of companies indicating that the job was suitable for Ukrainians had dropped significantly (Žabko, 2024a; Ministry of Welfare, 2025). The main reason was a skills

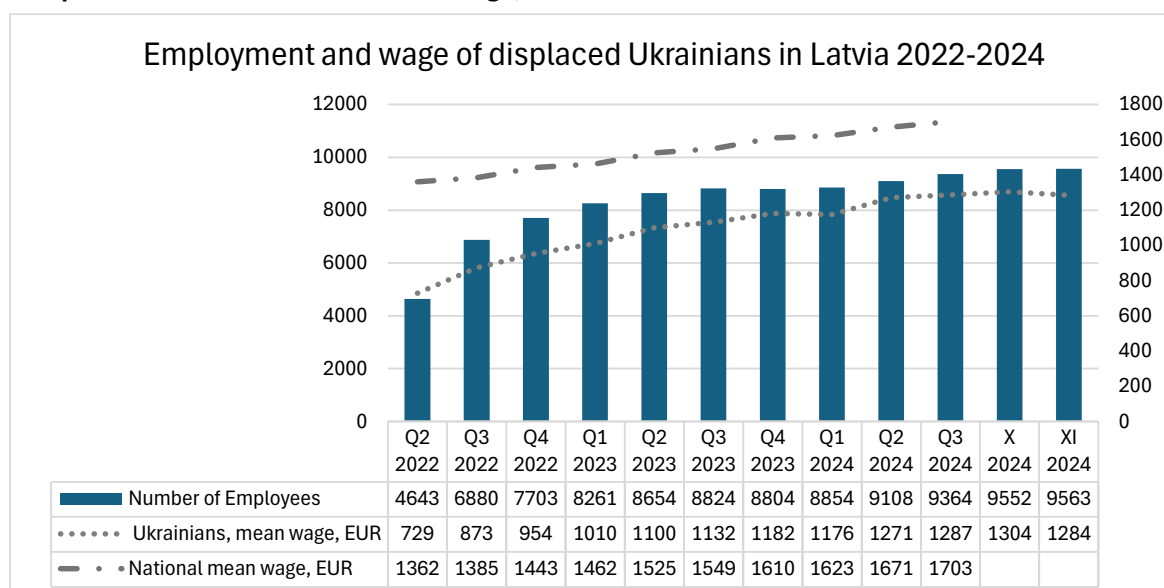
mismatch among Ukrainians and, later, labour market saturation (Žabko, 2024a). there is still a special section on the SEA website, which is named 'For Ukrainians', where one may find a job if the individual is a Ukrainian FDP in Latvia (SLB 1 in labour). Civil society plays a crucial role in helping Ukrainians integrate into the labor market by offering consultation and information support services. CSO 1 in labour suggested that it is essential for NGOs to equip them with knowledge about their working rights and labor legislation.

To make employers' offers more accessible to Ukrainians, from 2022 to 2024, the SEA, together with the Support Centre for Ukrainians, organised job fairs where various employers offered available positions to Ukrainians in person. Everyone could meet several employers, ask questions about working conditions, and, if interested, agree on starting to work. Participation in job fairs provided Ukrainians with an opportunity to reduce the time spent searching for a job and gave them confidence that these employers were reliable and trustworthy. By July 2024, 24 job fairs have been organized, offering around 4,500 jobs to Ukrainian FDPs. Around 100 companies and around 5,000 Ukrainians have participated in the job fairs (Žabko, 2024b). Interviewed CSO 1 in labour suggested that these job fairs should be seen as a "good example of coordination between the municipality and entrepreneurs".

Statistics on employment

Figure 3 provides general statistics on the number of displaced Ukrainians employed in Latvia. These data are collected by the State Revenue Service, so they show the declared employment – official number of regularly employed according to information provided by employers (sector, occupation, wage). Regarding wages, Figure 3 presents data on the national mean wage collected by the Statistical Office, which enables characterization of the wage gap between displaced Ukrainians employed in Latvia and Latvian nationals.

Figure 3. Number of displaced Ukrainians employed in Latvia and their gross mean wage in comparison with the national mean wage, 2022-2024



Source: State Revenue Service, Government Report: “Par aktuālo situāciju atbalsta sniegšanā Ukrainas civiliedzīvotājiem, 2025. gada februāris”; National mean wage: Official Statistical database. Labour market. DSV010c. Average monthly and median wages and salaries 1994Q1 - 2025Q1; Note: in January 2023 and 2024, statutory minimum wage increased

The data collected on the employment of displaced Ukrainians does not contain information on the actual qualifications of employees or the number of displaced Ukrainians working remotely in other countries, either within Ukraine or in other EU states. According to available data, displaced Ukrainians have entered the Latvian labour market early after arriving in the country, as the number of employees increased rapidly in the first quarters after the full-scale invasion. The wage gap between Ukrainians and Latvian nationals is explained by the large share of low-qualified jobs held by Ukrainians. However, over time, the wage distribution has changed, with an increasing share of Ukrainians earning above the statutory minimum wage (State Revenue Service, 2025). According to estimates based on data from the State Revenue Service, approximately 40% of displaced Ukrainians employed in Latvia work in low-skilled positions, such as cleaners, kitchen staff, and auxiliary workers. Only about 1% of all employees hold managerial positions (Providus, 2024). As of January 2025, around 1% (or 241 individuals) of working-age Ukrainians were employed in professions that required the recognition of qualifications obtained in Ukraine. This includes 198 in the medical field, 5 in pharmaceuticals, and 38 in education (Ministry of Interior, 2025).

According to SLB 1 in labour, Ukrainian FDPs are mainly employed in low-qualified positions due to a lack of necessary knowledge of the Latvian language, English, or any other foreign language, as well as a lack of working experience in the specific job position. According to SLB 1 in labour, Ukrainian males of working age are much more likely to have a job, although low-qualified, in comparison with elderly people or single mothers with children who are also from Ukraine. SLB 1 in labour described that the working conditions of Ukrainian FDPs are monitored by the special Labor Inspection Agency, which is entitled to handle all cases of individual employment. Implementing labor market integration measures also helps to alleviate mental health issues and improve the psychosocial well-being of Ukrainian FDPs, who arrive in Latvia with diverse backgrounds and life circumstances, according to SLB 1 in labour.

Figure 4 shows the number of employers who have actually declared that they employ displaced Ukrainians in Latvia. An increase in numbers indicates the expansion of employers hiring Ukrainians in 2022. Saturation was reached as early as the beginning of 2023 (Q2). A relatively stable figure in later quarters means that no new employers have offered jobs for displaced Ukrainians. If anyone finds a job, they are likely to be hired by the same employers who already have a Ukrainian workforce.

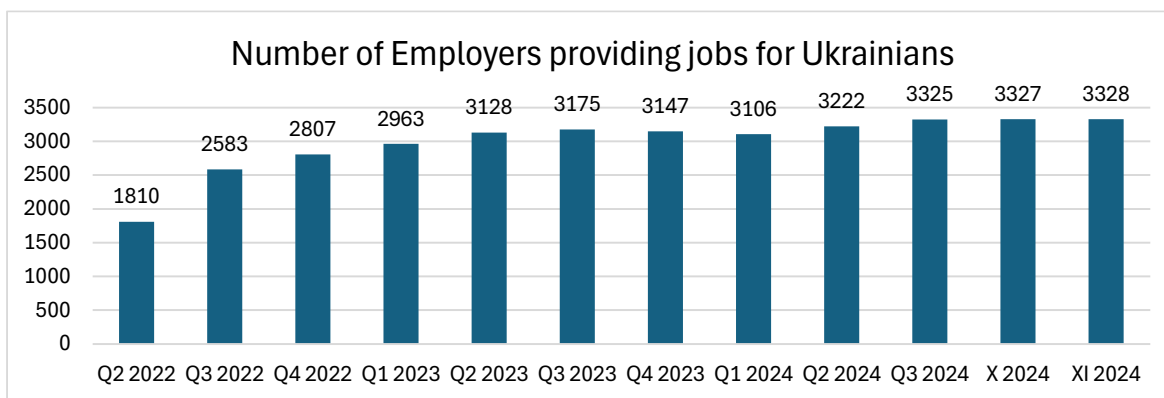


Figure 4. Number of enterprises employing displaced Ukrainians, 2022-2024

Source: State Revenue Service, Government Report: "Par aktuālo situāciju atbalsta sniegšanā Ukrainas civiliedzīvotājiem, 2025. gada februāris"

According to the State Revenue Service data in October 2024, employers providing jobs to displaced Ukrainians operates in following sectors: manufacturing (17%), wholesales and retail trade (16%), accommodation and food service activities (12%), construction (12%), transport and storage (9%) and human health and social work activities (6%). According to estimations, about 40% of displaced Ukrainians of working age are not officially employed in Latvia or registered with the SEA. There is no data available on the number of individuals in other employment relationships, such as entrepreneurs, those employed outside Latvia, or those engaged in undeclared work in Latvia, nor on the number of individuals who lack employment (Providus, 2024).

The summary of initiatives to facilitate the entrance of displaced Ukrainians into the labour market is listed in Table 3. They refer to both target groups – displaced Ukrainians (employed and unemployed) and Latvian employers about special exemptions for the employment of Ukrainians.

Table 3. Summary of initiatives to facilitate the entrance of displaced Ukrainians into the labour market

Target group	Initiative	Responsible public authority
Displaced Ukrainians – employees and self-employed	Single Employment Start-Up Allowance / Single Self-Employed Start-Up Allowance.	State Employment Agency (SEA)
Latvian employers/ displaced Ukrainian employees	Tax exemptions for wages received by displaced Ukrainians include: (1) a non-taxable minimum and (2) tax relief for dependent children.	State Revenue Service
Displaced Ukrainians holding a degree and work experience in medicine, psychology, and education	Recognition of prior education for regulated professions can be achieved through two procedures: (1) obtaining the European Professional Card, or (2) following	Academic Information Centre

	the process for temporary service providers.	Latvian Medical Association (medical doctors)
Unemployed displaced Ukrainians	Active labour market policy measures such as career counseling, formal and informal training: up-skilling, re-skilling	State Employment Agency (SEA)
Displaced Ukrainians, Latvian employers	Information seminars on tax issues	State Revenue Service, NGOs

Source: Author based on Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians; Ministry of Welfare, 2025; Ministry of Interior, 2025; Academic Information Centre, n.d.

Financial assistance

The single employment and self-employment start-up allowances are measures specifically designed for displaced Ukrainians. Their purpose is to reduce participation in undeclared work and to facilitate the transition into formal employment. According to the State Employment Agency (SEA), from February 2022 until January 6, 2025, a total of 16,397 individuals received the single employment start-up allowance, while 541 individuals received the single self-employment start-up allowance (Ministry of Welfare, 2025).

For reducing the tax burden for displaced Ukrainians, the Latvian government has introduced tax reliefs. They are described in Article 8.3 of the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians. The amount of tax deductions for working displaced Ukrainians has changed over time. At the first stage, since 27 May 2022, they were applied in the following manner: a non-taxable minimum of 250 EUR per month for wages and a tax relief of another 250 EUR for each dependent child living in Latvia with the income recipient. At the second stage, since 1 May 2025, the amount of tax deduction was increased and made equal to Latvian nationals as follows: the non-taxable minimum (510 EUR per month) and tax relief for a dependent child (250 EUR per month).

Main barriers

Despite various initiatives aimed at helping displaced Ukrainians find employment, several significant challenges continue to hinder their effective integration into the labor market. These challenges include: a) shortage of affordable rental apartments in Riga and economic development centers; b) Limited job vacancies in municipalities and rural areas outside the Riga region; c) Insufficient public transport options connecting rural areas to urban centers. d) A lack of Latvian language skills among highly skilled Ukrainian professionals, such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers. Additionally, the scarcity of part-time job opportunities, which is particularly relevant for women with preschool or primary school-aged children, has been noted as a concern (Ministry of Welfare, 2025).

Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

Access to housing and main actors

No special rules were indicated for where Ukrainian FDPs should stay upon arrival in Latvia. This was different from the general rule, which states that all asylum seekers must stay in a dedicated accommodation centre, called “Mucenieki”, during their application process and then find their own accommodation on the open market without any financial support (Asylum law, 2016). As to Ukrainian FDPs, they could choose whether to stay with relatives or other people they know in Latvia or apply for support provided by the government and local authorities. At the initial stage, for those without a pre-existing shelter in Latvia, the State Fire and Rescue Service coordinated the allocation of temporary housing in hotels and guesthouses (Ministry of Interior, 2022a, 2022b). This housing was provided on a free-of-charge basis, and the accommodation’s owner was compensated by the government. Since May 2022, anyone who provided housing to Ukrainians has been eligible to receive this compensation, including their relatives (Žabko, 2024b). SLB 1 in housing indicated that private business was more involved at the beginning, but with time the numbers of involved declined: “there were many private businesses and hotels that were ready to welcome everyone with open arms. Well, since it's business, so over time, private businesses practically refused to provide their hotels, and we were left with only few facilities, with those who completely gave up their small hotels or hostels for Ukrainians”.

Support for housing

Until 31 December 2025, Latvia maintains a regulation that housing for displaced Ukrainians is reimbursed for up to either 60 or 120 days, depending on the municipality's capability, or more than 120 days for specific target groups (Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, Article 12). The amount of reimbursement is stated as follows: 100 EUR per month for the first person and 50 EUR for each additional person in the family, but not exceeding EUR 300 for an entire family from Ukraine. The support is continued monthly for more than 120 days on the same terms if displaced Ukrainians have disabilities, are minors, are retirees, or are families with children under two years of age (Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, Article 7.¹). The interviewee indicated that state support is essential for covering housing expenses for those who cannot join the labour market due to age or other issues: “The only thing is that it is probably most difficult for pensioners because it is harder for them to work. They cannot earn as much as young people do, so they stay in hotels. The state provides them with the opportunity to live in hotels free of charge, so pensioners continue to live there” (SLB 1 in housing).

The statistics on housing support provided by public authorities to displaced Ukrainians are scarce. According to a media publication, as of 29 November 2022, 11,535 Ukrainian FDPs had received housing provided through public sources in various Latvian municipalities (Žabko, 2024b). Moreover, municipalities were encouraged to find and arrange vacant buildings (such as dormitories) to accommodate Ukrainian FDPs. In the long term, in early 2024, 3,090 Ukrainians continued to be accommodated through Civil Protection Commissions in municipal-owned accommodation buildings. No statistics are available on the quality of housing and living conditions provided by displaced Ukrainians (Providus, 2024).

Opportunities and barriers

Latvia's policies regarding housing issues for Ukrainian FDPs appear to be effective and prioritized by national and local level authorities, as confirmed by both SLBs and CSOs in this area. The coordination of various stakeholders by the state and municipalities, who have been involved in housing provision for Ukrainian FDPs since 2022, appears to be a highly effective measure that has ensured broad access to housing nationwide. Both informants are Ukrainians themselves, who arrived in Riga within a few months after February 2022, and did not have any special training on how to deal with the crisis situation. Yet, when it comes to housing, it appears that the measures in place are implemented to a high extent, and the informants' wish is that these measures be extended indefinitely.

CSO and SLB interviewees in housing indicate that there are differences in housing accessibility, which are determined by location. Riga is perceived as appealing to FDPs due to its job market, but this raises challenges in finding suitable housing. A CSO 1 in housing indicated that rejections on housing access may occur on a nationality basis when a landlord hears that the person seeking to rent is a Ukrainian national, although such cases are rare. CSO 1 in housing noted that some Ukrainians have also already purchased housing in Riga or its surroundings while living in the country since 2022. According to SLB 1 in housing, Ukrainians typically stay in the dormitory initially and then move to rented accommodation on their own. However, SLB 1 in housing noted that Ukrainians who start renting housing on their own immediately after arriving in Latvia lose access to information and social circles. Those who stay in the dormitory also turn out to have better psycho-social health conditions

Policies and outcomes on the education of adults and children

Access to education

Latvia relies on public provision of education at all levels, with little participation of private service providers. According to Article 13.1 of the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, displaced Ukrainians have the same rights to access public general secondary education as refugees under the Asylum Law. In Latvia, Ukrainian children have been allowed to choose whether to enter the local educational system. As CSO 2 described it, "Education is the right but not the obligation for Ukrainian children in Latvia."

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia, as of 13 February 2025, 4,203 Ukrainian children were attending Latvian schools or kindergartens, 178 were attending vocational schools, and 382 were studying in higher education institutions (Ministry of Interior, 2025). Estimates based on the results of the previous school year (2024) indicate that approximately one-third of Ukrainian children were outside the Latvian education system. There is no clear evidence whether they participate in the Ukrainian education system instead (Žabko, 2024c). CSO 2 in

education mentioned that the Latvian Ministry of Education submitted a draft law on the obligation for Ukrainian children to attend school, but it was not yet adopted at the time of the interview (CSO 2). CSO 2 in education mentioned that the number of 10th- to 12th-grade Ukrainian students in schools is very low.

The education for Ukrainian FDPs is mainly provided in the Latvian language. Exemptions to examinations were introduced for displaced Ukrainian children in the school years of 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. Displaced Ukrainians have the right to enroll in a vocational school or university, and, if relevant, according to the laws and regulations on recognition of prior learning. For universities, exceptions were made for the assessment of Ukrainian secondary education results, which entailed the absence of examinations in certain subjects during the study years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. Other enrollment conditions have been similar to those for Latvian residents. This means that Ukrainian and Latvian residents can compete for subsidized places at universities or other educational institutions; however, the government and universities may offer grants and subsidies to displaced Ukrainians.

Support measures

The Latvian government regularly allocates specific state budget funds to support the measures necessary for integrating Ukrainian children into Latvian schools. At the EU level, Latvia has been reported as a country providing a wide range of support measures for displaced Ukrainian children in the national education system. This includes support in language, teaching and training materials, financial support, recognition of prior learning, psycho-social support, and other forms of assistance (European Commission, 2024). However, in practice, the actual provision of these support measures, especially in terms of language, everyday learning, and psychological support, varies among Latvian schools (Žabko, 2024c).

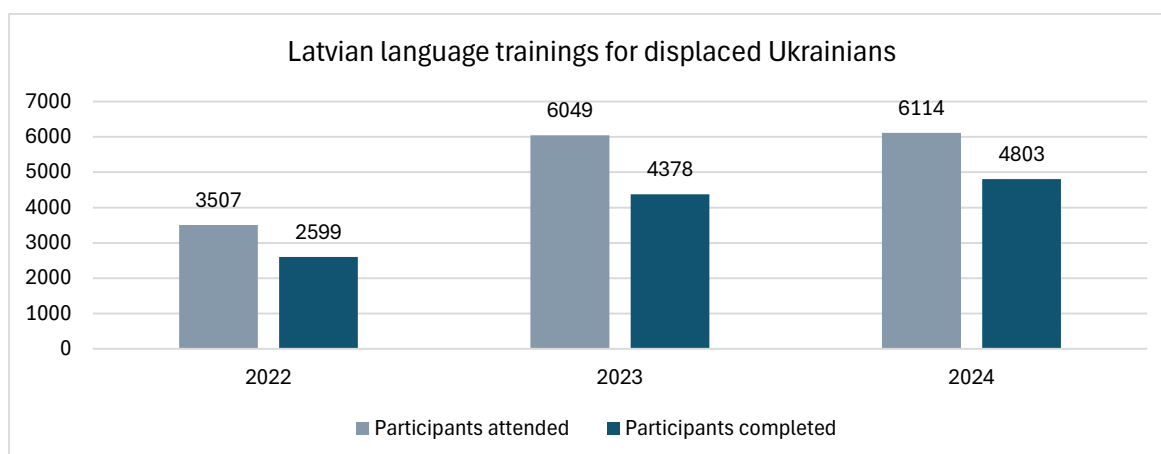
Special attention is given to facilitating language training for both Ukrainian children and adults. On the national level, language courses for adults are provided by two government bodies: the Society Integration Fund (or through its body, the Integration and Inclusion Agency of Latvia) for all third-country nationals, and the State Employment Agency if the person has registered as unemployed. These bodies organize and form a demand for training, which is supplied by various NGOs selected through public calls. The crucial role is also taken by the Riga municipality. Normally, all language trainings are funded by special government funds and is free of charge for learners.

CSO 1 in education confirmed that language and cultural integration courses are the government's priorities, and therefore, most funding is channeled in this direction. According to CSO 1 in education, the Latvian Language Agency actively cooperates with the Ukrainian Support Centre to coordinate the provision of language training. According to SLB 1 in education, free language courses are available in Latvia for Ukrainians, unemployed foreigners, and TCNs (SLB 1). SLB 2 in education noted that the school hired Ukrainians as assistant teachers to help children integrate into the educational system. According to CSO 2 in education, the initiative of educational assistants showed very low results due to the challenge of learning the Latvian language for Ukrainian educators (CSO 2).

Language courses for adults

Figure 6 illustrates the annual number of displaced Ukrainians participating in language training. However, participants could withdraw from training and return later, so the number can include the same persons who have attended training repeatedly.

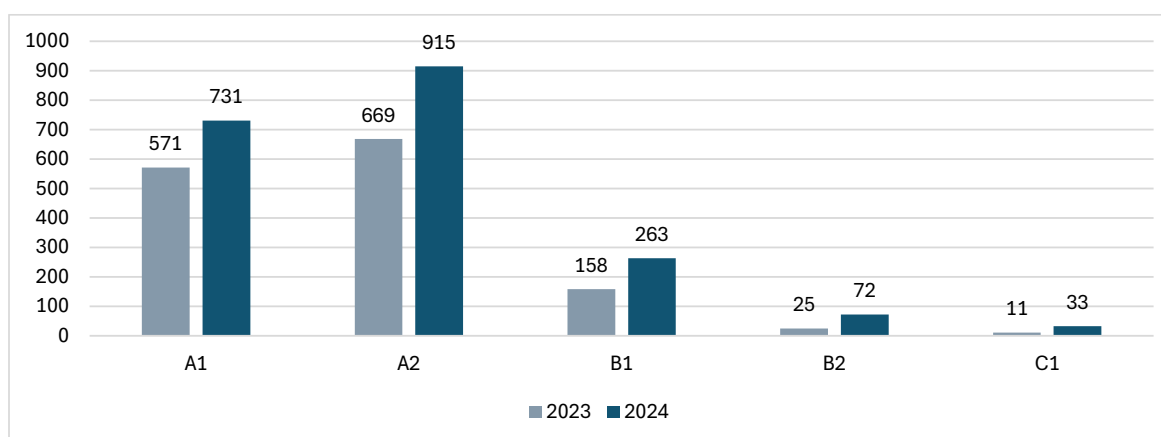
Figure 6. Number of participants in language trainings organized by the Society Integration Fund per year, 2022-2024



Source: Ministry of Culture, Government Report: "Par aktuālo situāciju atbalsta sniegšanā Ukrainas civiliedzīvotājiem, 2025. gada februāris"

As Figure 7 shows, most of the displaced Ukrainians have applied to take a test of the Latvian language at the basic level (A1 or A2). According to the Ministry of Education and Sciences (Government Report, 2025), 49% of applicants successfully passed the respective language test (averaging across all levels). These results confirm the shortages of Latvian language proficiency among Ukrainians, which hinder their entry into occupations more suitable for their qualifications.

Figure 7. Number of applications for the Latvian language test according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages



Source: Ministry of Education and Science, Government Report: "Par aktuālo situāciju atbalsta sniegšanā Ukrainas civiliedzīvotājiem, 2025. gada februāris"

State Employment Agency provides services that overcome obstacles to entering the local labour market. The general term that describes this set of measures is active labour market measures. They include career guidance and various formal and non-formal training courses that enable individuals to enhance or update their qualifications to meet labour market needs. Between 7 March 2022 and the end of 2024, a total of 4,462 Ukrainians participated in active labour policy measures offered by the SEA: 1,188 persons participated in 2022, 1,552 in 2023, and 1,722 in 2024. The most frequently used activities include career counselling, e-career self-assessment, non-formal education (primarily the Latvian language), information days of the SEA, summer employment for schoolchildren, and others. Participation in formal training is very low due to a lack of proficiency in the Latvian language, as all training is provided in the national language (Ministry of Welfare, 2025).

Barriers

Among the challenges and obstacles to educational system integration, the SLB 2 in education outlined excessive usage of digital gadgets and a lack of knowledge of the Latvian language among some children. The lack of Latvian language knowledge and the structured, legislatively regulated system of its learning were also highlighted by CSO 2 in education as posing challenges for FDPs from Ukraine. The emotional well-being of children from war-torn regions and the lack of experience of Latvian teachers to work with such vulnerable children were indicated as a challenge by CSO 2 in education. CSO 2 in education shared cases of bullying of Ukrainian children in Latvian schools due to language. CSO 2 in education has shared an opinion that formalized education programs for newcomers in schools are still lacking in Latvia, schools require more funding and resources, and teachers need to be trained on how to work with children from war-torn areas. CSO 2 in education expressed the opinion that there is a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Education, municipalities, and schools, resulting in a situation where some Ukrainian children do not attend schools in Latvia.

One significant issue is the inconsistency of language courses, as individuals may complete them and then wait for over six months before the next opportunity to enroll in a higher level (CSO 1 in education). Those gaps are often caused by the funding stream in Latvia, where spring is usually very empty for integration and language activities, and autumn is overloaded with various opportunities. This often demotivates people, causing them to lose the skills they have acquired (CSO 1 in education). Another challenge outlined by the CSO representatives is the project-based approach to language training and the limited funding available for stakeholders to implement projects beyond the project frame (CSO 1 in education). SLB 1 in education noted that a strong monitoring system for language training attendance could improve the overall system of language provision and also maintain accountability for FDPs from Ukraine who enroll in these courses.

Conclusions

Latvia introduced a separate legislation to handle the reception of Ukrainian FDPs. Instead of the direct application of TPD, it is the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians (Ukrainas civiliedzīvotāju atbalsta likums) that expands and adjusts the TPD provision to the national context by setting regulations and conditions for the reception and support of Ukrainian FDPs. Based on the Law, Ukrainians receive a temporary residence permit (TRP) with the right to work. Currently, since March 2025, the validity period of the TRP issued to displaced Ukrainians is three years. This means that displaced Ukrainians have a legal right to stay in Latvia until March 2028. Essential for reception is the fact that Ukrainians are provided with the same rights as Latvian residents in many essential services (such as social assistance and services, health services, tax incentives etc.).

The employment incentives adopted by the government allow Ukrainians to be employed in public and municipal institutions, which are generally not accessible to refugees and third-country nationals. This policy incentive has been confirmed through the interviews conducted. Nevertheless, although various initiatives have been introduced to support the employment of displaced Ukrainians, several key challenges have been identified: 1) the shortage of affordable housing in Riga and other major economic centres; 2) the limited availability of jobs in municipalities and rural areas outside the Riga region; 3) inadequate Latvian language skills required for many highly qualified professionals. Additionally, knowledge of labor legislation and recognition of various qualifications, not only those prioritized by the Latvian Government (healthcare, education, and pharmaceuticals), could be addressed at the legislative level, considering the long-term perspective of Ukrainian FDPs' stay. Ukrainian FDPs also receive a one-time start-up allowance upon employment in Latvia. Yet, a vast number of FDPs still occupy low-qualified job positions due to the lack of Latvian language knowledge and unmatched prior working experiences FDPs carried with them from Ukraine.

The Latvian accommodation system for Ukrainian FDPs has demonstrated a solid adaptability and strong inter-agency coordination. Although the housing support is granted until the end of 2025, one can assume that, if necessary, this term will be extended by the respective amendments in the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, as has been done before. FDPs can select between residing with their acquaintances or utilizing government-funded lodging in hotels or dormitories at no cost. Successful coordination among national agencies, local authorities, and NGOs, supplemented by consistent monitoring, has sustained satisfactory living conditions without significant instances of exploitation or inadequate housing quality. The identified gap within the housing dimension is a lack of suitable statistical data on the housing support provided by public authorities. The precise numbers are crucial for addressing the housing situation at the legislative level and facilitating the smooth coordination of various stakeholders involved. Additionally, heightened housing demand and escalating rental costs in Riga, along with sporadic discrimination within the private rental sector, could be considered as challenges that have to be addressed on the policy level.

Considering the aspect of access to education, there are no obstacles or challenges for Ukrainian youth to enroll in the Latvian educational system. Schools have shown flexibility by translating exams, hiring Ukrainian assistant teachers, and adapting to students' diverse educational backgrounds, while cooperation between ministries, municipalities, and NGOs has expanded access to Latvian language training for both children and adults. Nevertheless, the voluntary nature of enrollment in the secondary education system entails that a certain part (up to one-third) of Ukrainian children are not enrolled in the Latvian schools. Additionally, the complexities of learning the Latvian language, which is necessary for the education process, do not incentivize parents to choose Latvian schools over Ukrainian online education.

Language trainings are widely provided for Ukrainian FDPs by private stakeholders and CSOs. The language needs of the Ukrainian population change over time, and any design of the respective programs should take this aspect into consideration. Inconsistency in language learning, i.e., waiting a long time to start learning the next level of the Latvian language, sometimes leads to dropouts and a loss of the already acquired skills. CSOs emphasize the importance of making language training more inclusive – ensuring outreach to a broader range of people, not just those who are already active and engaged. Additionally, teachers working with Ukrainian groups should be equipped with cultural awareness and trauma-sensitive approaches.

When it comes to the interviewed expert's personal role in receiving FDPs from Ukraine, various tendencies can be outlined. Initially, some of the experts are Ukrainian FDPs who have arrived in Latvia after 2022 and subsequently started working in the public or NGO sector, while also assisting other Ukrainian FDPs. Secondly, Latvian experts take it emotionally very close to the fact of the massive arrivals of Ukrainians. All of the Latvian experts mentioned they were not prepared for such a large influx of FDPs. Yet, most of the experts had previous experience working with third-country nationals in Latvia. Education sphere experts have shared a common opinion that Ukrainian FDPs are very creative and have found different ways to learn the Latvian language on their own. Both SLBs and CSOs agree that it's easier for Ukrainian FDPs to settle their everyday lives in Latvia, particularly due to the presence of an intermediary language, which is not the case for other third-country nationals. CSOs experts have insisted on the importance of sustainable funding that would enable them to continue their work related to assistance to Ukrainian FDPs. Lastly, all the experts outlined that the mental health conditions of Ukrainians become better once FDPs obtain a service, whether it's related to education, labor market, or housing, or a simple conversation with one of the experts that would allow a person to relieve the emotions and thoughts related to the displacement experience.

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Authors : dr. Monika Frėjutė-Rakauskienė (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology), dr. Vilana Pilinkaitė Sotirovič (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology), dr. Kristina Šliavaitė (Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology). Social Sciences, vilana@ces.lt)

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 people in employment.

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
UPF	Universidad Pompeu Fabra
LSMC	Lietuvos Socialiniu Mokslu Centras
KKNU	Karazin Kharkiv National Univesrity-
UEF	University Of Eastern Finland
UG	Uniwersytet Gdanski
UGR	Universitaet Greifswald
ZAVOD APIS	Zavod APIS-LJUBLJANA
UGOT	University Of Gothenburg

Other:

TPD	Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC)
FDP	Forcibly Displaced Person
PEA	Public Employment Agency
CSO	Civil society organizations
SLB	Street level bureaucrats
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.

Table 1. Actors of reception of FDPs 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.
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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 hindrances 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.]
Housing	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.	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.

Education	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.]	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]
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Policies and outcomes of the labour market integration

- Laws and policies on 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 (Osičinaitė, 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 (Osičinaitė, 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.; Osičinaitė, 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 (Osičnaitė, 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) (Osičnaitė, 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 practices 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' reflections about their own role in reception of the FDPs

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.

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Elżbieta Czapka, University of Gdansk

Maja Grabkowska, University of Gdansk

Corresponding author: maja.grabkowska@ug.edu.pl

Executive Summary

Following the full-scale invasion of Russia on Ukraine, Poland, from being a migrant-sending country turned into a receiving country. This has had significant implications in all dimensions of socio-economic and cultural life. In this report we focus on three key areas of integration: labour market, housing, and education. The main aim of the report is to present the state-of-the-art in terms of the FDPs overall situation and changing dynamics in these three key areas since 24 February 2022.

The following report is based on desk research and expert interviews with SLB and CSO professionals working in the three fields mentioned above. The desk research involved an analysis of research publications, reports and relevant legal acts. Six interviews were conducted with representatives of public institutions and NGOs based in the Tricity agglomeration.

Our analysis indicates that the Polish state was not prepared to receive Ukrainian FDPs and in the initial phase following the full-scale invasion many measures were conceived ad-hoc and relied hugely on the engagement of civil society, both Polish and Ukrainian (the diaspora). Over time, some of them evolved into more consistent and institutionalised solutions but many policy gaps remain.

Key to Poland's response to the inflow of FDPs was the adoption of the EU Temporary Protection Directive through national legislation. The TPD frame was the most helpful and effective in terms of facilitating access to the Polish labour market. Despite tendencies of de-skilling, FDPs situation on the labour market is relatively good, and they are quite successful in finding employment. However, there are still many access barriers, such as lack of sufficient language competency, lack of adequate recognition of qualifications, or issues connected to discrimination on the basis of socio-demographic features.

In terms of housing, Ukrainian FDPs face similar challenges as Polish citizens, namely, an almost complete lack of public housing policy which enforces a reliance on the free market. Therefore, the main barriers in this area include high prices, high level of uncertainty and increased risk of homelessness.

The TPD frame allowed the FDPs children the same access to education as Polish children, but there have not been many satisfactory educational offers for adults. The Polish state has not provided free language courses for the FDPs, while the NGOs only offered project-based language courses on a very basic level, which was not sufficient for FDPs to enter the labour market according to their qualifications and competences.

In conclusion, despite Poland's unpreparedness towards reception and integration of migrants, the bottom-up response of the receiving society and the Ukrainian diaspora allowed the development of necessary coping mechanisms. Many issues are still unresolved, and the lack of an overarching systemic strategy constitutes a big challenge. Yet, a number of best practices can be distinguished,

which provide a good starting point and a basis for further development of policies, regulations and problem-solving.

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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 abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FDP	Forcibly Displaced Person/People
GUS	Central Statistical Office
HoReCa	Hotel Restaurant Catering
MSWiA	Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration
PESEL UKR	tax identification number confirming the status of FDPs under TPD in Poland
PUP	Powiat Employment Offices (Powiatowe Urzędy Pracy)
SLB	Street-Level Bureaucrat
TPD	Temporary Protection Directive (Directive 2001/55/EC)
TSL	Transport-Spedition-Logistics

Background

Geopolitical lenses

Poland, due to its geographical and cultural proximity to Ukraine, and a large group of Ukrainian labour migrants staying in the country prior the full-scale invasion, became the main destination and a transit route for Ukrainians in 2022 and onwards. While it had been expected that a considerable proportion of migrants would move further, treating Poland as a stepping stone into other EU countries, it is estimated that many of them stayed and continue to live here (UNHCR. Poland Fact Sheet, 2025).

Statistical overview

The Central Statistical Office indicated that around 1 million Ukrainians resided in Poland in 2021 (Migracje Zagraniczne, 2023). Since the full-scale invasion, the arrivals have been heavily dominated by women, representing 61% overall and 77% of the adult population (Obywatele Ukrainy, 2025). As of early August 2025, the age structure of the registered applicants from Ukraine showed a dominance of adult women under 65 and a significant proportion of the underaged, with children accounting for almost a third of all applicants (Registered applications, 2025).

Table 1. Gender and age structure of registered applicants for the UKR status due to the conflict in Ukraine (% , as of 11th August 2025)

Gender	Age			Total
	Under 18	18-65	Over 65	
Women	16.0	48.3	4.0	68.3
Men	16.8	13.7	1.2	31.7
Total	32.8	62.0	5.2	100

Source: Registered applications, 2025

Ukrainians settling in Poland tend to concentrate in regions with major cities, i.e., Warsaw, Wrocław, Poznań, Kraków and the Upper Silesia agglomeration. Specifically, the Mazowieckie (22%), Dolnośląskie (12%), Wielkopolskie (11%), Małopolskie (9%), and Śląskie (9%) voivodeships attract the largest proportions of Ukrainian migrants (Obywatele Ukrainy, 2025).

Poland did not choose to implement TPD directly but adopted its own “Act on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine” (Act on Assistance, 2022) on 12 March 2022, known informally as the Ukrainian Special Act (*specustawa ukraińska*). According to the Special Act, the primary condition for receiving

Temporary Protection by FDPs arriving from Ukraine is applying for the so-called PESEL UKR at any local authority office, within 30 days of crossing the border. The implementation is primarily through PESEL registration (Obywatele Ukrainy, 2025). PESEL is the electronic national identification number used for registration of the population. It is mandatory for all permanent residents in the country and for those temporary residents whose stay extends over two months.

As of March 31, 2023, there were 997,737 Ukrainian residents in Poland (Mieszkańcy Ukrainy, 2023) under temporary protection. In February 2025, Poland provided temporary protection to 993,000 Ukrainians. In addition, 462 thousand Ukrainian citizens have valid temporary residence permits issued before and after the war began. The vast majority of these permits are issued in connection with taking up employment. Permanent residence permits or long-term EU resident permits are held by 92 thousand Ukrainians.

According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix' survey, 93% of Ukrainian nationals' crossings back to Ukraine from Poland were pendular (short-term visits (27%) temporary returns (27%). Only 3% were returning from displacement, while 4% remained undecided (Poland – Ukrainian, 2024).

Actors of reception

At the beginning, there were grassroot initiatives from the Polish citizens, "ordinary people". FDPs were primarily hosted by Polish families (Szeptycki, 2024). The government offered financial support both to the FDPs themselves and to their host families. With time, state institutions partly took over the coordination of aid. However, because the national governments was initially slow to provide practical support and develop adaptable legislation informed by the evolving situation and understanding of newcomers' needs, there was a greater surge in community-led support (Pędziwiatr & Magdziarz, 2023):366). Local authorities provided various forms of financial support, integration into the local labour market and housing assistance. Business entities offered financial and material help. Education institutions provided help for the Ukrainian students, and in addition, did fundraising and in-kind collections for FDPs. Churches played an important role in fundraising and in-kind collections for FDPs. Non-governmental organizations, in addition to fundraising, provided language and information assistance, and legal aid (Bejma, Pająk-Patkowska 2023; Zajac, 2023). NGOs financed their activities with funds received from IOM, UNHCR and other organisations. Ukrainian organisations, virtual communities and informal networks that existed before the war provided invaluable assistance to the FDPs from Ukraine. The best known of these is the Ukraiński Dom (Ukrainian House), established in 2004 (*Fundacja Ukraiński Dom*, 2025).

Attitudes towards FDPs in the receiving society

In October 2024, a slim majority of Poles (53%) were in favour of Poland accepting Ukrainian FDPs, representing the weakest level of support since the start of the Russian invasion in February 2022 (O Ukraińcach, 2024). This contrasts sharply with the overwhelming support seen in the early days

of the war, when 94% of Poles were in favour in March 2022, and 80% remained supportive for the following year (O Ukraińcach, 2024). The public opinion started to shift in the spring of 2023, likely influenced by the "grain crisis" resulting from uncontrolled Ukrainian grain entering the Polish market, first leading to some tensions and growing negative attitudes which eventually caused a decline in support (Kitsa, 2025). Consequently, the proportion of Poles opposing the acceptance of Ukrainian FDPs has grown substantially, from a mere 3% in March 2022 to the current 40%, (O Ukraińcach, 2024).

Types of permits

As of October 2025, the following types of permits are available to Ukrainian citizens, depending on their legal, professional and household situation:

- **temporary protection** - right to legal stay, access to the labour market, housing, healthcare, and education for children,
- **temporary residence permit** - from April 1, 2023, Ukrainian citizens who have a PESEL number with UKR status can apply for temporary residence permits (for the purpose of working or running a business), however the procedure is lengthy (see: Main barriers and opportunities in the labour market)

family reunification - from 15 May 2024 the FDPs from Ukraine can apply for family reunification. According to Polish law, the following categories of family members may join the applicant in Poland: spouse (from a marriage recognised under Polish law), child (under 18 years of age) of the applicant and/or his/her spouse, parent or other adult responsible for the child (if the applicant is an unaccompanied child) (Łączenie Rodzin, 2025).

Governance and multilevel responsibilities in implementation of TPD in respective countries

Implementation of the TPD (Directive 2001/55/EC) in Poland

As mentioned earlier, the TPD in Poland has been implemented by means of the Special Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens, which is the short name for the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict in Ukraine (2022, the Special Act), which came into force on 12 March 2022. It sets out the rules for legal residence and access to the labour market for Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland after 24 February 2022 due to the military conflict. Since then, the Act has been amended several times to extend temporary protection for Ukrainians.

Since 1 April 2023 holders of PESEL UKR are entitled to apply [OS29] for a temporary residence and work permit, for a residence permit for the purpose of performing work in highly skilled professions (Blue Card) and for a temporary residence permit for the purpose of conducting business activity (Nowosielski & Raczyński, 2024).

Although on 4 June 2025 the European Commission proposed to prolong the Temporary Protection for FDPs fleeing Russia's aggression against Ukraine until 4 March 2027, the same document outlines the recommendations regarding a coordinated approach to the transition out of temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine (Directorate-General for Migration, 2025). The political climate in Poland is charged with the tension of the unresolved future duration of TPD, which has been further exacerbated by the right-wing candidate's victory in the presidential elections held in May 2025 (Długosz, 2025; Dudzik, 2025; Rupnik, 2025).

Division of responsibilities across different governance levels in relation to the reception and social rights FDPs

In terms of the official division of responsibilities regarding the support for FDPs, they were distributed between various actors on different levels of governance (Table 2).

Table 2. Division of responsibilities across governance levels in key areas of social rights of FDPs

	Local/municipal level	Regional level	National level
Labour market	Powiat ¹ employment offices (Powiatowe Urzędy Pracy, PUP) which register unemployed Polish citizens and support them in finding work, organise training and internships, and conduct professional activation activities are also responsible for the same tasks towards FDPs.	Voivodeship ² employment offices play a coordinating, analytical and strategic role, less 'direct' than in the case of PUP. Their tasks include: monitoring and analysis of the labour market at the regional level, regional programmes for the integration of foreigners and professional activation, support for PUP (e.g. training of district labour office employees in foreigner services), management of EU funds allocated to integration and activation projects, recognition of qualifications (in certain	Opening the labour market for FDPs under the Special Act

		regulated professions) and international coordination within the EURES network (job placement in the EU).	
Housing	Initially: municipalities were the key public actors engaged in organising settlement support and coordinating local housing responses through managing temporary accommodation centres, distributing aid and facilitating access to municipal housing stock where available. Currently: depending on availability of resources (usually very constrained), some cities/municipalities provide a limited number of FDPs with the access to municipal housing	Initially: co-management (with municipalities) of temporary accommodation centres Currently: regional offices of the central government still provide some options of temporary collective accommodation, but only for FDPs with special needs	Initially: the central government was involved in providing the framework for support through national legislation and programmes (e.g., compensation mechanisms reimbursing private individuals and institutions hosting FDPs). Currently: no overall policy for providing FDPs with the access to housing - Ukrainian FDPs registered in Poland are expected to rent privately on the open market.
Education	All FDPs under 18 are entitled to attend public schools run by gminas/municipalities. Local governments are responsible for providing places for Ukrainian FDPs. School principals are responsible for implementing regulations and ensuring that Ukrainian pupils have access to education at school. In addition, they organise the process of admitting pupils to school.	They do not have direct, decentralised tasks, but act as intermediaries in coordinating, monitoring and supporting the activities of municipalities within their regions.	Ministry of Education provides general regulations concerning education, including compulsory schooling for children from Ukraine, and monitors their situation.

¹ powiat (powiat) is the second level of local government in Poland, one above municipality (gmina)

² voivodeship is the regional level of government in Poland, one above powiat

Source: own elaboration

TPD's impact on the reception and inclusion of FDPs in different spheres of social and economic life

Opportunities:

- Labour market and education – TPD is a significant facilitator in the access to work and education
- Housing – only in the initial phase, when TPD was connected to the 40+ housing subsidy

Barriers:

- socio-political tensions
- lack of adequate social policies

Methods and materials

The country report is mainly based on the analysis of various statistical reports (published online and openly accessible) and research publications (academic papers and monographs), accompanied by relevant legal acts (e.g. the Special Act), and complemented with transcriptions of six expert interviews conducted with representatives of SLBs and CSOs who work with FDPs as part of their everyday job.

The expert interviews were held locally in the Tricity agglomeration (i.e., Gdańsk and Gdynia) during June and July 2025, in person with one exception of an online interview. The experts were recruited from SLBs and CSOs, representing the three key areas in focus of this research: labour market, housing and education. Three of the respondents were members of local NGOs, another two were employees of local and regional governmental institutions, and one was a teacher in a public school (Table 3). All of them experience face-to-face encounters with FDPs on a daily basis in their everyday professional lives. However, only some of them had worked with international migrants prior to the full-scale invasion (e.g., HOU_CSOU_PL who has provided support to immigrants since 2012) and some only meet specific groups (e.g., HOU_SLB_PL who provides welfare services and so interacts with the most vulnerable segment of FDPs, i.e., those who qualify for social assistance). These varying perspectives influence the experts' experiences and, by extension, their accounts.

Table 3. Key characteristics of the respondents participating in the expert interviews

SECTOR	SLB	CSO
Labour market	LM_SLB_PL: Face-to-face interview with a person employed in one of the regional employment offices. Their job involves liaising with employers and handling documents to legalise work for citizens of foreign countries (incl. seasonal permits). Since the full-scale invasion, the person has been engaged in running a service point for FDPs.	LM_CSO_PL: Face-to-face interview with a person working in one of the NGOs that has been actively supporting people with migration experience since 2022, amongst other things by conducting integration activities in cooperation with other NGO. The person provides career counselling for FDPs from Ukraine as well as workshops on writing and submitting CVs and starting their own business. These activities are aimed at preparing FDPs to enter the Polish labour market.
Housing	HOU_SLB_PL: Face-to-face interview with a person working in the department for foreigners at the municipal social welfare centre. This department was established in early 2023 (i.e., after the full-scale invasion but not directly because of it) to deal with integration of foreigners, including Ukrainian FDPs. Before this, the interviewee was employed in another department of the same institution, and dealt with similar tasks, which is why following the full-scale invasion, the person was delegated to the local crisis management team.	HOU_CSO_PL: Face-to-face interview with a person who is vice-president of an NGO coordinating a consultation point for foreigners, as well as assisting foreigners in their integration in the Tricity area. Their tasks include providing information about Polish law, residence procedures, different aspects of life in Poland, both formal and less formal. Apart from providing this information, the person also directs clients (incl. FDPs) to other institutions in order to obtain various types of support that their own organisation does not provide.
Education	SLB_EDU_PL: Face-to-face interview with a person working in one of the primary schools in the Tricity. The person has been directly involved in organising education for FDP children since the beginning of the war.	CSO_EDU_PL: Online interview with an employee of one of the foundations in the Tricity that provides comprehensive support to non-governmental organisations and civic initiatives. The person has been engaged in running language courses for adult FDPs.

Source: Own elaboration.

Policies and outcomes of the labour market integration

Access to the labour market: legal frameworks and structural factors

Due to the recent shortages in the labour force in Poland, the regulations governing access to the labour market for foreigners are considered to be among the most liberal in the EU (Nowosielski & Raczyński, 2024). Depending on the country of origin and/or type of job, foreigners may take up employment on the basis of: 1) declarations of entrusting work (a simplified procedure that allows for an accelerated employment); 2) work permits; 3) seasonal work permits (in sectors related to agriculture, horticulture and tourism); 4) temporary residence permits with access to the labour market (issued, for example, on the basis of work or family reunification); 5) permanent residence permits or long-term EU resident permits.

Under the Special Law, Ukrainian citizens do not need any additional permits on entering the Polish labour market. The employers are only obliged to report the hiring to a local public employment service within fourteen days. This regulation concerns not only FDPs, but all citizens of Ukraine legally residing in Poland (Nowosielski & Raczyński, 2024)

While the responsibility for labour market integration in Poland officially lies with public employment services (local and regional Employment Offices), in reality, a significant proportion of integration occurs through informal networks, primarily via social media platforms and personal contacts (LM_SLB_PL).

Outcomes of the labour market integration

Employment level and structure

By the end of April 2022, almost 100,000 FDPs had found their first job in Poland and this figure more than doubled by the end of June (Gromadzki & Lewandowski, 2023; Zyzik et al., 2024). According to GUS (Central Statistical Office), on 28 February 2025, 708,900 Ukrainian FDPs worked in Poland (Cudzoziemcy wykonujący pracę, 2025). They accounted for 67.0% of the total number of foreigners working in Poland.

Ukrainian FDPs work primarily in the industrial sector and services. The employment rate among this group is lower than among pre-war migrants, but still higher than among Polish citizens (see Table 4). The proportion of women among FDPs is notably higher compared to the proportion among immigrants from Ukraine who arrived prior to 2022. However, the proportion of highly educated individuals is comparable, and the command of Polish is significantly lower.

Table 4. Comparison of the basic statistics on migrants from Ukraine in the Polish labour market

	Immigrants from Ukraine (before 2022)	FDPs from Ukraine (after 2022)	Polish citizens
Activity on the labour market	96-99%	70-80%	58.6%
Share of employees	91-93%	53-71%	56.9%
Unemployment rate	5%	22-26%	2.9%
Share of women	40-54%	67-80%	51.7%
Knowledge of Polish language	58%	5-12%	-
Share of highly educated	46%	50%	23.1%

Source: Wpływ napływu, 2025: 12 (data collated from various reports)

In 2022, more than 50% of FDP workers were employed in elementary occupations, which was a proportion over seven times higher than in the indigenous employed population (Gromadzki & Lewandowski, 2023). At the same time, this occupational structure resembled the one from before the full-scale invasion, even despite the change of the gender structure of the employees.

In 2022, FDPs from Ukraine most often took up jobs in the food industry, construction and manufacturing, with a seasonal (second and third quarters of the year) domination of employment in agriculture, trade and the Hotel Restaurant Catering (HoReCa) industry, and a surge in logistics, e-commerce in the fourth quarter (Tyniec, 2025). As of the beginning of 2023, most FDPs worked in industrial processing, construction, Transport-Spedition-Logistics (TSL) and trade.

In 2023–2024, due to the ongoing situation in Ukraine and the female-dominated structure of the FDP workforce, the Polish labour market still felt the lack of employees in sectors previously dominated by men, such as construction and TSL. Although many companies declared their willingness to create jobs for women in professions traditionally considered ‘masculine’, the implementation of these plans encountered numerous barriers. As a result, even though women began to appear in new industries, including the warehousing sector and the meat industry, overall, instead of transforming jobs, entrepreneurs increasingly looked for male employees from work abroad, especially from Asia, Africa and South America (Tyniec, 2025).

Type and quality of work

Given the educational status of Ukrainian FDPs, of whom the majority have either university degree or secondary education, there is a clear tendency towards de-skilling. Back in 2022 only 17% were

looking for a job corresponding to their professional qualifications (Wojdat et al., 2022). De-skilling among the Ukrainian FDPs is found to be one of key factors in increasing propensity to return to Ukraine (Lewandowski et al., 2025).

There is, however, also an increasing tendency towards self-employment. According to an interviewed expert, there are two causes: 1) problems with finding a job/lack of response from employers (also affecting Polish citizens, not only FDPs), 2) self-reliance - some FDPs realize they will stay in Poland for longer and wish to have something on their own, build a future and work in accordance with their qualifications and on their own terms):

this group [i.e., Ukrainian FDPs starting their own businesses] seems to be growing every year, which I think is due to two basic reasons. The first is definitely the difficulty of finding a job, because for a long time, especially this year, many Ukrainian citizens have been emphasizing that they are not receiving any responses. [...] And the second reason [results from a certain] reconciliation with the fact that this war will not end quickly, so it is an attempt to find themselves in our standards and simply to have something of their own (LM_SLB_PL).

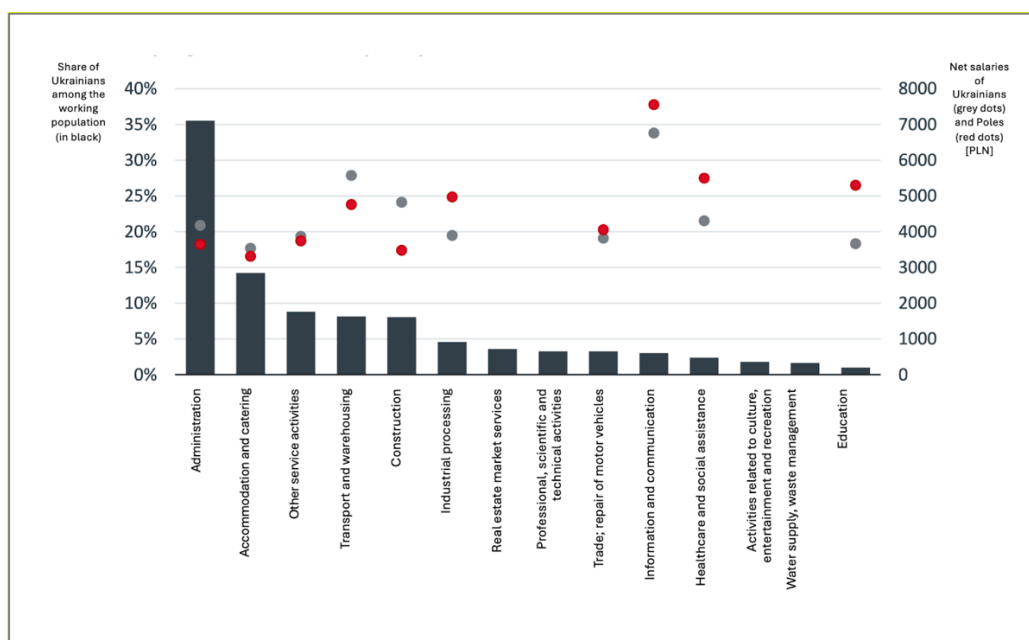
Employment stability

There is no official data on this issue, but from the experts' accounts it is obvious that apart from FDPs with employment contracts, some of them work casually/illegally.

Income and working conditions

According to the National Bank of Poland (Sytuacja życiowa, 2024), the median monthly net salary of immigrants in the third quarter of the fiscal year 2024 was PLN 4,000, while in the Polish economy as a whole it was PLN 4,900 net. An analysis of the available official data reveals that the wages of Ukrainian FDPs exhibit variability in relation to those of Poles, depending on the specific labour market sector. As demonstrated in Graph 1, the mean wages of Ukrainian workers in 2024 were higher than those of Polish workers in sectors where the share of employed Ukrainians was the largest, such as construction, transport and warehousing, and administration. However, the most pronounced wage disparities between Ukrainian and Polish workers, with the latter consistently outperforming the former, are evident in less Ukrainian-dominated high-skilled sectors, including education, healthcare and social assistance, and information and communication

Graph 1. The share of Ukrainians among those working in Poland and the median monthly net wages in selected sectors in 2024



Source: (Wpływ napływu, 2025 :15)

According to a more recent report, published on 10 June 2025, the wage gap between Ukrainian FDPs and Polish citizens is gradually narrowing, irrespective of the level of remuneration received by either group (Analysis of the impact, 2025).

Long-term effects

FDPs' plans for further stay in Poland vary greatly. A survey conducted in April 2022 revealed that 68% of the respondents had the intention to return to Ukraine following the cessation of hostilities. Of those, 38% indicated a desire to return immediately after the war's conclusion, while 30% expressed a preference to do so after a period of several months) (Wojdat et al. 2022). Furthermore, 14% of respondents indicated their intention to reside in Poland for a minimum period of one year, while 7% intended to relocate to another country and the remaining 11% were undecided. In 2025, this disparity is still valid, although it cannot be approximated due to a lack of comparable data. According to the interviewed experts, while some FDPs have reached a level of stability and a certain rootedness, others recognize their stay as temporary:

Some of the [FDPs] who want to stay [in Poland] already have a sense of stability and settling down, their children go to school, they already have jobs and some kind of stability, but there are families who are [...], convinced] that they will leave, so they don't learn Polish. [T]he children learn [Polish] at school and their parents say, 'the child can do it, so I don't have to learn,' [...]. And there are so many of them that they integrate among themselves, they don't want to integrate [with Poles], – they go to the shop, they are served by people from Ukraine, they spend their time in their own

group, they don't necessarily want to integrate here in Poland, learn Polish, or even work (HOU_SLB_PL).

Specific initiatives to facilitate the access to the labour market

Due to health personnel shortages, Poland has shortened the timeline for recognition of medical qualifications for the FDPs (OECD, 2022). In addition, it is beneficial for the FDPs because they often have a chance to be treated by Ukrainian medical specialists.

Vocational trainings are available to FDPs on the same terms which apply to Polish citizens.

As already mentioned, self-employment is a clear trend, but it happens spontaneously, rather than as a result of a specific initiative (LM_SLB_PL). Back in 2022, some companies became partners to the local Employment Offices and offered employment options on an activation/internship basis, but over time these have become discontinued. The reason for this discontinuation was less demand for immediate help as the situation normalised, and this task has since then been completely taken over by employment offices (LM_SLB_PL).

Currently in Poland there is no centralised access to publicly funded vocational language courses (OECD, 2022), apart from those provided by Poviats Employment Offices (LM_SLB_PL). In general, language courses are mostly organised by NGOs that receive dedicated grants. However, any beneficiary may only participate in the project once, which is why many FDPs who have completed the Polish language course at level A1 are unable to continue their studies. (EDU_CSO_PL).

Possibilities/indications for the labour market career

Language is crucial here, as is the possibility of having diplomas recognised.

Types of financial assistance for those outside of the labour market

Unemployment benefit

In Poland, three conditions must be met in order to receive unemployment benefit: 1) one has to be registered with the local employment office as unemployed, 2) in the eighteen months prior to registration, one has to have worked for at least 365 days, and 3) while being registered, one did not refuse a suitable job offer without justification. According to one of the interviewed experts from the labour market sector, some Ukrainian FDPs expressed considerable surprise at the fact that they were not eligible to receive unemployment benefits upon their arrival in Poland:

for the [FDPs], the employment office is not there to provide jobs. In Ukraine—and many people have confirmed this to me—the employment office is there to provide benefits. So when they came

to Poland, (...) they went to the employment office with the assumptions and point of view from their own country, and it was certainly a big culture shock for them (LM_SLB_PL).

Furthermore, what follows from two expert accounts, a (small) share of migrants who had entered Poland since the full-scale invasion were not forcibly displaced people but arrived from areas not affected by the war, seeking opportunity to move from Ukraine to Poland under the TPD (LM_SLB_PL, HOU_CSO_PL). Both experts maintain that some people among this group have tried to take advantage of the TPD procedure for individual profits:

There were people who arrived with just a handbag or a plastic bag and really had nothing, they had lost everything... There were also people, there were families who arrived in cars packed to the roof and, (...) who came and said, 'Well, the war didn't affect us directly, we came, but in the area where we live, nothing has happened so far (HOU_CSO_PL).

I have seen many cases of abuse and attempts to fraudulently obtain benefits and then transport those benefits to Ukraine (HOU_CSO_PL).

Financial assistance for caregivers of children

Just like Polish parents and caregivers of minors, all FDPs with the PESEL UKR status who take care of children under 18 are entitled to receive "Rodzina 800 plus" (or the so-called 800+) child benefit (800 PLN per child per month, formerly known as 500+). Nevertheless, this entitlement has recently become the subject of political debate, resulting in the amendment of certain regulations. Initially, the only condition was that the child lived with the applicant and was dependent on them, either as a legal or actual guardian. From 1 June 2025 an additional requirement was introduced with a special significance for FDPs - a child for whom they are applying for the 800+ benefit must attend a Polish school or Polish nursery school (known as zerówka) (Pierwsze Ważne Ograniczenie, 2005).

Financial assistance for the elderly and people with disabilities

No financial assistance is available specifically for the elderly FDPs or FDPs with disabilities, and therefore they are at risk of facing exclusion from the labour and housing market ("The older a person is, the more difficult it is for them to find a job", LM_SLB_PL). Representatives of these two vulnerable groups who are registered with PESEL UKR may apply for social assistance under the same terms as Polish citizens under the Social Assistance Act. This assistance includes cash and non-cash benefits, including permanent or temporary allowances, which may be granted in the event of incapacity for work or the need for care. However, it is important to note that such allowances are generally minimal ("People who are ill or disabled, even if they can take advantage of our benefits, it doesn't really solve the situation, and it also creates a sense of uncertainty and [raises questions] 'what next?'", HOU_SLB_PL).

Main barriers and opportunities in the labour market

Barriers:

- **language barrier** (“Men very often want to work in the port or in construction, because, as they say themselves, these are often jobs where you just need to point your finger and you don't need to speak the language”, LM_SLB_PL)
- **responsibilities related to children upbringing** (Janowska, 2024), (“Women most often want to work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., as [this is when] schools, kindergartens and nurseries operate”, LM_SLB_PL)
- **gender barrier**: the Polish labour market needs male workers,
- **discrimination**: e.g. inadequate or no pay, exploitation of a weaker position, unequal treatment, and workload (Zyzik et al. 2023), as well as reluctance of Polish employers who refrain from employing FDPs to avoid additional burdens or because they fear short-term nature of the employment (“sometimes the employer has never hired a foreigner before so they are afraid that they will have to do who knows how many additional things”, “Unfortunately employers repeat that Ukrainian citizens are not permanent employees, they are people who change jobs very often”, LM_SLB_PL)
- **unfavourable attitudes of other employees and/or Polish people in general** - growing resentment towards Ukrainian migrants (“[frequent changes in employment] very often also result from communication problems at work, with other employees, or the resentment of other employees, because unfortunately this resentment is growing in Poland”, LM_SLB_PL), some of which is anchored in Polish employees’ concerns, e.g., fear of losing their jobs to Ukrainians (Sadura & Sierakowski, 2022) or fears of slowdown in wage growth (Banyś, 2025)
- **disinformation** within Ukrainian networks of self-help and other informal channels – outdated information or fake news distributed mainly via social media (“either they do not have all the information [...], or they have incorrect information and do not know about many things that they could benefit from”, LM_SLB_PL)
- **complicated and lengthy procedure for legalising residence** (“it is outstanding that it takes 1.5 to 2 years to issue a residence permit card” (LM_SLB_PL, (HOU_CSO_PL)

Opportunities:

- **labour demand** - in line with the demographic forecasts Poland will need significantly more migrants in the coming years than the current number of Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland (Wpływ napływu, 2025: 4)
- **high qualifications, high level of education** (“those FDPs with higher education seem to have a broader perspective, are often better informed, and come here with much more knowledge about how to get around in Poland”, LM_SLB_PL)
- **favourable attitudes of the Polish people**: seeing the presence of Ukrainians as an opportunity for the development of the Polish economy
- **increasing self-reliance of FDPs** (“We can definitely see that FDPs are increasingly managing on their own. We very rarely encounter people who have just arrived”, LM_SLB_PL)

Policies and outcomes on housing and settlement

Access to housing prior to registration for the TPD

Overall, housing in Poland is characterised by the key challenges typical of the CEE region: a dominance of owner-occupied housing, a growing rental market, and a diminished social housing sector due to post-communist privatization. These structural issues, compounded by inflation and raising energy costs have made access to housing particularly problematic, both financially and in terms of available resources (Csoba et al., 2025). In the initial phase of the full-scale invasion, the housing for Ukrainian FDPs was provided mostly through informal emergency responses. Polish citizens opened their homes, while CSOs, religious institutions and local/regional governments rapidly mobilised temporary shelters and collective accommodation in vacant facilities, such as sports halls and hostels. During this phase, accommodation was typically free of charge and with limited regulation, its provision coordinated in pop-up welcome centres and through telephone helplines and dedicated websites. A share of FDPs relied on their own personal contacts and social networks among the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland. The situation was highly dynamic, marked by an urgent need to provide safe shelter rather than long-term housing solutions.

Access to housing after implementation of the TPD

Following the implementation of TPD, the reception of the Ukrainian FDPs continued to be managed rather bottom-up. According to results of a survey conducted at the end of April 2022 among holders of PESEL-UKR in 12 largest Polish cities, the largest group of FDPs (38%) were offered accommodation by Polish hosts, either in a shared accommodation (20%) or on their own (18%), while 23% of respondents found shelter with friends or family from Ukraine (Wojdat et al., 2022). Among all of them, 43% paid for their accommodation at that time.

As CSO and private actors continued to play a vital role in the provision of accommodation to the FDPs, article 13 of the Special Act introduced financial compensation mechanisms reimbursing private individuals and institutions hosting them (see Table 2). Until 30 June 2024, host families and institutions could apply for a reimbursement of 40 PLN per day, up to 60 days, with later adjustments (extension to 120 days and exceptions for the most vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, people with disabilities, carers of children under 1 year of age, large families, etc.). This helped to increase the number of offers available on the market, even if some landlords did not adhere to the rules and charged extra rent (HOU_CSO_PL). Over time, FDPs were encouraged to move toward self-reliance, using social assistance (such as housing allowances available to all eligible residents), child benefits (800+) and employment income to cover housing costs. No dedicated long-term housing subsidy programme was introduced meaning that this group has access to the same support mechanisms as Polish residents.

Key trends and changes in the initial phase

- **Gradual shift away from the emergency model** – the scope of the reimbursement was reduced over time and the temporary mass shelter was scaled down (Janowska 2024).
- **Increasing (although still relatively small) role of municipalities as key actors for integration and housing** (it is, however, worth noting that the increasing responsibilities are not matched with the increase of adequate funding from the central government) – they co-manage the remaining temporary shelter accommodation (with regional authorities), provide social assistance and integration support, some of them launched local programmes for housing assistance (such as rental subsidies, mediation with landlords and access to municipal housing).
- **Increasing reliance of FDPs on the rental market** – although rising rents and housing shortages have made this transition difficult for many families. By the end of 2024, 61% of FDPs rented their accommodation in the open market (as compared to only 3% in collective accommodation shelters (Regional Refugee, 2025).
- **A shift in the official narrative of the government from emergency response toward long term integration** (instead of focusing on ad-hoc, state-driven housing provision, the response switched to more sustainable integration measures which would make migrants more self-reliant and able to provide housing for themselves on the free market, e.g., via enrolment to language courses, or offering assistance with employment and childcare).

Current situation

In comparison with the initial phase, by 2025 the housing situation of FDPs stabilised (Długosz & Izdebska-Długosz, 2024). This has been confirmed by the interviewed experts, according to whom, overall, housing is no longer among the key topics of concern:

There were certain stages to this assistance. And we know that at that initial moment, these housing needs were actually the priority, one of the first needs, (...) but later on these needs changed (HOU_SLB_PL).

Nevertheless, this issue remains problematic in view of the short supply of public accommodation and the restricted availability of the rental market options, a situation that is especially challenging for the most vulnerable demographics.:

There are no offers specifically for people from Ukraine, there is no such thing, (...) so we are opening up the internet and looking at what is available to rent depending on the size of our wallet and the number of people who want to rent it. It is basically an open market, there is no division between people from Ukraine and the rest. (HOU_CSO_PL)

Prices are very high, (...) the situation is more difficult especially among older people who receive small benefits and also have to use the social assistance system, and [similar situation applies to] people who are ill or disabled, even if they are eligible for receiving our benefits, it doesn't really solve the situation, and it also creates a sense of uncertainty and [raises questions] 'what next?' (HOU_SLB_PL)

Lack of representative data makes it difficult to provide any reliable statistics. There is some information on the level of the country and esp. larger cities, but it is fragmented and uneven, as no single national monitoring system comprehensively tracks housing situations of Ukrainian FDPs over time in Poland. As far as any clear trends are concerned, initially, FDPs were concentrated in the largest cities, but later spread to smaller centres (Wpływ napływu, 2025). There is a lack of data on the level of neighbourhoods in cities.

There is evidence for overcrowding – many flats are shared between several families to decrease the costs of rent. However, our local expert's insight is that this should not be perceived as a key problem:

FDPs often live in groups. It is not usually one family, but two or three families, sometimes a few friends with children, or a multi-generational family. It is very rare for there to be only one family in one flat, as the costs are shared. They definitely most often choose districts where rental costs are significantly lower, and in Gdynia, renting is expensive, so they decide to rent somewhere further away, very often a little afraid to take jobs somewhere further from home (LM_SLB_PL).

A series of meetings at various levels made us Poles realise that uncomfortable conditions often mean something different for us than for this group. And I am referring even to the standard of living or the standard number of people in a room in their country of origin (HOU_CSO_PL).

Specific initiatives for housing career on the local level

Apart from the right for the housing allowance (available to all eligible residents), some specific initiatives emerged, but not too many and mostly in larger cities. For instance, public-private partnerships were set up by Habitat for Humanity Poland (Habitat dla Ukrainy, n.d.) and numerous private companies. Moreover, many NGOs (e.g., Fundacja Ocalenie or Fundacja Widzialne) and informal civic groups were engaged in providing informal housing brokerage, helping FDPs in finding private rentals (see for example: Rental of Apartments and Rooms, 2025; Wynajem Czterech Lokali, 2025).

Tendencies to independent living and financing own housing

Even though there are some tendencies to independent living and financing own housing, as noted above, it is a rather precarious housing independence. According to existing data only 2.7% of real estate transactions in Poland in 2023 were carried out by Ukrainians (Wpływ napływu, 2025).

Main barriers and opportunities

Barriers:

- **low income of FDPs working in low-paid sectors**, esp. in the case of single-parent households and mothers taking care of small children (Janowska, 2024)

- **affordability** - high (and increasing) costs of accommodation (esp. within two months after the invasion the inflow of FDPs caused an increase in housing rents in largest cities due a positive demand shock; Gluszek & Trojanek, 2025)
- **increased risk of homelessness due to unstable employment** (“there are situations where contracts have already been terminated, [...] or there are situations where someone has lost their job, lost the ability to pay for their flat, and in fact these are often people employed on a contract basis – when they lose such employment, it is clear that they have no source of income”, HOU_SLB_PL)
- **uncertainty in terms of future social care regulations** (“I don't know what the regulations will look like, what the laws will be, how it will all work out, but I don't know if there will be [places] in social care homes, providing care in general”, LM_SLB_PL)
- **unfavourable attitudes of the Polish people:** e.g., discrimination of FDPs by landlords (Kleiningner-Wanik & Wanke, 2024; Sarafian et al., 2025), animadversion towards FDPs based on the competition in the reduced access to housing resources (Babińska et al., 2022)
- **very complicated and lengthy procedure for legalising residence** (LM_SLB_PL)
- **demanding bureaucratic procedure when applying for council flats** (“we help them fill in the applications, which in my opinion are very unclear and difficult to fill in without making mistakes, (...) They are only in Polish, which is understandable, but they contain double negatives, and even for us, I am talking about the Polish team working in the office, it is sometimes unclear how to answer, (...) these applications are simply intellectually difficult. (...) these questions should be shorter... much simpler, we even reported this once, but these are just some bureaucratic oversights”, HOU_CSO_PL)
- **specific limitations regarding the purchase of real estate by FDPs in the Tricity agglomeration** - since it is located within the border zone, in order to purchase real estate, Ukrainian citizens (like any other foreigners) must obtain a permit from the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration (MSWiA) and more strict rules apply than in hinterland Poland (conditions: the purchase must not threaten national security, public order, or social policy, and the buyer demonstrates a real connection with Poland; duration of the procedure: should be up to two months but in reality usually lasts longer and involves quite a lot paperwork) (Uzyskaj zezwolenie 2023)

Opportunities:

- **dense informal networks among Ukrainians in Poland, which facilitate housing search** (“Ukrainian citizens ask relatively fewer questions about [housing], because they have very strong support groups”, HOU_CSO_PL)
- **good cooperation between public and civil society institutions established following the full-scale invasion, which continues today** (“it was also a time of getting to know each other, and for us, these acquaintances are now paying off and it is easier to cooperate”, HOU_SLB_PL)

Policies and outcomes on education of adults and children

Access to the education

In Poland, Ukrainian children have the legal right to education up to the age of 18, which includes full access to early childhood education and primary schools. The Polish government and educational institutions follow an integration model, according to which children of Ukrainian FDPs attend schools alongside Polish pupils, allowing for age-appropriate class placement (Nazaruk et al., 2024). Ukrainian pupils are provided with essential language support for up to three years (2021-2024: 6 hours a week; from 2024: 4 hours a week). One of our experts explained that at the moment, Ukrainian pupils do not need much language support:

Children learn within two years and then they are no longer entitled to additional hours, and that's right. Because they already know how to speak. We are talking about Slavic children... Two years is enough for Slavic children. And they already speak the language so well that they can cope at school at every level (EDU_SLB_PL).

Before September 2024, children of the Ukrainian FDPs could attend Ukrainian online schools. From 1 September 2024 all children of Ukrainian FDPs in Poland must attend Polish schools to meet the compulsory education requirement. Online education programs provided by the Ukrainian system are not recognized as fulfilling the education requirement in Poland, as those entities are separate from the Polish school system. The only exception is for students who, during the 2024/2025 school year, are in their final year of the Ukrainian system and are studying remotely to prepare for and take the Ukrainian matriculation examination in 2025 (Najczęściej zadawane, 2024).

At the secondary education level, Ukrainian students also face pathways to integration, though some challenges remain. Research indicates that approximately 40% of Ukrainian students are not enrolled in schools (Herbst & Sitek, 2023; Weir, 2024). Vocational schools present an option for those seeking practical skills that could enhance their employability in Poland's labour market (Weir, 2024). The educational landscape is still evolving, with ongoing adjustments in educational policy aimed at better accommodating the needs of FDPs and facilitating their adjustment (Herbst & Sitek, 2023).

Many Polish universities have introduced programs that acknowledge students' prior education and skills (Franczak & Lutz, 2024). These universities are providing resources for language acquisition and cultural orientation to help integrate these students academically and socially (Weir, 2024).

Access to the child-care

The children of the Ukrainian FDPs have the same access to child-care as the Polish children. The “active in nursery” benefit, introduced on 1 October 2024, provides support for parents of children under the age of 3. Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland after 24 February 2022 may apply for

it, but under certain conditions. They must have been legally residing in Poland as persons with 'UKR' status for at least 365 days (Świadczenie Aktywnie, 2024).

Financing of higher education

Higher education is free for Ukrainians, just as it is for domestic students. FDPs can continue their studies in Poland, even if they don't have any documents confirming their grades, etc.

Language courses for adults

Municipalities have initiated community-based language courses to help integrate Ukrainian FDPs into the local labour market and society (Duszczyk et al., 2023; Walawender et al., 2023). For example, free language courses are being organized through local community centres, reflecting a strategy that prioritizes immediate linguistic needs to foster social inclusion (Domaradzki et al., 2022). Organizations such as the Polish Red Cross and various local charities have been instrumental in offering free or subsidized language classes specifically designed for Ukrainian adults. These programs often utilize culturally sensitive methodologies, enhancing effective learning and participation among FDPs (Prusaczyk et al., 2023). Many churches in Poland, especially those with significant Ukrainian congregations, offer informal language classes as part of their outreach initiatives. These classes serve not only as a means of instruction but also as community-building spaces, facilitating cultural exchange (Duszczyk et al., 2023, Kopeć, 2023).

Descriptive statistics

Specific quantitative data on language acquisition levels is limited, due to the absence of centralized language assessment programs.

Research findings suggest that many adult Ukrainian FDPs have acquired a basic level of Polish proficiency, which may be categorized as "satisfactory," enabling them to navigate essential activities such as interacting with healthcare providers and engaging in community services (Duszczyk et al., 2023). However, a more advanced level of proficiency, which is required for skilled employment, may still pose difficulties for many, particularly those who lacked prior educational opportunities or face psychological barriers stemming from their displacement experiences (Kovács et al., 2023).

Specific initiatives for further or re-qualifications to facilitate the access to the education and labour market

The European Social Fund (ESF) resources toward initiatives designed for educational and vocational training and intensive language courses have been developed, specifically focusing on vocational Polish, which is crucial for entering various employment sectors (Duszczyk et al., 2023).

Work placement programs have been implemented to provide Ukrainian FDPs with practical experience in the labour market. These programs are often coordinated through collaborations between local governments and private businesses that seek to fill labour shortages while offering FDPs a pathway to gain valuable work experience (Struk, 2023). Internships have also been integrated into these frameworks, allowing Ukrainians to assimilate into the Polish work culture and showcase their skills to potential employers, thereby easing their transition into permanent employment (Working towards, 2023).

An essential component of these initiatives is early skills assessment programs, which aim to identify the qualifications and competencies of Ukrainian FDPs. This assessment helps tailor re-qualification programs according to individual needs and facilitates the validation of previous education and professional experiences (Duszczyk et al., 2023).

Tendencies to up or down educational mobility or opportunities structures

Adolescents and young adults who are students in higher education or transitioning into vocational training often find the recognition of their previous qualifications to be a significant barrier. Reports indicate that a considerable number of these young people possess high education levels yet struggle with bureaucratic hurdles in formalizing their academic credentials in Poland, leading to stagnation in their educational mobility (Working towards, 2023; Struk, 2023). The system is adopting, but there are still challenges.

Main barriers and opportunities

Barriers:

- Navigating bureaucratic processes and potential language challenges, which can hinder their access to educational opportunities (Herbst & Sitek, 2023).
- Persistence of disparities in educational experiences continues due to limited resources, varying regional support, and infrastructural constraints within the Polish educational framework (Weir, 2024; Duszczyk et al., 2023).

Opportunities:

- Similarity of the Polish and Ukrainian language

While Ukrainian FDPs in Poland are granted access to education across all levels, there are many factors that restrict that access in practice.

Conclusions

Best practices in the field of labour market, housing and education:

- Effective cooperation between different actors and adequate sharing of responsibilities
- Courses for employees tailored to the specific nature of the services they provide, but also tailored with regard to the identified gaps to be filled
- Psychological support for employees to prevent professional burn-out
- employment of cultural assistants with the knowledge of the languages of the FDPs and cultural differences

Emerging responses to the ending of TPD

By mid-October 2025, no decisions have been made. In general, despite the decreasing support for Ukrainian FDPs staying in the country the situation is complex. On the one hand, there is a growing social discontent about the social transfers to FDPs (CBOSNews, 2025), but on the other hand, a part of the Polish society appreciates the FDPs contribution to the Polish economy and that they are filling the critical demographic gap ('Should Ukrainian Refugees', 2025). According to our knowledge there are no specific policies focusing on the future of FDPs in Poland, either on the national or local level.

Interrelation between the key areas of social integration in Poland

There are many interrelations between these areas. For instance, better language competency increases the chance of getting a better job, which in turn translates into better accommodation options. Conversely, some FDPs are prevented from taking up better paid jobs, because of long commutes from their current places of residence, which are more affordable because of the peripheral location. Another example is the recognition of diplomas, which impacts job opportunities.

The experts' reasoning about their own role in reception of the FDPs

They seem to try to manage on their own, not expecting any external support. Some of them value adequate training, esp. those who have not dealt with immigrants/foreigners in their profession before. The experts were not too vocal about it but between the lines, their accounts indicated that these issues play a considerable role in their work.

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Annex 6 CR Sweden

MAGnituDe



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[Country report Sweden]

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Ludvig Sunnemark, University of Gothenburg
Oksana Shmulyar Gréen, University of Gothenburg
Andrea Spehar, University of Gothenburg

Corresponding author: Oksana.shmulyar@socav.gu.se

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
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, i.e., an employee at a state or municipal agency working directly with clients
CSO	Civil society organisation, in this report a civil society or other type of non-governmental organization working directly with affected groups.

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 (RPTPs) 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 RPTs 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.

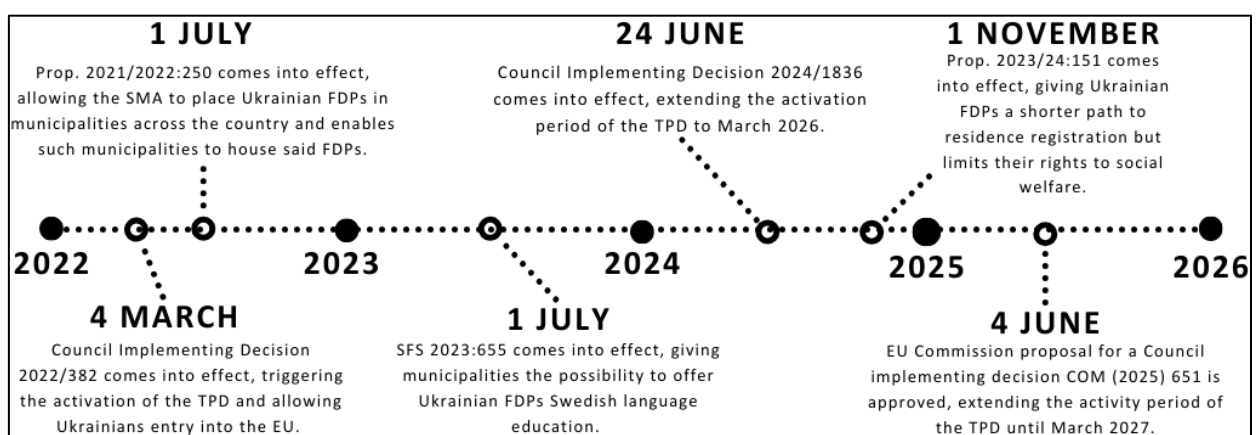
This group differs from Ukrainian migrants who settled in Sweden before 2022 (Shmulyar Gréen & Odynets, 2024; Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2022). Newly arrived Ukrainians are a much larger group than the pre-2022 Ukrainian population in the country, with only 12,891 individuals born in Ukraine living in 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; Rädda 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</i>, LSS)	No	Yes	No
Daily allowance from MV	Yes, provided certain conditions are met	No	No
Tuition-free post-secondary education	Yes	Yes	Yes
Right to Swedish language education	No (but, per a law change implemented in July 2023, municipalities can choose to provide such education anyway)	Yes	Yes

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.

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	• 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	• Administering and organizing <i>etableringsprogrammet</i> • Further labour market assistance programs
Skatteverket (Swedish Tax Authority, SV)	Government agency	• Residence registration • Personal identification number allocation • Taxation

Försäkringskassan (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, FK)	Government agency	• Social insurance, health- and work-related and parental benefits 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	• Admission into higher education • Validation of foreign degrees and diplomas
Pensionsmyndigheten (Swedish Pension Agency)	Government agency	• Pensions and income support for the elderly
Municipal social services	Municipal agencies	• 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	• 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 pre-school, primary and/or secondary school)	Municipal agencies	• Admission and administration of primary and secondary schools
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

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 RTPs?

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 RTP 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. Čižer 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 RTP 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	Housing	Former manager at a major civil society organization which arranged housing and labour market programs for Ukrainian FDPs in a major Swedish city.
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 overarching 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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