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It does not represent the official views of the European Committee of the Regions.

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Abbreviations

AMIF: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund CARE: Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe

CoR: European Committee of the Regions

CZ: Czechia

ESPON IRiE: European Spatial Planning Observation Network: Interregional

Relations in Europe

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

ESF: European Social Fund

EU: European Union

EUAA: European Union Agency for Asylum FAST-CARE: Flexible Assistance to Territories

FEAD: Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived FRA: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

HU: Hungary

IOM: International Organization for Migration

LRA: Local and Regional Authority

MFF: Multiannual Financial Framework NGO: Non-governmental organisation

PL: Poland SK: Slovakia

SRIM: Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees and Migrants

TP: Temporary Protection

TPD: Temporary Protection Directive

UA: Ukraine

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

REACT-EU: Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe

RO: Romania

1. Introduction, methodology and theoretical framework

The full-scale military invasion of Ukraine launched by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 has displaced one third of the population of Ukraine, that is, about 15 million people, creating the largest population displacement in Europe since World War II. While it is estimated that over 7 million people are internally displaced within Ukraine, more than 5 million have fled the country and sought refuge across Europe. By mid-June 2022, 7.5 million cross-border movements had been recorded from Ukraine to its neighbouring countries - with 6 million crossing to one of the four EU Member States on the Union's Eastern external border, – Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. An overwhelming majority of people fleeing the war entered the EU via the Polish border (4 million). Although the first weeks of the conflict saw a steep rise in crossings to the EU, followed by a steady increase ever since, pendular movements have also been recorded.

The current crisis created an immediate challenge for border regions and countries, whose public services have already been strained by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the field of health care. While the immediate concern is to guarantee the protection and fundamental rights of people fleeing the war in Ukraine, the solidarity that is at the heart of the European response has also put the local and regional infrastructure of the frontline cities and regions to the test. The response of volunteers, civil society and governments at EU, national and regional levels have been unprecedented. At the same time, the uncertainty of the duration and the consequences of the war on Ukraine call for sustainable responses to the continued refugee flows.

As an immediate response to the full-scale military invasion, on 4 March 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted a Council Implementing Decision³ activating, for the first time, the EU Temporary Protection Directive ('TPD').⁴ It

¹ UNHCR, Ukraine situation: Flash Update #17 (17 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93659.

² UNHCR Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine.

³ Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, OJ L 71, 4 March 2022, pp. 1-6, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32022D0382.

⁴ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, OJ L 212, 7 August 2001, pp. 12-23, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32001L0055.

grants protection to people residing in Ukraine on or before 24 February 2022, including Ukrainian nationals, stateless persons, third country nationals who benefited from international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine as well as to their family members.⁵ The Decision further allows Member States to extend temporary protection to other persons who were legally residing in Ukraine and who cannot return under safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin.⁶ Following the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive, the Operational Guidelines⁷ Commission adopted implementation across the Member States, covering several issues, such as the personal scope of protection or the protection of children and unaccompanied minors. Under the Temporary Protection Directive, persons with temporary protection status have the right to access employment (Article 12 TPD), suitable accommodation or means to obtain housing (Article 13(1) TPD), social welfare or means of subsistence (Article 13(2) TPD), medical care (Article 13(2) TPD) and to education for persons under 18 years in the state education system (Article 14 TPD). In order to ensure the exercise of these rights by beneficiaries of temporary protection, several initiatives have been launched at EU and national levels, as discussed throughout the Study. In particular, regarding reception, the European Commission has set up a 'Solidarity Platform' to coordinate the operational response between Member States and to support them in the implementation of the TPD.8

In tandem with the EU institutions, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has strongly condemned Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine and expressed full solidarity with Ukrainian cities and regions, as well as with the people of Ukraine. Further to symbolic action pledging support and solidarity, 10

⁵ Article 2(1) of the Council Implementing Decision.

⁶ Article 2(3) of the Council Implementing Decision.

⁷ "Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council implementing Decision 2022/382 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection", OJ C 126I, 21 March 2022, pp. 1-16, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022XC0321%2803%29&gid=1647940863274.

⁸ In line with Article 3(2) of the Council Implementing Decision. See European Commission, "Factsheet Ukraine: EU preparedness to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine", 23 March 2022, p. 4, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_1948; "The 10-Point Plan for stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war against Ukraine", available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/10-point-plan-stronger-european-coordination-welcoming-people-fleeing-war-ukraine_en.

⁹ Declaration of the European Union's Regions and Cities on Solidarity with Ukraine, adopted by the European Committee of the Regions at the Summit in Marseille on 3-4 March 2022, available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/pages/cor-stands-in-solidarity-with-ukraine.aspx.

¹⁰ Such as the offer to "temporarily host in its buildings one or two representatives of the Ukrainian associations of local and regional authorities" without a permanent representation in Brussels, the exposition of the colours of the Ukrainian flag in the Committee of the Regions' building, or the granting of honorary membership to the Mayor of Kyiv – cf. "Regional and Local dimension of the Ukrainian war", Background Document for the Extraordinary Conference of Presidents of 6 April 2022, 1 April 2022, p. 8,

 $[\]underline{https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2185914\&meetingSessionId=2233021}.$

the CoR has set up a dedicated webpage 'Solidarity with Ukraine' to host the requests for humanitarian aid from the Committee's Ukrainian partners.¹¹ 'Solidarity with Ukraine' also provides for an Info-Support Hub for Regions and Cities, through which local and regional authorities (LRAs) can submit requests for support and register their offers to help,¹² for instance, to accommodate displaced persons, provide transport, interpretation, schooling and other forms of help, as well as material support for the temporary placements of refugees. 13 The CoR has also adopted a Resolution on EU regions and cities' support for Ukraine¹⁴ reiterating its condemnation of the invasion, calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, and supporting the swift opening of dialogue with Ukraine regarding the EU accession process. It also welcomed the European Commission's proposal for CARE – Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe – and stressed the role of frontline LRAs in the reception of refugees. In line with this, on 23 June 2022, the CoR expressed support for the European Council's decision to grant EU candidate status to Ukraine. 15 In this legal context, the Working Group on Ukraine¹⁶ has been leading the CoR's political response since February 2022. In its meeting on 30 March 2022 on humanitarian aid and assistance to Ukrainian refugees in the EU,¹⁷ it adopted a Declaration that, among others, called for a "bottom-up approach in planning and implementing the European Union's support for displaced people, by directly involving Europe's regions and cities" on the frontline. 18

 $\underline{https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2185914\&meetingSessionId=2233021.}$

 $\frac{https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2182078\&meetingSessionId=2227828.$

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¹¹ Committee of the Regions, "Humanitarian aid to Ukraine",

available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/help-for-ukraine.aspx.

¹² Committee of the Regions, "Help Ukraine: Info-Support Hub", available at:

https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/Help-Ukraine-Info-Support-Hub-for-Regions-and-Cities.aspx.

13 Committee of the Regions, "Regional and Local dimension of the Ukrainian war", Background Document for the Extraordinary Conference of Presidents of 6 April 2022, 1 April 2022, p. 8, available at:

https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments/PreetingId=2185914&meetingSessionId=

¹⁴ Draft resolution on EU regions and cities' support for Ukraine, submitted by the EPP, PES, Renew Europe, ECR, EA and the Greens groups, COR-2022-01808-00-00-PRES-TRA (EN), adopted at the European Committee of the Regions 149th plenary session, 27-28 April 2022, as per the 'Voting Results on Opinion and Resolutions as Amended', COR-2022-00374-00-00-TCD-REF, available at:

¹⁵ See https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/granting-of-EU-candidate-status-to-Ukraine-and-the-Republic-of-Moldova.aspx.

¹⁶ The Working Group on Ukraine was created in April 2020, as a continuation of the former Ukrainian Task Force. The Working Group aims to provide "targeted political and technical support to Ukrainian partners to help them achieve good governance at all levels, reinforce local democracy, and advance decentralisation reform.", as summarised in the respective online page, available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/Ukraine.aspx.

The Working Group normally meets twice a year, in the margins of the Conference of the Local and Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP). See also Work Programme of the European Committee of the Regions - Working Group on Ukraine for 2021-2025, available at the same page.

¹⁷ More information on this meeting available at:

https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/CoR-Working-Group-on-Ukraine-Meeting-Hybrid--.aspx.

¹⁸ Declaration issued by the European Committee of the Regions' Working Group on Ukraine, 30 March 2022, available at:

 $[\]frac{https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2184075\&meetingSessionId=2230544.$

Against this background, the Study aims to map the territorial impact of refugee flows from Ukraine, and the corresponding multilevel coordination between the EU and local and regional authorities. It does so through case studies focusing on five frontline Member States with particularly high incoming refugee flows from Ukraine: Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Czechia.

Figure 1 below provides an overview of where Ukrainian refugees are registered for a temporary or other form of national protection across the EU.

1 169 497 780.000 Germany 129.623 90.297 79 196 50 000 - 75 000 78.302 75 000 - 100.000 71,422 100 000 - 300 000 300 000 - 1 million 64,480 56,223 Selgium 47,477 42,257 gal 42.246 39,769 eland 35,675 Latvia 31,561 30.286 26,629

Figure 1. Refugees from Ukraine recorded in EU Member States, 5-16 June 2022

Map and figure: own elaborations

Data source: UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Situation

Note: Member States with less than 15,000 recorded refugees from UA were omitted from the figure. Those include Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Slovenia, Luxembourg, and Malta. Member States with a light blue bar indicate the case study countries of RO, HU, SK, PL, and CZ.

Within this context, the objective of the Study is to provide a real-time, factual overview of the reception of people fleeing the war in Ukraine at local and regional levels along with the urgent needs of local and regional authorities. To this end, the Study provides illustrative examples of regions and cities most affected by the refugee flows and, therefore, having faced particular challenges in providing public services to this population, what these challenges are and what policies and funds can be devised or tapped into to address them. Understanding the territorial dimension of the 2022 migratory landscape and the main issues for multilevel coordination at local and regional levels are essential to designing policies that well equip the most affected cities and regions in order to respond to unprecedented and growing reception needs.

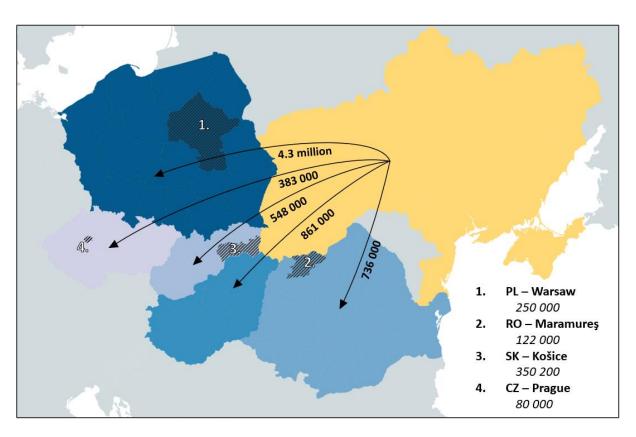
For the development of the Study, the desk research covered a range of sources, including strategic and legislative documents, policy reports, and 'grey literature', i.e. materials published on a non-commercial and non-scientific basis by stakeholders, government sources and NGOs, including situational reports, technical documents, and others. Given the novelty of the situation and the speed at which it is changing on the ground, updates and news published by the EU institutions and relevant agencies, national governments, LRAs and NGOs were regularly monitored. The Study further relied upon information made available by the Committee of Regions, in particular the Declaration issued by the CoR Working Group on Ukraine, as well as on reports and news updates released by the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The quantitative data were gathered from the operational data portal of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Eurostat, the EUAA as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The qualitative data collection was based on desk research and the results of tailored questionnaires distributed among the CoR representatives of the most affected frontline cities and regions in the five pre-selected case study countries. CoR representatives contributed to the development of this Study from Romania, Slovakia and Poland.

The data collected were subject to a threefold analysis — legal, policy and comparative. The legal and policy analyses focused particularly on the activated legal instruments and policies at EU and national level, having particular regard to the national contexts framing the Study. The comparative analysis, building on the case studies, focused mainly on the different experiences of the selected LRAs with a view to mapping territorial impacts, including gaps and areas for improvement. The case studies also present good practices with a view to being replicated in other regions, as applicable. The Study provides final conclusions and thematic recommendations from a policy and funding perspective as well as highlights forecasts for potential future scenarios requiring preparation in the short-term.

2. Case Studies

The territorial impact of the unprecedented refugee flows, as illustrated in Figure 2 below, have manifested differently in frontline cities and regions. While the vast majority of people fleeing Ukraine and crossing the borders of Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia are only staying in those Member States for a short period of time, those who cross the borders of Poland and Czechia predominantly arrive with a view to staying there until it is safe to return to Ukraine. The Study, therefore, focuses on the border regions of the mentioned transit countries of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, and the capital regions of the destination countries of Poland and Czechia, where nearly all arrivals have applied for temporary protection.

Figure 2. Direct cross-border movement of people fleeing Ukraine to the case study countries



Map: own elaboration

Data source: UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Situation

*Data correspond to the cross-border movement of refugees from UA (24 February-28 June 2022). For Czechia, the data indicate the number of refugees recorded. Local/regional data correspond to the number of people fleeing UA recorded in the given city/region.

The scale and nature of these flows are measured primarily through two sets of data: (1) cross-border movements, and (2) refugees from Ukraine recorded in a Member State. Data on 'cross-border movements' relate to the number of crossings by Ukrainians and third-country nationals, whereas 'refugees from Ukraine recorded' in a Member State refers to the number of individual refugees who have fled Ukraine since 24 February. The term 'refugee' hereinafter covers broadly people who have registered for temporary protection or a similar national protection scheme as well as Ukrainian applicants for asylum.

In addition, there is significant cross-border movement not only from Ukraine to EU Member States but also between the Member States. For instance, 587,000 people who crossed the border of Ukraine with Romania went on to cross the border from Romania to Hungary, and then continued their journey towards Slovakia given that ca. 97% of people transit through Hungary. To avoid counting the same people multiple times, Figure 2 above indicates only the population flows *directly* from Ukraine to the case study countries when referencing 'cross-border movements'. Accordingly, Poland has seen 4.3 million people arriving directly from Ukraine, Hungary 861,000, Romania 736,000, Slovakia 548,000 and Czechia 383,000 people by late June 2022. Accounting for direct border crossing was not possible in the context of Czechia, since it does not share a border with Ukraine. Here, the indicated statistics correspond with the number of people fleeing Ukraine and who were recorded in Czechia.

Lastly, significant cross-border movements have been observed from EU Member States back to Ukraine. In the context of the case study countries, between 24 February and 12 July 2022, the highest number of such movements was recorded at the Poland-Ukraine border with nearly 2.6 million, at the Romania-Ukraine border with over 492,000, and at the Slovakia-Ukraine border with over 320,000 reverse cross-border movements. While Ukrainian people want to return to their home country in high numbers and at the slightest chance they get, and the UNHCR has also consistently verified the phenomenon of reverse cross-border movements, related data cannot be attributed to sustainable return due to the significant pendular, i.e. back-and-forth, movements – also due to the continued volatility of the security situation in Ukraine.¹⁹

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¹⁹ UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Response", available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine.

2.1 Romania

Box 1: Key findings/challenges

- ♦ *Long-term integration*: due to the protracted conflict, Maramureş County, selected for the Romanian case study, has faced the challenge of developing social, educational, and occupational support for the reception and integration of refugees coming from Ukraine in the longer term.
- ♦ Vulnerability of the transiting refugee population: As Romania is mostly a transit country, a significant part of the people fleeing Ukraine in need of immediate assistance are on the move i.e. they do not hold temporary protection status and, thus, are not entitled to some of the essential services.
- ♦ *Children with extreme vulnerabilities*: Among the children fleeing Ukraine, Romania has received more than 2,000 from social services in Ukraine, who are in need of targeted support due to their intersectional vulnerabilities.
- ♦ *Hindrances in access to services*: for instance, as a result of the imposition of administrative fees/taxes.

Romania borders Ukraine in the South-West, sharing an over 600 km-long primarily land border as part of the Eastern external border of the EU. Since the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022, over 1.2 million refugees have arrived in Romania from Ukraine. Out of those, around 1,110,000 had left by 15 June, leaving 83,000 - 90,000 refugees on Romanian territory – with some pendular movements also observed.²⁰ Over 90% of the refugee flow from Ukraine transits through Romania. After the peak influx in the first three weeks following the invasion, Romania has seen a steady weekly arrival rate of around 10,000. Around half of new arrivals are women, 31% children, and 19% men.²¹ While the number of arrivals changes rapidly, the trend of large-scale transiting flows remain constant. Prior to the war, Romania was hosting around 4,000 asylum seekers and refugees, with 10,000 people being the largest number to arrive in a single year.²² Hence, the influx is on an unprecedented scale – and yet met with generosity, hospitality, and solidarity.

By virtue of Government Decision 387/2022, temporary protection applies to Ukrainian nationals living in Ukraine on 24 February, third-country nationals and stateless people who have received international protection or a similar national

²⁰ UNHCR, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Romania", (1-15 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93839.

²¹ Prime Minister's Office, "Romania's response to the humanitarian refugees' crisis", (14 April 2022), p. 6, available at:

https://gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/14.04.2022ROMANIA%E2%80%99S_RESPONSE_TO_THE_HUMANIT_ARIAN_REFUGEES%E2%80%99_CRISIS-_SUMMARY_COUNTRY_REPORT.pdf.

²² UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 58, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

protection, and those holding Ukraine-issued permanent residence permits who cannot return to their country of origin.²³ However, most non-Ukrainian third-country nationals will not fall under the latter category and even if they do, the Romanian authorities must first investigate and then decide that they cannot return to their country of origin safely.²⁴ Accordingly, in practice non-Ukrainian third-country nationals are being accepted from Ukraine for transit purposes only. They must have a valid travel document, and at the border crossing point they receive a Romanian transit visa for up to 90 days (arrivals via Moldova even need to obtain a visa from the Romanian Consulate in advance).²⁵

The top five counties hosting people fleeing Ukraine are Bucharest, Constanta, Brasov, Galati, and Iasi. While the majority of those remaining in Romania are hosted in Bucharest, this region contains only a fraction of the flow – with less than 38,000 people (ca. 3.5% of the total number of arrivals) registering for temporary protection by 15 June 2022.²⁶ Therefore, the need for immediate services such as access to shelter, food and non-food items, means of subsistence, medical care, transportation, and temporary educational support for children is concentrated in the border areas. This trend warrants a heightened focus on the 'North-West' and 'North-East' development regions that border Ukraine – with four main border crossing points between Romania and Ukraine (Halmeu, Sighet, Siret and Isaccea), and two border crossing points between Romania and Moldova (Albita and Sculeni). In light of this, the case study demonstrates the factual situation on the ground in June-July 2022 through the illustrative example of Maramures County in the North-West region of the country. With its 163 km-long border area with Ukraine, the county is at the frontline of the reception of people fleeing Ukraine. Since the invasion, over 122,000 have entered Maramures, with 93,000 being Ukrainian citizens.

As Ionel Ovidiu Bogdan, the president of Maramureş County Council explained, the management of the reception of the people arriving from Ukraine in large numbers in such a short period of time was very challenging. All key actors, from the local government and local authorities to public institutions, businesses and civil society were mobilised to provide much-needed support. For the coordination of such a concerted response, a Crisis Management Working Group was established at county level, involving the representatives of Maramureş

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²³ Information for People Displaced from Ukraine

available at: https://igi.mai.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Text-protectie-temporara-EN-pdf.pdf, and HOTĂRÂRE nr. 367 din 18 martie 2022 available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/252745.

²⁴ Deloitte Romania, "The temporary protection mechanism, implemented in Romania. How does it apply?", available at: https://www2.deloitte.com/ro/en/pages/tax/articles/mecanismul-de-protectie-temporara-implementat-romania-cum-se-aplica.html.

²⁵ IOM Romania, "Information for Third Country Nationals (TCNs) entering Romania from Ukraine", available at: https://romania.iom.int/news/information-third-country-nationals-tcns-entering-romania-ukraine.
²⁶ UNHCR, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Romania", (1-15 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93839.

County Council, Maramureș Prefecture, and Maramureș' Inspectorate for Emergency Situations.

Further, Maramureş County Council allocated RON 1.5 million (€303,000) to manage the refugee crisis through the financing of local NGOs to increase the operational capacity for more adequate, efficient, and unitary humanitarian assistance. Under the coordination of the Working Group, over 30 NGOs are involved in the project, running all necessary operations at the logistic centres and at the Children and Family Protection Support Hub (Blue Dot). The latter is operated in partnership with the UNHCR and UNICEF²⁷ and is aligned with the national and local protection systems.²⁸ This is of exceptional relevance due to the intersectional vulnerabilities of this population. As an illustrative example, as of mid-April 2022, 2,047 children from Ukrainian social services have been identified in Romania.²⁹

The range of immediate actions required by the response is wide and includes receiving, registering and guiding the people fleeing Ukraine; providing meals, accommodation, and transportation; facilitating access to legal advice and translation assistance; facilitating access to medical and psychological care, as well as access to child protection services while managing donations. Importantly, the official response goes hand in hand with the voluntary acts of solidarity from Romanian citizens across the country who, since the early days of the invasion, have been offering thousands of accommodation places, food and transportation support free-of-charge.

With Romania being a transit country, people fleeing there from Ukraine in need of immediate assistance are primarily those on the move i.e. not holding temporary protection status in the country. Nevertheless, according to IOM's immediate needs assessment survey,³⁰ the top primary needs of those in transit and those remaining in the country are similar in nature and include accommodation, food and non-food basic items, medical care, and temporary educational activities for children. With a view to meeting these needs, Romanian law has recognised the importance of inclusivity and reduced legal restrictions on access to essential services. In Government Ordinance No. 20/2022, it provided

²⁷ UNICEF Romania, "3 things to know about Blue Dots" (24 March 2022)", available at: https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/3-things-know-about-blue-dots.

²⁸ Children and Family Support Hubs, "Ukraine Emergency in Neighbouring countries: BLUE DOTS", (March 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/91739.

²⁹ Prime Minister's Office, "Romania's response to the humanitarian refugees' crisis", (14 April 2022), p. 12, available at:

https://gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/14.04.2022_ROMANIA%E2%80%99S_RESPONSE_TO_THE_HUMANIT_ARIAN_REFUGEES%E2%80%99_CRISIS-_SUMMARY_COUNTRY_REPORT.pdf.

³⁰ IOM, "Ukraine Response 2022 - Needs Assessment 12 April – 04 May 2022" (6 June 2022), available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/iom-ukraine-response-2022-needs-assessment-12-april-04-may-2022. Although the report specifically considers the situation in Poland, the considerations can be extrapolated to the whole flow.

access to services for "the people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including all such foreign citizens and stateless persons".³¹

Romania has shown comparatively high preparedness in terms of accommodation facilities available for Ukrainian refugees. Across the county, there are 55 accommodation sites with a total capacity of 1,640 people. The average occupancy rate of refugee accommodation centres nationwide is around 20%.³² Maramures county hosts one of the six main regional reception centres, 33 which also operates at the same capacity – with only 260 people being hosted as per 8 June 2022 data.³⁴ Across Maramures, the forms of accommodation range from tents to containers and a Refugee Camp set up in the Municipal Stadium of Sighetu Marmatiei in partnership with the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and the Mayoralty. In addition, local and national companies and institutions offer free accommodation for people fleeing Ukraine, under the coordination of Maramures County Council, which has also created a dedicated online platform to connect the needs of those fleeing the war with the available accommodation and transportation. Further, the county has provided accommodation for over 500 children and their accompanying adults on their way to Turkey. Citizens also extensively host people fleeing Ukraine on a voluntary basis. It should be noted that any person who is hosting a foreigner who has legally entered the country is obliged to inform the local Police within 3 days – failing to do so is considered an offence and is fined RON 100 to 500 (€20 - €100).35 At the same time, under the mechanism established by Government Decision no. 336/2022, natural persons who host people fleeing Ukraine benefit from the reimbursement of food expenses.³⁶ Accordingly, individuals and legal entities can receive €4 per person per day for the cost of food and €10 per person per day to cover the costs of accommodation.³⁷

³¹ Emergency Ordinance no. 20 of 7 March 2022, available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/252480.

³² UNHCR, "Romania Situation Overview of Refugee Accommodation Centres", (8 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93516.

³³ Six main regional centres in Timis, Maramureş, Galati, Suceava, Giurgiu and Bucharest

ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine", (31 May 2022) p. 27, available at: https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Information-Sheet-%E2%80%93-Access-to-territory-asylum-procedures-and-reception-conditions-for-Ukrainian-nationals-in-European-countries.pdf.

³⁴ UNHCR, "Romania Situation Overview of Refugee Accommodation Centres", (8 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93516.

³⁵ Articles 12, 134, and 135 of OUG no. 194/2002, in DOPOMOHA, "Temporary Protection", available at https://dopomoha.ro/en/temporary-protection

³⁶ Prime Minister's Office, "Romania's response to the humanitarian refugees' crisis", (14 April 2022), p. 14, available at:

https://gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/14.04.2022_ROMANIA%E2%80%99S_RESPONSE_TO_THE_HUMANIT_ARIAN_REFUGEES%E2%80%99_CRISIS-_SUMMARY_COUNTRY_REPORT.pdf.

³⁷ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine", (17 June 2022) p. 34 available at: https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ECRE-Update-30-May-2022-Implementation-of-the-TPD.pdf.

Apart from the accommodation centres, three logistics centres have been set up across the county in Baia Mare, Sighetu Marmatiei and Halmeu for managing donations of *means of subsistence*, received from local, national and international donors, including donors from twin-regions and other EU partners. Under the coordination of the Maramures' Chamber of Commerce, local companies have also contributed food, hygiene products, medical devices, clothes, and other essential household items. Further, people fleeing Ukraine in need of food, clothing, hygiene and other products can register their request on an Emergency Support Platform - an integrated resource management system that coordinates donations from individuals, civil society and legal entities.³⁸ In partnership with local and international NGOs and UN Agencies, including UNICEF, the Red Cross and the Romanian Child Protection Institution, the Maramures LRA has set up a "Blue Dot – Integrated Centre of Assistance and Support" for refugees and their children at the border point of Sighetu Marmatiei, which was the first Blue Dot facility to be set up at the Romania-Ukraine border.³⁹ At the Blue Dot, people fleeing Ukraine can request food, accommodation, transportation, medical care as well as specialised psychological support. More than 5,000 adults and 3,000 children have been helped by this facility.⁴⁰ Public and volunteer support also extends to transportation. With a "Help Ukraine Ticket", people displaced from Ukraine can travel on the state railway or certain cross-border journeys for free. Two free international rail transport corridors have also been created, with departure from Sighetu Marmației daily. There are also initiatives at national level, among others via Romfour⁴¹ or Flixbus,⁴² which offer free transport via bus to various European cities.

People entitled to temporary protection under national law are granted access to *health care*. Those who seek asylum in Romania have access to primary care, as well as emergency hospital care.⁴³ However, non-Ukrainian third-country nationals do not have the right to health care with the temporary transit visa they are granted. In addition, Maramureş County Council offers free COVID-19 testing and access to the two local hospitals in case of emergencies.

In the context of *education*, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Maramureş plays a central role in ensuring social assistance and child protection for the refugees. Pre-schoolers and pupils from Ukraine are entitled to access the Romanian education system. To that end, they can enrol at

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³⁸ Emergency Support Platform, available at: https://sprijindeurgenta.ro/.

³⁹UNICEF, "Blue Dot: Providing Critical Support to Refugees from Ukraine", available at: https://www.unicef.org/romania/blue-dot-providing-critical-support-refugees-ukraine.

⁴⁰ Stakeholder consultation June 2022.

⁴¹ European Travel Commission, European Tourism Support to the People of Ukraine, available at: https://etc-corporate.org/european-tourism-support-to-the-people-of-ukraine/.

⁴² Flixbus, Together for Ukraine, available at: https://global.flixbus.com/ukraine-support.

⁴³ Government 'Welcome to Romania' Brochure, available at: https://www.gov.ro/fisiere/impreuna_ajutam_mai_mult/Brosura-A5-ENG.pdf.

the county level, where at the same time they can request psycho-pedagogical assistance and counselling. Work is also underway to create the necessary conditions for ensuring Ukrainian children can learn the Romanian language.⁴⁴

People fleeing the war have a right to *access to employment* in Romania, with no work visa required, and the possibility of asking for a single permit for temporary residence and work after 90 days in Romania.⁴⁵ It should be noted that the €250 tax on the issuance of a single work permit is likely to be a hindrance to access, given the vulnerability of this population.⁴⁶ Maramureş County has organised several meetings with people fleeing Ukraine and with local companies, in partnership with NGOs, the Chamber of Commerce Maramureş and the Employment Agency Maramureş in order to present national and local employment opportunities for refugees.

Due to the protracted conflict, the region is faced with the challenge of supporting refugees in the longer term, to develop social, educational, and occupational support for their *integration* in Maramureş. For that, currently the main policy instrument is the Sustainable Development Strategy of Maramureş County 2014-2020 (SDSMC 2014-2020), still in force until the adoption of the 2021-2027 Strategy.⁴⁷ In the operationalisation of its strategic and thematic objectives, the social and economic integration of the newly arrived refugees is to be considered. Recently, Maramureş County Council in partnership with the Podkarpackie Voivodship, as the project leader and twin-region on the Polish-Ukrainian border, along with other partners, applied for funding through Interreg Europe⁴⁸ for a project on the Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees and Migrants (SRIM). Through the project, the county aims to develop an Action Plan and new ways of helping the refugees integrate in the county.

So far, the county reportedly has not benefitted from EU funding in the context of the reception of people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

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⁴⁴ DOPOMOHA, My Rights – Education, available at: https://dopomoha.ro/en/education.

⁴⁵ Emergency Ordinance no. 20/2022 on humanitarian assistance for those fleeing Ukraine, available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/252480.

⁴⁶ DOPOMOHA, My Rights – Right to Work, available at: https://dopomoha.ro/en/my-rights.

⁴⁷ Among others, under the strategic objective on the integrated and balanced development of the territory (SO2) and the thematic objective of promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (TO2), with a view to supporting urban and rural development to provide quality public services. In particular by ensuring access to infrastructure, education and training services as well as to infrastructure and quality social services for all inhabitants. Under the forthcoming Strategy, it is foreseen to support the adaptation of the workforce for future challenges and to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion by investing in education, health, social services, culture, youth, sports and recreation.

⁴⁸ One of the two goals of the EU Cohesion Policy for the 2014-2020 programming period. It is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Box 2: Local/regional good practices

- ♦ *Coordinated local response*: via the establishment of the Crisis Management Working Group at county level, involving the local government and authorities, public institutions, businesses and civil society.
- ♦ Comprehensive financing of civil society organisations: Maramureş County Council allocated €303,000 to local NGOs participating in the reception and integration of refugees in order to increase their operational capacity.
- ♦ Extended personal scope of temporary protection: granting access to reception conditions generally to "people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine" (Emergency Ordinance no. 20/2022).
- ♦ *Spare reception capacity*: 55 accommodation centres with 1,600+ capacity have been available, although currently running at 20% of their capacity.
- ♦ Coordination and vetting of private accommodation: the Maramureş County Council has created an online platform to connect the needs of those fleeing the war with the available accommodation and transportation and has ensured the possibility to file a complaint.
- ♦ Centralised Emergency Support Platform: coordination of private donations and refugees' needs: through an integrated resource management system that coordinates donations from individuals, civil society and legal entities, and where refugees in need of food, clothing, hygiene and other products can register their request.

2.2 Hungary

- ♦ Populations unaccounted for and not served by the state reception system: only 3% of people crossing the Hungarian border either directly from Ukraine or via Romania remain in Hungary, and even they resort to unofficial channels to meet their needs with only a fraction of them appearing in the formal reception system and thus receiving state support.
- ♦ *Limited scope of protection*: non-Ukrainian third-country nationals fleeing the war in Ukraine fall outside the scope of the national temporary protection regime. They are not being offered another status that could provide adequate alternative protection either, and they are ineligible for reception conditions, other than accommodation.
- ◆ Lack of preparedness: the immediate needs are concentrated in the border regions with Ukraine and to a lesser extent with Romania, where LRAs have had little previous exposure to refugee flows, and where over 1.3 million people fleeing the war came under the remit of the local/regional infrastructure within four months.
- ♦ Lack of capacity of the education system: the already strained capacity combined with the lack of methodological and language assistance risk compromising the integration of thousands of Ukrainian-speaking pupils.
- ♦ Lack of capacity of the health care system: the national health care system suffers from a severe shortage of medical staff, lack of available infrastructure, and overall strained capacities post-COVID. Even if newcomers have access to the health care system, the extent to which the system will be able to actually care for them remains to be seen.

Box 3: Key findings/challenges

Hungary borders Ukraine on the West, sharing a 136 km-long land border as part of the external border of the European Union. Since the beginning of the invasion, over 1.3 million people fleeing Ukraine have arrived in Hungary, with 725,000 of them crossing the border directly from Ukraine, with another 587,000 arriving via Romania by 7 June 2022⁴⁹. Most of them have departed, with only 24,231 individuals (less than 2% of all arrivals), applying for temporary protection. Out of these, only 16,188 have been granted temporary protection status so far. Vulnerable persons constitute the majority of the various flows, with 44% being women, 26% children and 30% men, the latter mainly elderly or with disabilities.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the flows are uneven with ca. 70% of those arriving directly from Ukraine being women and children, while the majority of arrivals via Romania are men.⁵¹ At the same time, there is an increasing sense that it is impossible to determine the exact number of displaced persons from Ukraine who

⁴⁹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Hungary", (7 June 2022), p. 1. available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93509.

⁵⁰ UNHCR, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Hungary", (7 June 2022), p. 1. available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93509.

⁵¹ UNHCR "Ukraine Situation/Hungary: Population Figures" (4 July 2022) available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

are still on Hungarian territory. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee reports that most new arrivals immediately travel onwards to other Member states and more and more people decide to return to their homeland. The Committee projects that between 50,000 and 100,000 displaced persons from Ukraine may still be present in Hungary, although they do not show up in official statistics. ⁵² At the same time, based on Facebook users' login points, Meta has reported that tens of thousands of people fleeing Ukraine are in Budapest, while only 270 are officially being housed by city authorities. ⁵³

Initially, people arriving from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 were eligible for temporary protection status (termed 'menedékes' i.e. 'sheltered' under national law). However, as of 8 March 2022, by virtue of Government Decree no. 86/2022, only Ukrainian and/or Hungarian citizens and those who were granted international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine prior to the full-scale military invasion are entitled to temporary protection.⁵⁴ At the same time, the Decree excluded from temporary protection any other persons who do not fall into the above categories, such as non-Ukrainian third country nationals. They, therefore, are not eligible for the reception conditions foreseen in the TPD and are only entitled to stay on the territory for a period of an initial 30 days with a temporary residence permit.⁵⁵ The difference in access to reception conditions is striking between people fleeing the war in Ukraine who are eligible for temporary protection under national law (predominantly Ukrainian and/or Hungarian nationals), and those who are ineligible for temporary protection (predominantly third-country nationals). The former receives a residence permit, means of subsistence and the right to work, study and access healthcare (as discussed in more detail below), whereas the latter do not have a right to any state support and can only rely on the voluntary help of civil organisations.

Further, Decree 86/2022 specifically expanded the personal scope of the national temporary protection regime to Hungarian-Ukrainian dual citizens. This is in a regional context where an estimated 130,000 ethnic Hungarians live in the

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helsinki/?fbclid=IwAR3RGrQtlWWtXvT9qr Te8KcVkJiA62SXHZ d-MxSqlpcduMwqkEeH D7a8.

⁵² 24.hu, "The government refers to a million of Ukrainian refugees, while only a handful of them ask for protection from the Hungarian authorities", available at: https://24.hu/belfold/2022/06/15/orosz-ukran-haboru-menekultek-szama-nepszamlalas-

⁵³ 444.hu, "According to Facebook data, there are tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees in the capital, but no one knows who they are and where they live", available at: https://444.hu/2022/06/24/a-facebook-adatai-alapjan-tobb-tizezer-ukran-menekult-van-a-fovarosban-de-senki-sem-tudja-hogy-kik-ok-es-hol-elnek.

⁵⁴ Government Decree No. 86/2022. (III. 7.) on the rules applicable in a state of danger and related to persons recognised as eligible for temporary protection, and on derogations from the rules of Act CVI. of 2011 on public employment and on the amendment of acts related to public employment and of other acts, available in EN at https://helsinki.hu/en/wp-

content/uploads/sites/2/2022/03/HUgovdecree_implementing_councildecision_tempprotEN.pdf.

⁵⁵ National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing, Information for non-Ukrainian citizens fleeing Ukraine and for Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Hungary before the outbreak of the armed conflict, available at: http://www.bmbah.hu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1763&Itemid=2127&lang=hu.

Ukrainian border region of Zakarpatska Oblast/Kárpátalja,⁵⁶ many of whom hold both Ukrainian and Hungarian citizenship, especially since the 2011 introduction of the simplified naturalisation procedure for ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries.⁵⁷

Importantly, applications for temporary protection can be submitted on national territory – suspending the prior requirement introduced with reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, which banned applications for international protection on Hungarian territory as a whole and required that a 'declaration of intent' to that effect be submitted to a Hungarian Embassy abroad.⁵⁸

Against this background, the case study demonstrates the factual situation on the ground through references to the situation of border counties, such as Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg county and the capital city of Budapest. Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg county has six border crossing points with Ukraine and two with Romania along the Eastern border of Hungary.⁵⁹ With Hungary being a transit country, the role of LRAs in the border region is pivotal in providing immediate public support services. Even though the flows transit through Hungary within weeks, new arrivals are continuous, and support for over 1.3 million refugees within four months poses a considerable challenge. It is even more of a challenge in a region which has had little prior exposure to forced migration and where, at points of exit from the conflict regions, the need for psycho-social support is essential. Therefore, in this frontline region, the LRAs are in dire need of support to strengthen capacities to ensure access to health, education, temporary accommodation, and core relief items. At the same time, since 21 March 2022, the government has centralised the coordination of reception support in the newly opened Transit Centre at the BOK Stadium in Budapest. Therefore, refugee flows have systematically been channelled to the BOK Stadium, regardless of their border crossing points, where government and civil society actors jointly direct them to necessary services.⁶⁰

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⁵⁶ Tátrai P., Molnár J., Kovály K., Erőss, Á., Population of Transcarpathian Hungarians and factors affecting their population based on the SUMMA 2017 survey (*A kárpátaljai magyarok lélekszám a és a népesedésüket befolyásoló tényezők a SUMMA 2017 felmérés* alapján) p. 10 available at: http://real.mtak.hu/101470/1/3.Tatrai et.al ..pdf.

⁵⁷ Central Statistics Bureau (KSH), New Hungarian citizens: Changes after the introduction of the simplified naturalisation procedure, (Új magyar állampolgárok: Változások az egyszerűsített honosítási eljárás bevezetése után), available at: https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/pdf/ujmagyarallampolgarok.pdf.

⁵⁸ Act LVIII of 2020 on the transitional rules related to the end of the state of emergency and on epidemic preparedness, available at: https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a2000058.tv.

⁵⁹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Refugee Situation Operational Update: Hungary" (4 May 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92594.

⁶⁰ Telex, "The transit waiting area is a step forward in the care of refugees, but it is incomprehensible why the government would wait a month", available at: https://telex.hu/belfold/2022/03/25/ukrajna-menekultek-bok-csarnok-kozponti-tranzitvaro-szallas-migration-aid-palyaudvar-fuvar.

The Hungarian response to the flows has been characterised by the solidarity and activism of volunteers who have offered accommodation, food and essential items – without financial support or the possibility of reimbursement. Voluntary organising has been concentrated on social media, with the 'Help Ukraine/ Transcarpathia' Facebook group having ca. 140,000 members.⁶¹

People with temporary protection status, which, for now, is valid until 4 March 2023, 62 are eligible for accommodation, but can also choose to reside with volunteers or friends, but in any case, must report their place of residence to the National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing at the time of application. People with no eligibility for temporary protection can also request accommodation via immigration officials, but mainly rely on the support of volunteers and civil society. The first week of the war alone saw over 10,000 refugees being hosted by volunteers from the above-mentioned Facebook volunteer group. 63 Temporary accommodation is mainly offered by citizens in their homes and by LRAs in local sports and cultural facilities and motels. The civil society organisation, MigrationAid, is particularly involved in assisting new arrivals both at the border crossing points and at the BOK Stadium, coordinating private offers of accommodation, as well as operating the Madridi Street shelter, which hosts ca. 300 refugees.⁶⁴ The Local Government of Budapest offers temporary accommodation in real estate and public buildings owned by the municipality, with an accommodation capacity of up to 2,000 refugees.⁶⁵ However, the City's General Council recently confirmed that, currently, the city hosts only 270 people.66

People who have applied for temporary protection are eligible for food assistance and those who were already granted the status receive a monthly cash assistance of HUF 22,800 (\in 55) for *means of subsistence*, as well as HUF 13,700 (\in 33) as child benefit. These benefits are only received if the status holder is unemployed, and beneficiaries are obliged to accept any employment offered by the employment department of the local authority of their place of residence.⁶⁷ As

https://helsinki.hu/informacio-az-ukrajnabol-menekulo-ukran-allampolgaroknak-es-csaladtagjaiknak/.

^{61 &#}x27;Segítségnyújtás (Ukrajna, Kárpátalja) Допомога українцям, available at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/994143548136400/.

⁶² Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "Information for Ukrainian citizens fleeing Ukraine, refugees recognized in Ukraine, stateless persons and their family members", available at:

⁶³ 24.hu, "More than ten thousand refugees have already been accepted by private individuals through a Facebook group", available at: https://24.hu/belfold/2022/03/01/orosz-ukran-haboru-menekultek-szallas-facebook-gregor-alexandra/.

⁶⁴ Migration Aid available at: https://migrationaid.org/.

⁶⁵ Index (2022), "Budapest provides for accommodation to refugees", 27 February 2022.

^{66 444, &}quot;According to Facebook data, there are tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees in the capital, but no one knows who they are and where they live", available at: https://444.hu/2022/06/24/a-facebook-adatai-alapjantobb-tizezer-ukran-menekult-van-a-fovarosban-de-senki-sem-tudja-hogy-kik-ok-es-hol-elnek.

⁶⁷ Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "Information for Ukrainian citizens fleeing Ukraine, refugees recognized in Ukraine, stateless persons and their family members", available at: https://helsinki.hu/informacio-az-ukrajnabolmenekulo-ukran-allampolgaroknak-es-csaladtagjaiknak/.

mentioned above, those who are neither applicants nor beneficiaries of temporary protection are not eligible for means of subsistence from public authorities. Nevertheless, the voluntary support of civil society, UN Agencies (in particular, the UNHCR and UNICEF), as well as the business sector have been largely needs-rather than status-based and can be broadly relied upon by people displaced from Ukraine. One notable example of comprehensive public support is that of the Budapest Transport Centre, owned by the Local Government of Budapest, which grants free public transport for "those fleeing the war in Ukraine". ⁶⁸

Those who have applied for or received temporary protection are eligible for primary *health care*. However, those excluded from the status have access only to emergency health care and mandatory vaccinations. ⁶⁹ The Ministry of Human Capacities has set up mobile medical units in Vásárosnamény, Fehérgyarmat and Tarpa in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, where medical professionals are on duty 24/7 to provide immediate care for new arrivals. Every person crossing the Hungarian border goes through a temperature check, and on suspicion of an infection, is tested for COVID-19, unless they hold a valid vaccination certificate. The Ministry has also designated hospitals across the region responsible for receiving people in need of immediate assistance. Mobile pharmacies have also been set up at the border crossing points. ⁷⁰ Civil society organisations are also offering medical assistance to new arrivals. For example, the MedSpot Foundation (*MedSpot Alapítvány*) has deployed a medical unit and installed two examination rooms that operate 24/7 at the border crossing point of Beregsurány. ⁷¹

Children entitled to temporary protection are eligible for free *education* from nursery to secondary school along with daily meals at child-care or educational facilities for six months.⁷² For those who are of mandatory school age, public schools and vocational training institutions receive 130,000 HUF/month (€350) supplementary state support, provided they can prove that at least five hours/week are dedicated to the individual training of refugee pupils arriving from Ukraine.⁷³

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⁶⁸ BKK, "Refugees from Ukraine can travel free-of-charge on all BKK vehicles until 31 August", available at: https://bkk.hu/hirek/2022/05/augusztus-31-ig-dijmentesen-utazhatnak-az-ukrajnabol-erkezo-menekultek-a-bkk-jaratain.7646/.

⁶⁹ Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "Information for non-Ukrainian citizens fleeing from Ukraine", available at: https://helsinki.hu/en/information-for-nonukrainian-citizens-fleeing-from-ukraine/.

Hungarian Government, "The Government also Provides Healthcare for Ukrainian Refugees",
 available at: https://kormany.hu/hirek/a-kormany-biztositja-az-ukrajnai-menekultek-egeszsegugyi-ellatasat-is.
 MedSpot Foundation available at: https://medspot.hu/,

relevant updates are available via Facebook at https://m.facebook.com/pg/medspotalapitvany/posts/.

⁷² Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "Information for Ukrainian citizens fleeing Ukraine, refugees recognized in Ukraine, stateless persons and their family members", available at: https://helsinki.hu/informacio-az-ukrajnabol-menekulo-ukran-allampolgaroknak-es-csaladtagjaiknak/.

⁷³ Government Decision 1179/2022. (III. 23.) on the provision of resources necessary for implementing the development and education of pupils who are entitled to temporary protection and are obliged to attend school, available at: https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A22H1179.KOR&dbnum=1.

However, the lack of capacity as well as methodological and language assistance, reportedly, leaves the schools unprepared for integrating thousands of Ukrainian-speaking pupils into an already strained public education system.⁷⁴

From the time of application for temporary protection, applicants have the right to access *employment* in Hungary without restrictions or the need for a work permit; however, those falling outside the scope of the national temporary protection regime have no right to work with a temporary residence permit.⁷⁵ Cash assistance is dependent on the beneficiaries' willingness to register with the Employment Department of the LRA as a job-seeker and to accept any employment offered to them.⁷⁶

Box 4: Local/regional good practice

- ♦ *Temporary public accommodation*: for instance, the Local Government of Budapest has made available real estate and public buildings with an accommodation capacity of up to 2,000 refugees, although the city currently only hosts 270 beneficiaries.
- ♦ *Free public transport*: available in Budapest.
- ♦ *Volunteerism & activism*: the solidarity and quick self-organisation of volunteers, including on social media is notable. For example, the Help Ukraine/Transcarpathia (*Segítségnyújtás (Ukrajna,Kárpátalja)/Допомога українцям*) Facebook group has ca. 140,000 members, who in the first week of the war alone hosted over 10,000 refugees.
- ♦ *Needs-based civil society support*: civil society, UN Agencies (especially UNHCR, UNICEF) and businesses have made essential services available for all people fleeing the war in Ukraine regardless of legal status.
- ♦ Access to first-response health care: in mobile medical units set up by the Ministry of Human Capacities at border crossing points with 24/7 medical staff presence.
- ♦ *Meals in child-care and education settings*: besides being eligible for free education, refugee children can receive daily meals at child-care or educational facilities for six months.
- ◆ State financial support for educational institutions: public schools and vocational training institutions receive 130,000 HUF/month (€350) supplementary state support for each Ukrainian pupil.
- ♦ *Early access to employment for TP applicants*: people eligible for temporary protection already have a right to employment during the application phase.

⁷⁴ HVG, "Refugees in the classroom: a letter from the ministry will not solve another huge task for teachers", available at: https://hvg.hu/elet/20220323 Menekult gyerekek az iskolaban.

⁷⁵ Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "Information for non-Ukrainian citizens fleeing from Ukraine", available at: https://helsinki.hu/en/information-for-nonukrainian-citizens-fleeing-from-ukraine/.

⁷⁶ Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "Information for Ukrainian citizens fleeing Ukraine, refugees recognized in Ukraine, stateless persons and their family members", available at: https://helsinki.hu/informacio-az-ukrajnabol-menekulo-ukran-allampolgaroknak-es-csaladtagjaiknak/.

2.3 Slovakia

Box 5: Key findings/challenges

- ♦ Reception linked to TP eligibility: most reception conditions are linked to the application for temporary or international protection leaving out the majority of new arrivals who transit through the country and those not eligible, such as non-Ukrainian third-country nationals.
- ♦ Women and children: 86% of refugees on the territory are women and children a significantly higher rate than in other case study countries, requiring reception and integration measures tailored to the needs of this extremely vulnerable population.
- ♦ *Differentiated access to health care*: the degree of access and related costs depend on the type of protection status, or the lack thereof.
- ♦ *Inclusion in but not admission to education*: children fleeing Ukraine are not granted a right to be admitted in schools, even upon being granted temporary protection, rather they can be included subject to availability and the decision of school directors.

Slovakia shares a 97 km-long border with Ukraine, which forms part of the Eastern external border of the EU. Since the Russian full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, over 548,000⁷⁷ refugees have crossed the border from Ukraine to Slovakia, out of which close to 80,000 have applied for temporary protection.⁷⁸ After the peak influx in the first three weeks following the full-scale invasion, Slovakia has seen a weekly arrival rate of around 3,000 refugees.⁷⁹ This constitutes 'the largest refugee emergency' in the history of Slovakia, as previously Slovakia hosted only 409 refugees.⁸⁰ Importantly, the vast majority of arrivals are women and children, who make up 86% of this population group.⁸¹

The main border crossing points are located in the Prešov and Košice regions of the East of Slovakia bordering Ukraine. Košice is one of the eight self-governing regions of the Slovak Republic with a population of ca. 782,000 and where the border crossing points of Vyšné Germané, Veľké Slamence and Čierna nad Tisou are located. Between 24 February and 15 July 2022 350,210 people fleeing the war arrived in Slovakia through these border crossing points; therefore, the case

⁷⁷ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation (24 February-28 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine.

⁷⁸ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine; "Slovakia: Inter-Agency Operational June Update" (22 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93829.

⁷⁹ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation: Slovakia, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10785.

⁸⁰ UNHCR, "Slovakia: Inter-Agency Operational June Update" (22 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93829.

⁸¹ UNHCR, "Slovakia: Inter-Agency Operational June Update" (22 June 2022), p. 1, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93829.

study demonstrates the factual situation on the ground through the illustrative example of Košice.

Upon the Russian full-scale military invasion, Slovakia passed Act No. 55/2022 on certain measures in view of the situation in Ukraine,⁸² effective from 26 February 2022. Via the Government Decision of 16 March 2022 on the proposal for a declaration of temporary refuge in accordance with Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022,⁸³ the categories of persons protected under national law were aligned with EU law.⁸⁴ Moreover, Act No. 92/2022 Z. z. on certain other measures in connection with the situation in Ukraine,⁸⁵ effective from 30 March 2022, amended multiple laws to address the situation of displaced persons fleeing the Russian war in Ukraine (the so-called Lex Ukraine).⁸⁶

Accordingly, the following categories of people are entitled to temporary protection: Ukrainian nationals and their non-Ukrainian relatives,⁸⁷ and non-Ukrainian nationals, who were granted international protection or permanent residence in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 as well as their family members residing in Ukraine before the full-scale invasion. Temporary protection is granted until 4 March 2023 and is automatically extended for six months, up to a maximum of one year.⁸⁸ Those granted temporary protection are issued a 'tolerated stay' document, which verifies the person's right to stay on Slovakian territory, the right to accommodation and benefits, the right to access healthcare, education, and work as well as exemption from certain taxes, such as accommodation or dog tax.⁸⁹ Importantly, this does not include non-Ukrainian third-country nationals, except for those who had international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine or held permanent residence there prior to the

available at: https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/en/i-am-already-in-slovakia/temporary-

refuge/#:~:text=As%20of%201%20March%2C%20Slovakia,study%2C%20and%20access%20to%20healthcare.

⁸² Act No. 55/2022 on certain measures in view of the situation in Ukraine, available at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/55/20220226.

⁸³ Government Decision of 16 March 2022 on the proposal for a declaration of temporary refuge in accordance with Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022, available at: https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Resolution/19969/1.

⁸⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 10, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

⁸⁵ Act No. 92/2022 Z. z. on certain other measures in connection with the situation in Ukraine, available at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/92/20220330.

⁸⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 11, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

⁸⁷ i.e. wife/husband of a UA national; minors of UA nationals or minors of their spouse; parents of a minor who is a UA national, and dependent members of their households.

⁸⁸ From Ukraine to Slovakia, "Temporary Refuge",

⁸⁹ From Ukraine to Slovakia, "Temporary Refuge",

 $available\ at: \ \underline{https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/en/i-am-already-in-slovakia/temporary-refuge/\#:\sim:text=As\%20of\%201\%20March\%2C\%20Slovakia,study\%2C\%20and\%20access\%20to\%20healthcare.$

invasion.⁹⁰ Such new arrivals are also admitted to Slovakian territory, however, upon reporting to the Foreign Police Office within three working days, they are advised to contact their respective Embassies with a view to facilitating their departure from Slovakia.⁹¹

The proportion of Ukrainian refugees applying for temporary protection is around 15% of the total number of arrivals. On 16 June 2022, this amounted to 76,626 people nationwide and 12,768 people in Košice. This is significantly higher than the rate of TP status holders in Hungary and slightly higher than in Romania. Nevertheless, with ca. 85% of the refugee flow leaving, Slovakia is still classified as a transit country, although noting the increased tendency of people to remain on national territory.

At county-level, the Košice Self-Governing Region as a crisis management entity (KSK) is involved in most activities related to the reception of people fleeing Ukraine, most notably, in providing emergency accommodation and transport from borders, monitoring free accommodation capacity, and coordinating humanitarian aid and volunteers. After crossing the border, new arrivals receive humanitarian aid and are further directed to large 'capacity-centres', such as the one in Michalovce-Stráňany. 92 Other such centres also operate in Bratislava, Nitra, Žilina and Humenné.93 There, people receive immediate assistance and information, and can register their application for temporary protection⁹⁴ as well as submit a request for accommodation regardless of their legal status. The emergency accommodation in these large capacity centres is for a maximum of 10 days. 95 On 19 June 2022, such accommodation was being provided to 313 new arrivals. Following this initial period, people fleeing the war have been provided with various types of accommodation managed by the state, the region, individuals, and the private sector, such as Airbnb. KSK has opened 24 emergency temporary accommodation facilities at tourist accommodation, schools and sport halls, for instance, with a total capacity of 1,822 people. At national level, a website has also been created to centralise the matching of accommodation offers

 $available\ at: \ \underline{https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/en/i-am-already-in-slovakia/temporary-refuge/\#:\sim:text=As\%20of\%201\%20March\%2C\%20Slovakia,study\%2C\%20and\%20access\%20to\%20healthcare.$

⁹⁰ From Ukraine to Slovakia, "Information for Persons who do not have Ukrainian citizenship", available at: https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/en/i-am-already-in-slovakia/information-for-persons-who-do-not-have-ukrainian-citizenship/.

⁹¹ Human Rights League, "Information for Persons who do not have Ukrainian citizenship", available at: https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/letak-eng.png.

⁹² Government website on "Information for Ukrainians entering Slovak Republic", available at: https://ua.gov.sk/?csrt=6352399969097706630.

⁹³ From Ukraine to Slovakia, "Temporary Refuge", available at: https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/en/i-an

⁹⁴ Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, "Information on the temporary refuge registration procedure", available at: https://portal.minv.sk/wps/wcm/connect/sk/site/main/zivotne-situacie/Cudzinci/Informacie-v-anglickom-jazyku/.

⁹⁵ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (17 June 2022), p. 36, available at:: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

with people in need. 96 In order to obtain a financial allowance, a contract for the free provision of accommodation must be concluded, a statement has to be submitted to the municipality with the number of nights for which the person has received accommodation, while the accommodated person has to notify the municipality once a month that they are still receiving free accommodation. 97 Private accommodation providers to people fleeing Ukraine receive a daily allowance of €8 per night for adults and €4 for children under 15 years of age. The support scheme has recently been extended until September 2022. 98 The Government also compensates for the free provision of meals. This payment is included in the accommodation allowance. 99

In addition to food, upon arrival at the border, people also receive other *means of subsistence* as well as medical, legal, psychological, and social assistance. Ukrainian citizens who have been granted temporary protection status can apply for material needs assistance, which consists of a material needs benefit, and a dependent child allowance if the child is of compulsory school age. ¹⁰⁰ Ukrainian citizens are entitled to the same amount of material need benefits and under the same conditions as Slovak citizens. ¹⁰¹ Benefits are not lost upon employment, however, the amount of benefits are commensurate with the income. Pupils from Ukraine who are in a Slovak kindergarten or primary school and receive meals are also entitled to a food subsidy. ¹⁰² Material and financial donations continue to play an important part, as does the role of volunteers in the distribution of these. Since February 2022, a humanitarian aid warehouse has been in operation for food and material supplies such as clothes, sanitary aids, mattresses, etc., and in addition the Košice Region Volunteering Centre has been supporting reception in emergency facilities.

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⁹⁶ Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, "Housing for People fleeing Ukraine", available at: https://pomocpreukrajinu.sk/.

⁹⁷ Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, "Housing for People fleeing Ukraine", available at: https://pomocpreukrajinu.sk/.

⁹⁸ SchengenVisaInfo, "Slovakia Has Paid €13.2 Million in Housing Aid to Ukrainian Migrants So Far" (8 July 2022), available at: https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/slovakia-has-paid-e13-2-million-in-housing-aid-to-ukrainian-migrants-so-far/.

⁹⁹ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (17 June 2022), p. 36, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹⁰⁰ Center for Labour, Social Affairs and Family, "Frequently asked questions and answers for citizens of Ukraine with temporary refuge status", available at: https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/KGR/FAQ-AJ.pdf. ¹⁰¹ €68 per month for an individual, €119 per month for a couple without children, €130 per month for an individual with a child or up to four children, €179 per month for a couple with a child or up to four children, €191 per month for an individual with more than four children, €241 per month for a couple with more than four children - Center for Labour, Social Affairs and Family, "Frequently asked questions and answers for citizens of Ukraine with temporary refuge status", available at: https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/KGR/FAQ-AJ.pdf. Ukraine with temporary refuge status", available at: https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/KGR/FAQ-AJ.pdf.

Transportation from the border to the temporary residence is arranged at the border crossing points, with free travel for Ukrainian citizens in trains and suburban buses. The Ministry of Interior has issued a factsheet in Slovak and in Ukrainian to raise awareness about the risks of trafficking people displaced from Ukraine. In response to these risks, at the border crossing point of Vyšné Nemecké only certain NGOs are admitted and only companies that have been approved by the State are allowed to provide transportation. 104

First aid and emergency care are provided to every new arrival. However, the degree of access to health care is differentiated based on legal status. Those who are transiting through Slovakia can receive emergency medical care but must pay for other medical care. Those who have applied for asylum or temporary protection have a right to access urgent and necessary medical care, which covers care recommended by a Slovak doctor upon examination. This is provided by the outpatient emergency service in the region or city where the patient is located or at the central hospital reception in that city and is paid for by the Ministry of Interior. 105 They are also entitled to medicines, medical equipment, and dietetic food free-of-charge. Once granted temporary protection or asylum, the full range of medical services are accessible to them. 106 At regional level, the 'Ukraine Care Centrum' was set up at the University Hospital in Košice, including both general and specialised outpatient clinics. The hospital has also set up a non-stop psychological counselling service. Various supplementary initiatives of NGOs and the private sector are also in place. For instance, as of 1 July 2022, Ukrainian citizens can also arrange a consultation with a specialist by phone or via the ua.diagnose.me website, where experts from 20 different medical fields are available, including a paediatrician, gynaecologist, or a psychiatrist, for a 20minute Skype consultation free-of-charge. 107

Children on whose behalf an application for temporary protection or asylum has been submitted are entitled to be included in public *education* from kindergarten to secondary school. However, the Ministry of Education has explained that 'inclusion' is not the same as admission. Compulsory schooling does not apply to these children, even upon being granted temporary protection, since they are not permanent residents of Slovakia. As a result, they can be enrolled in schools, subject to the decision of the school directors who are encouraged but not obliged

¹⁰³ Government website on "Information for Ukrainians entering Slovak Republic", available at: https://ua.gov.sk/?csrt=6352399969097706630.

¹⁰⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 16,

available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

¹⁰⁵ HelpUkraine, "Health Care", available at: https://helpukraine.sk/health-care/.

¹⁰⁶ Information for Ukrainians arriving in Slovakia available at: https://ua.gov.sk/?csrt=6352399969097706630.

¹⁰⁷ Health Line for Ukraine available at: https://lp.diagnose.me/uk/partner/ua/consultation-with-a-specialist.

to decide promptly. 108 Schools receive a payment of €200 per child and Ukrainian nationals are only included if there is capacity once Slovak students have been enrolled. 109 The Ministry of Education has established a register on the Ministry's website, through which nurseries as well as primary and secondary schools can publish the spare capacity they have for Ukrainian children and inform parents about available schools in their vicinity. Families can also visit the chosen school in person and ask for a pupil to be included. The website also contains public recommendations and procedures for both parents and individual schools. Information leaflets and advice are also available for parents both in Slovak and Ukrainian. Pupils are enrolled in the appropriate school year based on their knowledge of the subject matter as well as Slovak language proficiency. 110

Those granted temporary protection in Slovakia have the right to access to *employment* under the same conditions as Slovakian citizens, except for positions in public service. People not eligible for temporary protection or, for other reasons, transiting through Slovakia have a 90-day visa-free stay, which does not allow for the right to work. Those eligible can register at the Center for Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovakia, where they can receive relevant information, can test their skills to determine suitable profession(s) and qualification levels, can get referrals to improve skills or be matched with employment offers. The language barrier seems to be the primary obstacle to labour market integration, which to some extent is being tackled by targeted language courses, provided by IOM, for instance. 112

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¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Education, "The most frequent questions and answers regarding the situation in Ukraine from the point of view of education", available at: https://ukrajina.minedu.sk/data/att/22984.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (17 June 2022), p. 37, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹¹⁰ Information for Ukrainians arriving in Slovakia available at: https://ua.gov.sk/?csrt=6352399969097706630.

¹¹¹ Information for Ukrainians arriving in Slovakia available at: https://ua.gov.sk/?csrt=6352399969097706630.

¹¹² Visit Ukraine, "How to get Employment for Ukrainian Refugees in Slovakia",

available at: https://visitukraine.today/blog/317/how-to-get-employment-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-slovakia.

Box 6: Local/regional good practices

- ♦ *Involvement of the LRA in reception:* the Košice Self-Governing Region, as a crisis management entity, is involved in most reception services for refugees in the county, leading to a comprehensive oversight, demonstrating interest in the matter, and strengthening public-private collaboration.
- ♦ *Monitoring of private offers for transportation*: at the border crossing point of Vyšné Nemecké only certain NGOs are admitted and only companies that have been approved by the State are allowed to provide transportation from the border to another location. This is key to lowering safety risks, especially in relation to human trafficking.
- ♦ Allowance for hosts offering private accommodation & monitoring: A daily amount of €8 per night for adults and €4 for children under 15 years of age, along with compensation for provision of meals. Importantly, the allowance can only be received if a hosting statement is submitted, and the beneficiary also confirms their stay to the LRA.
- ♦ Same social assistance as for nationals: for instance, material need benefits are accessible to Ukrainian citizens under the same conditions as Slovak citizens, with the amount commensurate with income levels.
- ♦ *Provision of services facilitated by businesses*: for instance, as of 1 July 2022, Ukrainian citizens can arrange a free-of-charge consultation with a medical specialist by phone or via the ua.diagnose.me website.
- ♦ Centralised system on the supply and demand for education: on the Ministry-run website, both schools and families can register their capacities and needs, respectively.

2.4 Poland

Box 7: Key findings/challenges

- ♦ *Accommodation capacity under pressure*: with a sudden 15% increase in population, access to accommodation is one of the biggest current and projected future challenges.
- ♦ *Risk of trafficking, exploitation, and violence*: stemming, particularly, from the lack of transparency and oversight of private offers for accommodation.
- ♦ *Language barrier*: with adverse impacts especially in education and health care.
- ♦ *Limited access to services by most third-country nationals*: notably, to medical care, leaving them in a particularly vulnerable situation.
- ♦ Lack of excess capacity in the education system: with the number of refugee children already in Warsaw, school capacity levels have reached their limits. Given that the actual number of children are estimated to be much higher than official statistics, and since incoming flows continue, immediate support for the upscaling of capacities is needed.
- ♦ *Limited access to funding:* the integration needs of a population of this scale and composition requires comprehensive funding, especially in the field of education.

Poland borders Ukraine to the West, sharing an approximately 530 km-long land border as part of the Eastern external border of the EU. Since the Russian full-scale military invasion on 24 February 2022, 4 million cross-border movements from Ukraine to Poland have been registered, with close to 1.2 million refugees from Ukraine recorded in Poland by mid-June, making it the EU country receiving the most refugees. After the peak influx in the first three weeks following the full-scale invasion, Poland has seen a steady weekly arrival rate of slightly over 20,000. According to the UNHCR, Poland became in just a few weeks "one of the main refugee-hosting countries in the world", while prior to the Russian full-scale military invasion of Ukraine it hosted "relatively few refugees". 114 It should be noted, however, that the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland was already very significant before the war, which explains to a great extent the preference for this country of the refugees coming from Ukraine. 115 In any case, the influx has been at an unprecedented scale and is expected to continue.

¹¹³ UNHCR, "Ukraine Emergency - UNHCR Poland Factsheet" (17 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93757.

¹¹⁴ UNHCR, "Ukraine Emergency - UNHCR Poland Factsheet" (17 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93757.

¹¹⁵ With over 1.5 million Ukrainians above 15 years of age living in Poland before the war - Union of Polish Metropolises Research and Analysis Centre, "Urban Hospitality: Unprecedented Growth, Challenges and Opportunities – A report on Ukrainian refugees in the largest Polish cities", pp. 11-12.

96% of the close to 1.2 million refugees recorded are women and children. The refugee population coming from Ukraine also includes the elderly and people with disabilities. The disabilities of the close to 1.2 million refugees recorded are women and children. The refugee population coming from Ukraine also includes the elderly and people with disabilities.

The Special Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian nationals (the 'Special Act')¹¹⁸ introduced a special protection status for Ukrainian nationals and their spouses who do not hold Ukrainian citizenship and their close family members¹¹⁹ coming from Ukraine as a result of the war. ¹²⁰ Third-country nationals or stateless persons who were living in Ukraine on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit or as beneficiaries of international protection, are not covered by the personal scope of the Special Act; rather, they are subject to the general temporary protection regime.¹²¹ Ukrainian nationals and their spouses and close family members are attributed a national identification number (the PESEL number) and have access to health care on equal footing with Polish nationals, as well as easier access to employment and to social assistance and benefits, while also receiving support from centres for social integration. Third-country nationals have access to employment, healthcare, accommodation, means of subsistence, and financial support - for which they need to obtain a certificate issued by the Office for Foreigners. 122 It should be noted that the number of third-country nationals displaced from Ukraine entering Poland is "modest, but significant" compared to Ukrainian and Polish nationals living in Ukraine prior to the fullscale invasion.¹²³

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, "Ukraine Emergency - UNHCR Poland Factsheet" (17 June 2022), available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93757.

¹¹⁷ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 25, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

118 Special Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian nationals, available at: https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20220000583.

¹¹⁹ Provided the Ukrainian national has a "Polish card", i.e. a document confirming that a foreigner belongs to the Polish nation, e.g. on the basis of being a Polish descendant/member of the Polish community living outside of Poland. If the Ukrainian national does not have the Pole's card, their close relatives will fall under the general temporary protection regime.

¹²⁰ The law initially foresaw having come *directly* from Ukraine as a requirement, which was in the meantime repealed. See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 9, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

Moreover, the Special Act automatically extended, until the end of the year, the right to stay of Ukrainian nationals in Poland, on the basis of titles expiring after 24 February 2022.

¹²¹ Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland, available at: https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu20031281176. See, in this regard, https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-on-assistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-has-entered-into-force.

¹²² This is required proof of enjoyment of international protection in Ukraine prior to 24 February 2022, or proof of legal residence in Ukraine on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit and inability to return to their country or region of origin in safe conditions. https://www.gov.pl/web/ochrona-en/how-to-get-a-certificate. Moreover, while persons falling under the Special Act are entitled to stay for 18 months from 24 February 2022 (until 24 August 2023), the general temporary protection regime applies until 4 March 2023.

¹²³ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", pp. 26-27, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

Against this national backdrop, Warsaw in the Masovian voivodeship is the city with the largest estimated number of refugees in Poland. In the Masovian voivodeship, there are more than 240,000 people registered, with almost half of them (over 115,000 people) in the City of Warsaw. Since the start of the Russian full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, the City's population has increased by 15%. By the end of June 2022, the number of persons displaced from Ukraine living in Warsaw was estimated to be even higher, around 240,000, according to one interviewed city official. From mid-March to the end of May, Warsaw absorbed 10% of the refugees registered in Poland and 50% of the Masovian region, with more than 70% being women, mostly of working age. The case study, therefore, demonstrates the factual situation through the example of Warsaw.

Dealing with such a significant influx of people into the city has had a considerable impact in many areas; not only in the services to which persons displaced from Ukraine are entitled to access, such as social services, housing, education and health care, but also in the infrastructures and services supporting the daily life of a city, e.g. public transport, waste management, water supply and sewage.

The response in Poland to the current crisis has been unprecedented, combining the efforts of the authorities with the action of international organisations and civil society organisations, with a very strong solidarity movement from volunteers. According to one interviewed city official, the response of the City to the current crisis has mainly been two-fold: on the one hand, ensuring support for refugees in several areas, such as providing accommodation and selection of housing provided by private individuals, medical care for arrivals, psychological support, language and legal assistance; on the other hand, coordinating the activities of over 14,000 volunteers. The City of Warsaw has launched a city aid network including aid points. At the three main reception centres, operating at the East and West Railway Stations and at the Multicultural Centre, 338,000 people had received assistance by the end of May. First assistance to new arrivals includes

¹²⁴ In the register of citizens of Ukraine and their family members who have been assigned a PESEL number (national identification number)

 $[\]frac{https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiNmRmNmViOGItMDQ2Ny00MTNhLWJkZmEtMzE3MmRjZjUxNzcxIiwidCI6ImU1YzM3OTgxLTY2NjQtNDEzNC04YTBjLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOjh9.}{27}$

¹²⁵ According to Warsaw's Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, as per intervention in the CoR Working Group on Ukraine's second meeting, held in Brussels, on 30 March 2022. Minutes available at: https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2186493&meetingSessionId=2233775.

¹²⁶ The Union of Polish Metropolises Research and Analysis Centre, using the 'geo-trapping' method that relies on the data emitted from mobile phones, currently places the number of Ukrainians in the Metropolitan Area of Warsaw by the beginning of April at 469,628 persons, and the number of Ukrainians living in the central city at close to 270,000. This amounts to 13% of the city's population. – Union of Polish Metropolises Research and Analysis Centre, *Urban Hospitality: Unprecedented Growth, Challenges and Opportunities – A report on Ukrainian refugees in the largest Polish cities*, pp. 7-8, 15, 44 and 38.

free public transport, availability of places in kindergartens, schools and hospitals, provision of psychological and legal assistance and interpretation.¹²⁷

Further, for more effective information-sharing with people in need of assistance, the city aid network also operates hotlines and information points, where it provides materials translated to Ukrainian. Moreover, a dedicated website¹²⁸ also available in Ukrainian providing information for refugees was set up as part of the "Warsaw 19115 City Contact Centre for refugee assistance", a project created with the support of EU funds under the 2007-2013 programming period. A Coordination Support Centre was also established by the LRA and NGOs providing information and resources to help refugees.

With a significant share of the refugees entering Poland making their way into the urban areas, *accommodation* quickly became a challenge for cities to deal with. During the first three months of the war, the City of Warsaw made available a total of 160,000 overnight stays, with 3,200 available daily at the peak of the influx. The population of Warsaw opened the doors of their homes to accommodate Ukrainian nationals and Poles fleeing Ukraine. Against this backdrop, besides providing accommodation, the municipality coordinates the process of matching offers of private accommodation to beneficiaries through an electronic system, with the proposals of accommodation being verified by city services and trained volunteers. Notably, a private person providing accommodation and food to Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war "may receive a benefit on the basis of a contract concluded with the municipality", 129 with the benefit being up to PLN 40 per person per day within a 60-day period. 130 In the longer term, targeted support for this purpose is even more necessary as increasing difficulties with providing accommodation due to rising inflation and interest rates are foreseen.¹³¹ To tackle this issue, the response of the City of Warsaw focuses on supporting refugees to find employment, to ensure their selfsufficiency. The inter-agency Refugee Response Plan in Poland also places a "significant emphasis (...) on the medium-term urban response" in this regard, in

¹²⁷ Stakeholder consultation in June 2022.

¹²⁸ Municipal Contact Center Warsaw, Help for Ukrainian Citizens, available at: https://warszawa19115.pl/-/help-for-ukrainian-citizens.

¹²⁹ Service of the Republic of Poland: Office for Foreigners, Amendment to the law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of the country, available at: https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-on-assistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-has-entered-into-force. In fact, pursuant to the amendments introduced to the Special Act on 8 April, the government no longer funded the provision of accommodation or meals by private entities. — See ECRE, "Information Sheet — Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (17 June 2022), p. 33, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹³⁰ OECD, "Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries" (2022), p. 14, available at: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/rights-and-support-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-receiving-countries 09beb886-en#page3.

¹³¹ Stakeholder consultation of June 2022. Also, UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", pp. 32-33, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

order to support and complement the public response, but also to "increase capacities of refugees to make choices regarding how and where to temporarily settle". 132

Regarding *access to means of subsistence*, a one-off allowance of PLN 300 (€65) to cover expenses for food, clothing, footwear, personal hygiene products and housing costs per person is made available for refugees covered by the Special Act, ¹³³ paid by the municipalities. ¹³⁴ Additionally, refugees covered by the Special Act with children are entitled to a specific benefit ¹³⁵ and have access to a range of social assistance benefits. As for other beneficiaries of temporary protection, financial allowance is granted only to those not benefitting from state or local accommodation. ¹³⁶ Moreover, the funds of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) are being channelled, at national level, to provide aid in the form of food parcels or meals. ¹³⁷ In Warsaw, the City is organising financial collections and has created special bank accounts for donations to help refugees. As for *transport*, in Poland, people fleeing from Ukraine can use trains, ferries and bus transportation free-of-charge from border cities. In the City of Warsaw, together with other Polish cities, such as Kraków, Olsztyn, Katowice, the use of public transport stopped being free for refugees from 1 June. ¹³⁸

Refugees covered by the Special Act with a PESEL number have *access to the public health care system* on equal footing with Polish citizens. Although other beneficiaries of temporary protection have access to healthcare, it is limited to medical care provided via the Office for Foreigners. ¹³⁹ In Warsaw, besides access to the city's medical infrastructure, the City of Warsaw has organised specific medical points for refugees to receive medical aid. According to one of our

¹³² UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 25, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

¹³³ As per government information available at: https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-on-assistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-has-entered-into-force.
¹³⁴ OECD, "Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries" (2022)", p. 15, available at: https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-on-assistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-has-entered-into-force.

134 OECD, "Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries" (2022)", p. 15, available at: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/rights-and-support-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-receiving-countries

9beb886-en#page3.

¹³⁵ The "500+ child benefit programme". However, the granting of this benefit is set to be suspended. – see ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine", (17 June 2022), p. 33, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹³⁶ Service of the Republic of Poland: Office for Foreigners, Temporary Protection for Foreigners, available at: https://www.gov.pl/web/ochrona-en/social-assistance.

¹³⁷ Food Aid Operational Programme 2014-2020, available at

 $[\]underline{https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-on-assistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-has-entered-into-force.}$

¹³⁸ Visit Ukraine, Europe cancels free travel for Ukrainians: list of countries,

available at: https://visitukraine.today/blog/467/europe-cancels-free-travel-for-ukrainians-list-of-countries.

139 Service of the Republic of Poland: Office for Foreigners, Temporary Protection for Foreigners available at: https://www.gov.pl/web/ochrona-en/medical-care. It includes basic medical care and vaccinations, special medical and dental treatment, and supply of medicines and medical supplies, Also, EUAA, "Information Booklet for Ukrainians on Poland", p. 16, available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/euaa-response-russian-invasion-ukraine.

respondents, one of the biggest challenges in this context is the language barrier. As with the national level, the government has shortened the process of recognition of medical qualifications;¹⁴⁰ in Warsaw, the City is selecting medical staff among the refugee population with the necessary medical qualification or recognition and speaking Polish or learning it, to assist in the provision of healthcare to refugees. On the larger national scale, considering the number of refugees hosted by Poland, the pressure on the national healthcare system is "expected to be significant", 141 even more so considering the particularities of the population seeking refuge, notably, the overrepresentation of the elderly and people with disabilities. In the framework of the 'intra-EU medical transfers' solidarity mechanism, set up by the European Commission, medical patients from Ukraine in Poland may be transferred within Poland or to other Member States. 142 The first medical evacuation operation carried out under this mechanism was the transfer of Ukrainian paediatric patients from Poland to Italy. 143 Lastly, to address mental health needs of the refugees, the Psychological Support Centre in Warsaw provides psychological support to children, adolescents and adults. 144

Among the refugees hosted by Poland, it is estimated that about half are children of school age which constitutes a challenge with regard to ensuring their *access to education*. ¹⁴⁵ Close to 200,000 of these children are attending state education in Poland. In Warsaw, more than 17,000 children from Ukraine attend city educational institutions, with about 5,000 children in kindergarten, over 10,000 in elementary schools and 1,200 in secondary schools. ¹⁴⁶ The response of the City of Warsaw has been two-fold: on the one hand, preparing kindergartens and schools for the reception of Ukrainian pupils, including by providing preparatory departments in 77 elementary schools and 14 secondary schools; on the other hand, providing the places and equipment necessary for refugees to continue to follow the Ukrainian education programme. According to one interviewed city official, about half of school-age children continue to follow the Ukrainian education system remotely. The Palace of Youth, in the city centre, hosts the

¹⁴⁰ OECD, "Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries" (2022), p. 17, available at: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/rights-and-support-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-receiving-countries 09beb886-en#page3.

¹⁴¹ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 34, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

¹⁴² See European Commission, "Factsheet Ukraine: EU preparedness to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine", 23 March 2022, p. 3, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs 22 1948; UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 35, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257; https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-eu-coordinates-further-medical-evacuations.

¹⁴³ European Commission, "Ukraine: EU's first medical evacuation operation transfers Ukrainian children from Poland to Italy" (14 March 2022), available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news/ukraine-eus-first-medical-evacuation-operation-transfers-ukrainian-children-poland-italy-2022-03-14 en.

¹⁴⁴ Stakeholder consultation June 2022.

¹⁴⁵ UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 35, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257.

¹⁴⁶ Numbers provided by stakeholder consultation in June 2022.

central point for remote education where Ukrainian children attend classes conducted by Ukrainian teachers. Despite State efforts on this, notably the transfer of funding from the state budget to local level or the facilitation of Ukrainian teacher employment, the integration of children in the Polish education system has encountered significant obstacles, such as the language barrier, cultural differences, and lack of funding, infrastructures and staff. Moreover, it is estimated that 65,000 school-aged children are currently living in the city, meaning that educational needs may be much greater than has so far been revealed.

In the area of *employment*, refugees fleeing Ukraine may work and pursue an economic activity under the same conditions as Polish nationals. Notwithstanding, those covered by the Special Act benefit from additional services, such as job placement, vocational counselling and training, and special rules on the recognition of qualifications. According to the numbers regarding the refugee population registered in Warsaw, 57,000 are of working age, of which the largest share are women aged 25 to 45 (30,000). A reflection of the city's initiatives may be the considerable share of women who have already found a job - 36%. The Service Point for Ukrainian Citizens, operating in the Labour Office of the City of Warsaw, provides assistance in registering for employment opportunities and translation. Additionally, the "WorkSpace – Ukraine", at the Smolna Entrepreneurship Centre (which was created with EU funding under the 2007-2013 programming period), is equipped with office materials and services and is available for refugees to use.

With regard to available *funding*, it should be noted that within the framework of the Regional Operational Programme for the Mazovian voivodeship, funding is still available as a result of the extension of the programming period of the relevant funds by the CARE – Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe. ¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴⁷ Foreseen in the Special Act, according to the Fundamental Rights Agency. Other measures foreseen in the Special Act include the creation of additional places for education, the possibility of staff working overtime, and the facilitation of hiring Ukrainian citizens speaking Polish to help students who do not speak the language. – See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 22,

available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

¹⁴⁸ More general challenges in this context include: the availability of information and data to identify demand and eventually supply by identifying and recruiting Ukrainian education professionals in Poland; the capacity of the Polish education system, including facilities, qualified teachers and support personnel; educators' skills or knowledge gaps in dealing specifically with these children; lack of educational materials for distance learning, and limited access to temporary learning opportunities – See UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 35, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257. Against this background, Save the Children highlights the necessity of providing more training to Polish teachers and recruiting Ukrainian teachers, and of allocating additional funding to local municipalities allowing them to hire intercultural assistants and language teachers and provide non-formal educational activities to prepare for integration into the school system ahead of the next school year. See

https://www.savethechildren.net/news/european-govts-urged-do-more-get-children-ukraine-back-learning. 149 See point 4.2 below.

Mazovian Regional Government's project on the support of refugees from Ukraine has received PLN 13.5 million (€2,835,000) in EU funding. One city official explained that these funds will be directed towards providing psychological support for refugees, Polish language courses, assistance in finding employment and suitable accommodation, with a strong focus on dependent and elderly people. In the framework of the next EU budget, the City of Warsaw will be able to apply for funding under the regional programme for 2021-2027 to finance action directed towards the reception and integration of refugees. In spite of this, the scale of the challenge due to the number of arrivals is significant, and the main challenge has, reportedly, continued to be the lack of funding or limited access to funding. This is indispensable for supporting refugees in the long-term. To that end, one city official has called for specific funds to directly support LRAs in the reception of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. ¹⁵⁰

Long-term *integration* of the people fleeing Ukraine is also a challenge faced by the LRAs. Relevant action undertaken in this context includes the "Assistance and Integration Fund for Ukrainian Women and Children #MYZWAMI" initiative of the Pro Humanum Association for the Development of Civil Society, in cooperation with the LRA, directed at raising funds for long-term support for families.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ The Mayor of Warsaw Rafał Trzaskowski has also called for EU funding to be channelled not only to central governments, but also to local authorities, as per the intervention in the CoR Working Group on Ukraine's second meeting, held in Brussels, on 30 March 2022. Minutes available at: https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2186493&meetingSessionId

¹⁵¹ Stakeholder consultation June 2022.

Box 8: Local/regional good practices

- ♦ *LRA-coordinated cross-sectoral response*: the City of Warsaw's response to the crisis has been coordinated with civil society organisations and thousands of volunteers.
- ♦ *Centralised access to information*: the City of Warsaw has created a dedicated website available in Ukrainian where all the information relevant for refugees is available, as part of a project created using EU funds.
- ◆ *LRA coordination and vetting of private accommodation*: this is done by the municipality through an electronic system.
- ♦ *LRA coordination of donations*: the City of Warsaw organises financial collections and has created special bank accounts for donations to help refugees.
- ♦ Facilitating both access to health care and to employment: the City of Warsaw selects medical staff from among the refugee population who speak Polish or who are learning it and acquiring the necessary medical qualification or recognition, to assist in the provision of healthcare to refugees.
- ♦ Remote access to Ukrainian education system: the Palace of Youth, in the city centre of Warsaw, hosts the central point for remote education, where Ukrainian children attend classes conducted by Ukrainian teachers.
- ♦ *Proactive use of EU funds*: the Mazovian Regional Government will be running a special project to help refugees from Ukraine, using EU funding.

2.5 Czechia

Box 9: Key findings/challenges

- Over-centralisation of refugees in the capital region: with Prague being the main destination for persons displaced from Ukraine reaching Czechia, the city's capacity was strained and led to the temporary closure of the regional assistance centre.
- Exhaustion of accommodation options: with accommodation in the city having reached full capacity with no more long-term housing alternatives available in city buildings, two makeshift camps were erected.
- ♦ *Vulnerability and discrimination of specific groups*: for instance, Roma Ukrainians reportedly had difficulties in accessing temporary protection status and related services.
- ♦ Repeal of emergency or short-term solutions: for instance, refugee access to state subsidies as well as to free health care.
- ♦ Lack of capacity of the education system: for instance, authorities in Prague have advised refugees to enrol children in schools in other regions.

Czechia is the only case study country that does not share a border with Ukraine. Since the Russian full-scale military invasion on 24 February 2022, Czechia has faced an unprecedented influx of people coming from Ukraine, receiving close to 400,000 refugees. With the prolonged war in Ukraine, it is projected that this number could reach 500,000 – rising to about 5% of the total population of the country. The majority of the refugees enter Czechia through the neighbouring countries of Poland and Slovakia and are women and children, while less than one fifth are men. The refugee population arriving from Ukraine also includes older people and people with disabilities. The refugee population arriving from Ukraine also includes older people and people with disabilities.

Czechia has adopted Act No. 65/2022 Sb., on certain measures relating to the armed conflict within the territory of Ukraine caused by an invasion of the army of the Russian Federation (Lex Ukraine), ¹⁵⁶ in force since 21 March 2022, as well as further laws on measures in the area of employment and social security and

¹⁵³ Reliefweb, "Czech Republic and CEB sign a grant of almost €400,000 to facilitate early integration of refugees from Ukraine" (21 April 2022), available at https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/czech-republic-and-ceb-sign-grant-almost-400000-facilitate-early-integration-refugees#:~:text=The%20Czech%20Republic%20has%20so,total%20population%20of%20the%20country.

¹⁵² UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine.

¹⁵⁴ UNHCR, "Czech Republic: Ukraine refugee situation operational update" (7 June 2022)", p. 2, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/unhcr-czech-republic-ukraine-refugee-situation-operational-update-7-june-2022.

¹⁵⁵ UNHCR, "Czech Republic: Ukraine refugee situation operational update", (7 June 2022), p. 2, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/unhcr-czech-republic-ukraine-refugee-situation-operational-update-7-june-2022.

¹⁵⁶ In Czech: 'Zákon o některých opatřeních v souvislosti s ozbrojeným konfliktem na území Ukrajiny vyvolaným invazí vojsk Ruské federace', available at: https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2022-65.

education.¹⁵⁷ Under this law, Ukrainian nationals,¹⁵⁸ third-country nationals and stateless persons who are beneficiaries of some form of international protection, and their families are granted temporary protection until 31 March 2023. In addition, the scope of temporary protection covers third-country nationals who had permanent residence in Ukraine and are unable to return to their country of origin due to a "threat of real danger". 159

Czechia registered the highest ratio of Ukrainian citizens granted temporary protection status in proportion to its population in March 2022, 160 with ca. 17,000 being granted TP on 8 March 2022 alone. Since the end of March, the daily number has been under 5,000 and, although variations are noticeable, it has been decreasing ever since. 161 Most refugees reside in urban areas. 162 The region of Prague is hosting the most refugees – over 80,000.163 According to the Mayor of Prague Zdeněk Hřib, the number of refugees in Prague is four times greater than in some other regions.¹⁶⁴ The case study, therefore, demonstrates the factual situation through the example of Prague.

In order to coordinate access to reception conditions, the National Centre for Help and Assistance to Ukraine (NACPU) was set up. Under the umbrella of NACPU, regional assistance centres have been established where refugees are registered and issued documentation, including health insurance¹⁶⁵ and work permits, and

available at: https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2022-67.

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¹⁵⁷ Act No. 66/2022 Sb., on measures in the area of employment and social security relating to the armed conflict within the territory of Ukraine caused by an invasion of the army of the Russian Federation, available at: https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2022-66; Act No. 67/2022 Sb., on measures in the area of education relating to the armed conflict within the territory of Ukraine caused by an invasion of the army of the Russian Federation,

¹⁵⁸ Including citizens of Ukraine who had legally entered the Czech territory prior to the full-scale military invasion and, on that date, still legally resided there. - ECRE, "Information Sheet - Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (17 June 2022), p. 12, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-inukraine/.

¹⁵⁹ Defined in Section 179(2) of the Act No. 326/1999 Sb., Act on the residence of foreigners within the territory of the Czech Republic, as any return to a home country that would be in breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

¹⁶⁰ As per Eurostat data, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220603-

¹⁶¹ UNHCR, Czech Republic: Ukraine refugee situation operational update (7 June 2022), p. 1, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/unhcr-czech-republic-ukraine-refugee-situation-operational-update-7-june-

¹⁶² UNHCR, Czech Republic: Ukraine refugee situation operational update (7 June 2022), p. 1, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/unhcr-czech-republic-ukraine-refugee-situation-operationalupdate-7-june-2022.

¹⁶³ UNHCR data from 7 June in UNHCR, Czech Republic: Ukraine refugee situation operational update (7 June 2022), p. 1, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/unhcr-czech-republic-ukraine-refugee-situationoperational-update-7-june-2022.

¹⁶⁴ As reported by IntelliNews on 5 June in "Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees" (5 June 2022), available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/?source=ukraine.

¹⁶⁵ EUAA, Information Booklet for Ukrainians on Czechia, p. 11, available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/euaa-response-russian-invasion-ukraine.

can find assistance and a comprehensive range of services, such as accommodation. On 15 June, the Prague City Hall decided to close the assistance centre serving Prague and Central Bohemia, reportedly as a reaction to the lack of action of the central government towards the creation of a redistribution system and in an attempt to alleviate the overflow of refugees in Prague. Nevertheless, it reopened on 11 July despite the open disagreement of the head of the local government. In order to ensure that refugees have access to all relevant information, a special website has been launched ("Our Ukrainians") which concentrates information, in English and in Ukrainian, on how to register for temporary protection and how to access relevant services. In addition, an app has also been created ("Smart Migration"). Moreover, the Centre for Support of Integration of Foreigners offers Czech courses for foreigners, mainly Ukrainian nationals.

Accommodation made available for refugees coming from Ukraine is intended to respond to both short-term and long-term needs. In fact, regarding the former, refugees can stay in temporary shelter for 30 days, and in hotels for up to 90 days. 172 80% of accommodation is made up of private housing and only 20% of collective centres. 173 Hosts of beneficiaries of temporary protection are entitled to compensation for costs from €122 per person per month up to €490. 174 Refugees have to report a change of residence within three days to the authorities. 175

The situation regarding accommodation in Prague is particularly challenging. It forced the city to open a makeshift refugee camp in mid-May, ¹⁷⁶ and another one

¹⁶⁶ UNHCR, "The EU Temporary Protection Directive in Practice 2022" (15 June 2022), p. 3, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93633.

¹⁶⁷ IntelliNews, "Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees" (5 June 2022), available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/?source=ukraine.

168 As reported by Romea, "Czech authorities reopen refugee reception center in the Vysočany neighborhood of Prague", available at: http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-authorities-reopen-refugee-reception-center-in-the-vysocany-neighborhood-of-prague">http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-authorities-reopen-refugee-reception-center-in-the-vysocany-neighborhood-of-prague.

¹⁶⁹ Available at: https://www.nasiukrajinci.cz/en/.

¹⁷⁰ Available at: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=cz.mpsv.smartmigration.

¹⁷¹ More than 200 as per information dated 31 May, in ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (31 May 2022), p. 11, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹⁷² ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (17 June 2022), p. 12, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹⁷³ UNHCR, "Czech Republic: Ukraine refugee situation operational update" (7 June 2022), p. 1, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/czechia/unhcr-czech-republic-ukraine-refugee-situation-operational-update-7-june-2022.

¹⁷⁴ OECD, "Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries" (2022), p. 14, available at: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/rights-and-support-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-receiving-countries 09beb886-en#page3.

¹⁷⁵ Ministry of interior of the Czech Republic, Information for Ukrainian Citizens, available at: https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/docDetail.aspx?docid=22370840&docType=ART#Informace2.

¹⁷⁶ SCMP, "Prague opens tented camp for Ukrainians as refugee facilities become exhausted" (15 May 2022), available at: https://www.scmp.com/news/world/europe/article/3177798/prague-opens-tented-camp-ukrainians-refugee-facilities-become.

at the end of May,¹⁷⁷ in an effort to accommodate people staying in the main train station, mostly Ukrainians of Roma origin.¹⁷⁸ Having reached full capacity, the city of Prague no longer offers refugees long-term accommodation in municipality-owned properties; only in emergency refugee camps.¹⁷⁹

All beneficiaries of temporary protection may apply for humanitarian *assistance* via a dedicated online portal. Cash assistance amounts to €200. Notwithstanding, a recent amendment to Lex Ukraine, amidst growing claims of "benefit tourism", last limited access to state support to those who are not provided with free accommodation and food. 183

As for *transport*, from 1 April to June, refugees were allowed to travel by train from Slovakia, Poland and Hungary to Czechia for free.¹⁸⁴ From border points within Czechia to other locations in the territory, Ukrainian refugees can still travel by train for free.¹⁸⁵ In Prague, the possibility of using public transport for free for those with a Ukrainian passport or ID card was cancelled with effect from 12 June; instead, a special pass is available for ca. €7 per month.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁷ Romea, "Czech firefighters erect another "tent city" for refugees in the Malešice neighborhood of Prague" (31 May 2022), available at: http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-firefighters-erect-another-tent-city-for-refugees-in-the-malesice-neighborhood-of-prague.

¹⁷⁸ Intellinews, "Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees" (5 June 2022), available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/?source=ukraine. Guardian, "They won't accept us': Roma refugees forced to camp at Prague train station" (6 June 2022), available at: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/may/25/they-wont-accept-us-roma-refugees-forced-to-camp-at-prague-train-station.

Similar events have also been reported in other Czech cities, e.g. in Brno – See https://ecre.org/eastern-borders-unhcr-updates-ukraine-displacement-data-asylum-requests-by-russians-doubled-euaa-says-poland-to-abolish-no-access-zone-on-belarus-border-czech-republic-limits-assistance-to-ukraini/">https://ecre.org/eastern-borders-unhcr-updates-ukraine-displacement-data-asylum-requests-by-russians-doubled-euaa-says-poland-to-abolish-no-access-zone-on-belarus-border-czech-republic-limits-assistance-to-ukraini/.

179 Romea, "Czech authorities reopen refugee reception center in the Vysočany neighborhood of Prague" (11)

¹⁷⁹ Romea, "Czech authorities reopen refugee reception center in the Vysočany neighborhood of Prague" (11 July 2022), available at: http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-authorities-reopen-refugee-reception-center-in-the-vysocany-neighborhood-of-prague.

¹⁸⁰ Assistance to Ukrainian citizens available at: https://davkyuk.mpsv.cz/en.

¹⁸¹ Different sources refer to the allowance being paid once to all individuals and on a monthly basis to those who do not receive enough income to cover their needs. Other sources do not refer to the economic conditions of the beneficiary, but rather to a six-month limit.

¹⁸² IntelliNews, Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees, available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/.

¹⁸³ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine", (17 June 2022), p. 12, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

See also Intellinews, "Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees" (5 June 2022), available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/?source=ukraine.

184 ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine" (31 May 2022), available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/.

¹⁸⁵ Czech Railways, Free transportation of Refugees from Ukraine, available at: https://www.cd.cz/info/aktuality/-36295/.

¹⁸⁶ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine", (17 June 2022), pp. 11-12, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/. See also https://english.radio.cz/refugees-can-continue-use-prague-public-transport-free-until-12-june-8752054 and https://english.radio.cz/refugees-can-continue-use-prague-public-transport-free-until-12-june-8752054 and https://english.radio.cz/refugees-can-continue-use-prague-public-transport-free-until-12-june-8752054 and https://english.radio.cz/refugees-can-continue-use-prague-public-transport-free-until-12-june-8752054 and https://english.radio.cz/refugees-can-countries.

Those granted temporary protection in Czechia have *access to health care* and are covered by the public health insurance scheme. However, with the exception of children and the elderly, the recent amendments to the Lex Ukraine have limited access to free health insurance to a maximum of 150 days. ¹⁸⁷ During the first response to the crisis, medical care was provided at Prague's main railway station by the Health Emergency Service of the Capital City of Prague. ¹⁸⁸

Measures have been implemented at national level to expedite hiring Ukrainian teachers, waiving the requirement of proof of knowledge of the Czech language, in view of facilitating the *education* of Ukrainian children. From the onset of the war, a project resulting from the joint endeavour of the Ukrainian Embassy, the Children of Ukraine Endowment Fund, the Ministry of Education, Charles University and volunteers, has intended to provide Ukrainian children with education in Ukrainian language, delivered by native-speaking teachers ("Ukrainian Single Class"). This project has also been implemented in Prague, at the First Slavic Grammar School, but capacity has from the beginning been limited. In the general capacity of the school system to absorb refugee children was also a challenge in Prague in the early days of the crisis, with refugees even being advised not to enrol in schools in the city and immediate vicinity due to the shortage of places. In the city and immediate vicinity due to the shortage of places.

Beneficiaries of temporary protection have free *access to the labour market*, with no work permit being required. To help with their job search, refugees may register with the Labour Office as unemployed. During the first six months of temporary protection, beneficiaries are allowed to verify their qualifications by a sworn statement.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ ECRE, "Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine", (17 June 2022), p. 12, available at: https://ecre.org/information-sheet-measures-in-response-to-the-arrival-of-displaced-people-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine/, and reported in <a href="https://ecre.org/eastern-borders-unhcr-updates-ukraine-displacement-data-asylum-requests-by-russians-doubled-euaa-says-poland-to-abolish-no-access-zone-on-belarus-border-czech-republic-limits-assistance-to-ukraini/.

¹⁸⁸ Charles University: Faculty of Medicine, Medical Aid for Ukrainian Refugees at the Prague's Main Train Station, available at: https://www.lf2.cuni.cz/en/study/ombudsman/medical-aid-for-ukrainian-refugees-at-the-pragues-main-train-station.

¹⁸⁹ OECD, "Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries" (2022), p. 16, available at: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/rights-and-support-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-receiving-countries_09beb886-en#page3.

¹⁹⁰ Expats.cz, "For Ukrainian refugee children in Czechia, classes begin on Monday" (3 March 2022), available at: https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czech-education-ministry-seeking-jobs-for-ukrainian-teachers-classrooms-for-students.

¹⁹¹ Expats.cz, "Education Ministry: Ukrainian refugees should seek schooling outside Prague" (11 March 2022), available at: https://english.radio.cz/ukrainian-classes-refugee-children-now-underway-czech-republic-8746079.

¹⁹² Expats.cz, "Education Ministry: Ukrainian refugees should seek schooling outside Prague" (11 March 2022), available at: https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/education-ministry-ukrainian-refugees-should-seek-schooling-outside-of-prague.

¹⁹³ Article 3(5) of Act No. 66/2022 Sb., on measures in the area of employment and social security relating to the armed conflict within the territory of Ukraine caused by an invasion of the army of the Russian Federation.

Lack of funding for the reception and integration of refugees coming from Ukraine has been a cross-cutting challenge for LRAs.¹⁹⁴ Prague's Mayor, Zdeněk Hřib, has called for the EU to "immediately and directly financially support cities and regions".¹⁹⁵

Box 10: Local/regional good practices

- ♦ Facilitation of Ukrainian-language education: a national project, implemented in Prague, aiming to provide Ukrainian children with education in Ukrainian language delivered by native-speaker teachers ("Ukrainian Single Class").
- ♦ *Public transport for free or at a reduced price*: the City of Prague offered public transport to refugees for free and, more recently, at a reduced price.
- ♦ Centralised registration and service hubs: the regional assistance centre in the city concentrates relevant services for refugees, including registration in single locations.
- ♦ Compensation of costs of hosts offering private accommodation: in addition to the compensation provided by the State, the City of Prague also paid a compensation to residents hosting refugees. However, this has since been revoked.

¹⁹⁴ IntelliNews, "Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees" (5 June 2022), available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/?source=ukraine.

¹⁹⁵ Statement of Prague's Mayor, Zdeněk Hřib, on "The Ukrainian war: hosting refugees and Cohesion funding implications" at the 150th Plenary Meeting of the CoR, which took place on 29 and 30 June 2022. Transmission available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/150th-cor-plenary-session.aspx.

3. Assessment

While all examined Member States have put in place national legislation to implement the Temporary Protection Directive that the EU activated in the wake of Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, the case studies have revealed differences in the way in which the obligations were transposed, resulting in different public services being available across the Member States.

A fundamental issue cutting across the examined jurisdictions, albeit to very different degrees, is the personal scope of the national temporary protection schemes. All countries analysed grant temporary protection to Ukrainian nationals and to third-country nationals and stateless persons who benefitted from international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine. Poland has created an even more beneficial national protection scheme for Ukrainian citizens under the 'Special Act' while ensuring that most people fleeing Ukraine are granted access to temporary protection. Moreover, except for Hungary, all case study countries grant temporary protection to third-country nationals or stateless persons who held a permanent residence permit in Ukraine and who cannot return to their country of origin. In Hungary, only Ukrainian and/or Hungarian citizens and those having benefitted from protection status in Ukraine prior to the full-scale invasion are eligible for temporary protection. This entails a two-fold concern: firstly, it leaves out most non-Ukrainian third-country nationals from the protection foreseen by the Temporary Protection Directive, and secondly, it gives them access to a legal status that cannot be considered adequate within the meaning of the TPD, since it does not grant a right to access any of the following reception conditions, apart from accommodation. Romania recognises the same groups of people as eligible for the purposes of temporary protection – also adding those holding Ukraine-issued permanent residence permits and who cannot return to their country of origin. In practice, however, the lack of legal entitlement for reception conditions of this group is similar to the conditions in Hungary. As a more promising practice, Ukrainian nationals and their family members in Poland have access to health care on equal footing with Polish nationals as well as easier access to employment and to social assistance and benefits, while also receiving support from social integration centres.

A concerning trend across Europe, reported in particular from Czechia, is Roma refugees from Ukraine facing challenges in accessing temporary protection status as well as related services. The issue highlights the intersectional vulnerability of groups that have historically been discriminated against across Europe as well as the legal and practical gaps and ambiguities in the temporary protection scheme. For instance, Roma people fleeing Ukraine have been found ineligible for

temporary protection in Czechia due to their Ukrainian-Hungarian dual citizenship amidst a heated national debate centred around "benefit tourism". 196

The next sections provide a brief comparative overview of how people fleeing the war in Ukraine can access the most critical reception services as per the Temporary Protection Directive as well as the needs assessments reported from the ground. The selected reception conditions include the right to access suitable accommodation or means to obtain housing, social welfare or means of subsistence, medical care, education, and employment, to which beneficiaries of temporary protection are entitled as per Articles 13(1), 13(2), 14 and 12 of the TPD, respectively.

3.1 Access to accommodation

From the analysis of the case studies, two different needs emerge with regard to access to accommodation: in transit regions, the demand for shelter is mostly of short duration, while in destination regions, the demand is mostly for medium to long-term accommodation.

In the *transit countries* analysed, it appears that even though there seems to be enough available capacity, either due to the capacity of the national reception facilities like in Romania or due to the offering of LRAs like in Budapest, the majority of people fleeing the war are still housed by volunteers and via social networks. The reasons for this could include the brevity of stay, the concerns about eligibility for access (which is not granted automatically to the transiting population), the quality of the accommodation sites, as well as the fact that in these neighbouring countries many people fleeing the war may have personal connections. In Slovakia, and particularly, in the Košice Self-Governing Region, temporary accommodation facilities have been opened in tourist accommodation, schools and sport halls.

In *destination cities and regions*, faced with a sudden increase in population, ensuring access to accommodation for the persons displaced from Ukraine is one of the main challenges faced by the LRAs. The local and regional response is even more difficult due to the uncertainty regarding the duration and intensity of the war. Warsaw, for instance, has provided 100,000 overnight places for refugees since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Concurrently, as just one example of Polish solidarity, thousands of people opened the doors to their homes. While volunteers stepping in is a welcome expression of solidarity across Europe, the

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¹⁹⁶ The Guardian, 'They won't accept us': Roma refugees forced to camp at Prague train station, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/may/25/they-wont-accept-us-roma-refugees-forced-to-camp-at-prague-train-station, as well as BNE IntelliNews, Czech authorities tighten rules for Ukrainian refugees, available at: https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/.

example of Prague, for instance, has shown that Member States increasingly seem to have to rely on reception support from citizens. There, the city has exhausted its accommodation capacity in municipal buildings and has created two makeshift camps to meet basic accommodation needs.

A trend cutting across all case study countries is the central role of volunteer supply of private accommodation, mostly by private individuals but also by various entities. While citizen engagement is both commendable and necessary. the informal nature of providing these services poses particular risks. The projected continuation of the war, as outlined in Section 4.3 below, requires that Member States move from immediate crisis-response mode to developing a sustainable approach to the reception and integration of the continued refugee flows from Ukraine. This is even more urgent in light of the increased risks of "trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence of refugees" that are ripe in unregulated environments in need of formal oversight and support mechanisms.¹⁹⁷ This is a particular concern as the refugee population is mostly made up of vulnerable people - with women facing an increased risk of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. 198 In this regard, the official coordination of the matching process of offers of private accommodation with beneficiaries, as is pursued by both the Maramures County Council and the City of Warsaw, is a promising practice to be followed. Another important tool for mitigating this risk is the imposition of legal requirements, in place in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Czechia, to notify the authorities (which in Romania and Slovakia are local authorities), when a refugee is being hosted by private persons - be this the responsibility of the volunteer or of the beneficiary, or preferably both.

In the context of a sustainable response as well as state responsibility mentioned above, a particular challenge pertains to the costs volunteers bear when offering private accommodation, especially given that the need may last much longer than what would have been expected following the full-scale invasion. To address this, the possibility of receiving an allowance and/or the reimbursement of expenses, as is the case in Romania, Slovakia, Poland and Czechia, with the possibility of a supplementary city contribution, as was the case in Prague, are promising practices that should be encouraged.

In this context, EU funding avenues are particularly relevant and will be looked at in detail in Section 4.2 below.

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¹⁹⁷ Human Rights Watch, Poland: Trafficking, Exploitation Risks for Refugees, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/29/poland-trafficking-exploitation-risks-refugees.

Also, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 16,

available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

¹⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch, Poland: Trafficking, Exploitation Risks for Refugees, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/29/poland-trafficking-exploitation-risks-refugees.

3.2 Access to means of subsistence

In all case study countries, access to means of subsistence was ensured for people entitled to temporary protection. However, the role of the LRAs varied significantly. In Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Czechia, people with temporary protection may receive **cash** assistance. However, Hungary has the condition that assistance is only offered when the beneficiary is unemployed and offers a monthly cash-assistance of about €55 plus €33 as monthly child support provided that the beneficiaries do not reject any employment the LRA may offer to them. Whereas in Poland, beneficiaries under the Special Act receive a one-off allowance of €64 without additional conditions, and beneficiaries of temporary protection are only entitled to assistance provided they are not housed in state or local accommodation. Importantly, however, beneficiaries under the Special Act have access to a range of social benefits. Ukrainian citizens in Slovakia are also entitled to material assistance under the same conditions as Slovak nationals. starting at €68 per month per individual. The assistance is not contingent on unemployment, but the amount of the benefits is commensurate with the income. Children enrolled in the public education system also receive a food subsidy. At the same time, as a sign of a growing trend of scaling back assistance, in Czechia, for instance, humanitarian assistance has recently been limited to refugees not receiving state accommodation or food.

In the Maramureș County, means of subsistence and **basic items**, such as food, hygiene products, medical devices, clothes and other, were mainly provided by donations, whereas the LRA ensured coordination through managing donations in three logistic centres as well as through a dedicated platform where beneficiaries could also register their requests. Also, in Košice, a humanitarian aid warehouse distributes material and financial donations. In addition, the City of Warsaw manages bank accounts created specially with the purpose of people making donations for refugees.

The role of **international organisations and NGOs** in complement to or in cooperation with the national or regional/local response in the provision of means of subsistence has emerged as a cross-cutting tendency. The UNHCR and UNICEF coordination points, including a chain of Blue Dot centres, has been central in all examined countries. Importantly, these hubs have been providing assistance to people regardless of their protection status.

Transport is essential, which in fact, reportedly, has been the most sought-after service at the height of the refugee flows, especially in border areas. In line with

initiatives put in place across the EU,¹⁹⁹ among others, the Romanian state railway allows persons displaced from Ukraine to travel for free to certain destinations out of the country; in Poland, people fleeing from Ukraine can use trains, ferries and bus transportation free-of-charge from border cities; in Czechia, free railway transport is provided to refugees from border points to other locations within the country; similarly, in Slovakia transport is provided from border crossing points to temporary residence places; while in Hungary railway services are available free-of-charge to people fleeing Ukraine. In any case, access to transport is also relevant within the areas where refugees settle, and to that end Budapest continues granting free public transport; however, the city of Warsaw cancelled while the city of Prague replaced free transport by a special pass at a reduced price.

In this context, Poland has successfully made use of a funding opportunity under the FEAD to provide aid for food parcels or meals. This will be further looked at in point 4.2 below.

3.3 Access to medical care

Similar to other reception conditions, access to **health care** is also subject to legal status or administrative requirements in the case study countries. Romania seems to provide health care with the broadest scope. There, people fleeing the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine are broadly granted access to free medical care similar to that of Romanian citizens. This goes beyond the TPD requirements both in personal and material scope. Hungary provides access to a much narrower group of people, as only those entitled to temporary protection are eligible for primary health care, whereas those excluded from that status have access only to emergency health care and mandatory vaccinations. Also, in Slovakia, access to health care depends on legal status and people transiting Slovakia only have access to emergency medical care, while beneficiaries of TP have access to the full range of medical services. Based on a similar logic but with a wider scope, Poland grants access to health care on equal footing with Polish citizens to those falling under the Special Act, which similarly to the Hungarian TP status, covers primarily Ukrainian citizens. Although other beneficiaries of temporary protection have access to healthcare, it appears to be limited to medical care provided by the Office for Foreigners. Czechia initially provided full free coverage under the public system to all refugees; however, recent amendments limited this to 150 days for adults (except for children and the elderly).

¹⁹⁹ European Travel Commission, European Tourism Support to the People of Ukraine, available at: https://etc-corporate.org/european-tourism-support-to-the-people-of-ukraine/.

Immediate medical assistance upon entry to the national territory is foreseen in all case study countries, including Hungary. There, necessary medical assistance upon arrival is not based on legal status or travel documents and is supported by mobile medical units and pharmacies as well as regional hospitals designated by the Ministry. Public efforts are complemented by civil society initiatives, such as that of the MedSpot Foundation, which runs 24/7 examination rooms at border crossings. In Slovakia, various supplementary initiatives of NGOs and private sectors are also in place, notably, the initiative that enables Ukrainian citizens to arrange free-of-charge consultation with a medical specialist by phone or via a website. Lastly, COVID-19 testing of this population is mandatory upon suspicion at the border crossing points in Hungary, while it is offered on a voluntary basis by Maramureş County Council in Romania.

The **language barrier** is a cross-cutting challenge that hinders adequate medical care for this vulnerable population, with many of the elderly, and people with disabilities being in heightened need of medical care, along with an overarching need for mental health care.

Lastly, Poland is in a specific situation where the biggest challenge remains the **extremely high number of arrivals**, that can create a particular burden on the health care system. To mitigate this, in Warsaw, besides access to the city's medical infrastructure, specific medical points were set up for refugees.

3.4 Access to education

Under the TPD, across the case study countries, children are entitled to **enrolment** in the public education system under the same conditions as nationals. However, in Romania and Hungary, this applies only to those children who fall within the scope of the national temporary protection regime. However, in Slovakia, child beneficiaries of TP are entitled to be 'included' but not 'admitted' to the education system. They are not subject to compulsory schooling, with their admission to schools being dependent on the decision of the school director and subject to the capacity of the school after the enrolment of the Slovak students. Nevertheless, a Ministry-run website where both schools and families can register their capacities and needs constitutes a promising initiative. In Romania, at the time of enrolment, psycho-pedagogical assistance and counselling can also be requested for the child. An example of good practice from Hungary is daily hot meals being provided in all Hungarian educational facilities, and those children who can enrol in the school system also have access to it. As another important step, public schools and vocational training institutions have been allocated supplementary funding of €350 for each such child of mandatory school age. By contrast, Slovak schools receive only €200 per child.

Lack of capacity of public education systems to absorb refugee children has emerged as an issue in both destination countries analysed. In Prague, a shortage of places in schools has even led authorities to recommend that parents seek refuge in other regions where enrolment in the education system would be possible. Notwithstanding, in Hungary, the lack of capacity as well as of methodological assistance also leaves schools, reportedly, unprepared to integrate thousands of Ukrainian-speaking pupils into what is already a strained public education system.²⁰⁰

The language barrier constitutes a cross-cutting challenge in each case study country. In Maramures county in Romania works are, reportedly, underway to create the necessary conditions for Ukrainian children to learn Romanian for their integration into mainstream Romanian education.²⁰¹ Whereas Warsaw has prepared kindergartens and schools for the reception of Ukrainian pupils, including by providing preparatory departments in 77 elementary schools and 14 secondary schools. The city has also provided the places and equipment necessary for refugees to continue following the Ukrainian education programme, and, reportedly, around half of them already do so online. For instance, the Palace of Youth hosts the central point for remote education where Ukrainian children attend classes conducted by Ukrainian teachers. Despite state efforts, 202 the integration of children into the Polish education system is encountering significant obstacles, such as the language barrier, cultural differences, lack of funding, infrastructures and staff. ²⁰³ In Czechia, to overcome this challenge, measures have been implemented to expedite the hiring of Ukrainian teachers, even with insufficient proof of knowledge of Czech. Moreover, a project has been implemented to teach Ukrainian children in their native language and also by Ukrainian teachers, as explained in the case study above.

²⁰⁰ HVG, Refugees in the classroom: not a letter from the ministry will solve another huge task for teachers, available at: https://hvg.hu/elet/20220323 Menekult gyerekek az iskolaban.

²⁰¹ DOPOMOHA, My Rights – Education, available at: https://dopomoha.ro/en/education.

²⁰² According to the Fundamental Rights Agency, the Special Act foresees the transfer of additional funding from State budget to local level, the creation of additional places for education, the possibility of staff working overtime, and the facilitation of hiring Ukrainian citizens speaking Polish to help students who do not speak the language. See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, p. 22, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

²⁰³ More general challenges in this context include the availability of information and data to identify demand and eventually supply by identifying and recruiting Ukrainian educational professionals in Poland; the capacity of the Polish education system, including facilities, qualified teachers and support personnel; educators' skills or knowledge gaps in dealing specifically with these children; lack of educational materials for distance learning, and limited access to temporary learning opportunities. See UNHCR, "Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - March-December 2022", p. 35, available at: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92257. Against this background, Save the Children highlights the necessity of providing more training to Polish teachers and recruiting Ukrainian teachers and of allocating additional funding to local municipalities allowing them to hire intercultural assistants and language teachers and provide non-formal education activities preparing for integration into the school system ahead of the next school year, Save the Children, European gvts urged to do more to get children from Ukraine back to learning, available at https://www.savethechildren.net/news/european-govts-urged-do-more-get-children-ukraine-back-learning.

Lastly, in Poland, the **number of children in need of education** constitutes a unique challenge. Close to 200,000 children from Ukraine are enrolled in the state educational system across the country, and more than 17,000 in Warsaw alone, which require significantly more and long-term resources to ensure the education as well as social integration of children fleeing Ukraine. Moreover, it is estimated that 65,000 school-aged children are currently living in the city, meaning that educational needs may be much greater than identified so far.

3.5 Access to employment

In the context of access to employment, it is, in particular, important to recall the different nature of the examined case study countries. While Romania and Hungary are **transit countries**, where people typically stay for days to weeks, Poland and Czechia are **destination countries** for people fleeing Ukraine, where people reside on the mid- to potentially long-term. As discussed above, the Temporary Protection Directive requires Member States to allow beneficiaries of that protection scheme to engage in employed or self-employed activities, subject to the rules applicable to the various professions. Accordingly, all examined countries recognise the right to employment of refugees. Differences exist in terms of whether the right can already be exercised at the application phase, whether there are additional requirements in place for access, and how difficult it is to access the labour market in practice.

In Poland, all displaced people from Ukraine have a right to access employment under the same conditions as Polish nationals. In Slovakia, the same applies, with the exception of positions in public service. In Romania and in Czechia, those entitled to temporary protection have a right to access employment with no work visa required. However, in Romania and in Slovakia, those in transit and, thus, falling outside the scope of the national temporary protection regime, have no right to work. It should be noted that for people entitled to temporary protection, Hungary recognises the right to access employment without restrictions or the need for a work permit from the time of submission of an application for temporary protection, setting a broader access than that foreseen in the TPD. At the same time, those falling outside the scope of the national temporary protection regime have no right to work in the case study countries.

Finding a job, however, is a challenge for refugees who generally have to deal not only with the **language barrier**, but also with the **recognition of qualifications** in order to exercise certain professions. Article 12 of the TPD also foresees that Member States shall allow beneficiaries of TP to participate in educational or training activities. Nevertheless, a comprehensive approach is needed to facilitate labour market integration, in practice covering the entire process from recognition of pre-existing qualifications and experience to training,

job-search support and workplace integration. In addition, follow-up may facilitate the growing self-sufficiency of this population. While none of the case study countries have a comprehensive approach in place, except for the promising practice of the City of Warsaw, various efforts are underway to help people fleeing Ukraine find employment. To that end, Maramures County, for instance, has organised several meetings with refugees and with local companies, in partnership with NGOs, the Chamber of Commerce Maramures and the Employment Agency Maramures to present national and local employment opportunities for refugees. In Poland, those covered by the Special Act also benefit from job placement, vocational counselling and training, and special rules on the recognition of qualifications. Specifically, in Warsaw, the city has set up a Service Point for Ukrainian Citizens, operating in the Labour Office of Warsaw, which provides assistance in registering for employment opportunities and translation. Additionally, the "WorkSpace - Ukraine" at the Smolna Entrepreneurship Centre, which was created with EU funding, also supports jobseekers who are fleeing the war by offering office materials and services. This strategy appears to be successful in Warsaw, where 36% of the 30,000 workingage refugee women have already found a job. In most case-study countries, the IOM offers targeted language courses.

Lastly, in this context, it should be noted that being employed may have an impact on the **social benefits** that refugees may be entitled to. In Hungary, people entitled to temporary protection must accept any employment offered by the LRA in order to receive social benefits, including child benefits. Given the vulnerability of this population, such conditions may be a cause for concern.

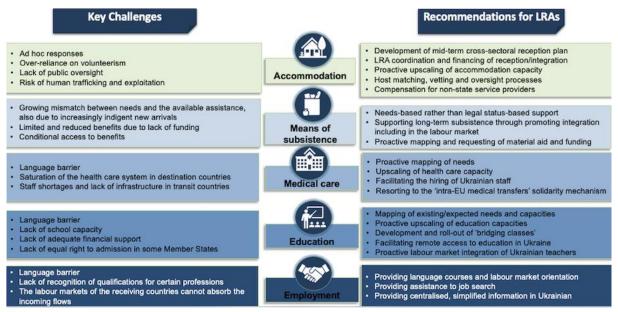
4. Conclusions, Recommendations and Strategic Foresight

With cross-sectoral solidarity at the heart of the European response to the fullscale invasion of Ukraine, the role of Member States, LRAs, as well as civil society, businesses, and civilian actors needs to be re-evaluated in order to ensure the sustainability of the necessary reception and integration measures. In the longterm, the current heavy reliance on volunteer support, among others in providing private accommodation, is not only questionable from a **feasibility** perspective in Member States where citizens already bear the brunt of the energy crisis stemming from Russia's war on Ukraine, but also raises the question of whether Member States are meeting their legal and democratic responsibility to provide public services to persons lawfully within their jurisdictions. The possible future scenarios of the war, as outlined in Section 4.3 on Strategic Foresight below, require that Member States move from the immediate crisis-response mode to the stage of developing sustainable national mid- to long-term approaches as well as requisite infrastructures for the reception of the continued refugee flows from Ukraine. As part of such efforts, the role of citizens and other non-state stakeholders needs to be evaluated in order to capitalise on their support for the benefit of the refugee population while ensuring that related risks are mitigated proactively, with Member States assuming overall legal and financial responsibility at each step of reception and integration. In order for Member States, and in particular LRAs, to meet these challenges, it is essential that adequate funding avenues, in particular the ones outlined in section 4.2 below, are proactively tapped into.

4.1 Key Challenges and Recommendation for LRAs

LRAs at the frontline of receiving people fleeing Ukraine face various challenges, as discussed throughout the chapters above. The following brief overview focuses on the challenges related to accessing rights and services provided for in the TPD, as presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Overview of challenges and corresponding recommendations for the reception of people fleeing the war in Ukraine



Source: own elaboration

In response to the significant reliance on private *accommodation* provided by volunteers and on *ad hoc* solidarity initiatives, it is recommended that LRAs develop mid- to long-term reception plans for the accommodation of increasing refugee flows, where the forms of cross-sectoral collaborations and related responsibilities are laid down. This is necessary for proactive planning, partnership building and needs assessment. In addition, to address the risks in relation to human trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence, associated with a system relying heavily on private accommodation of refugees, LRAs should consider raising awareness of these risks²⁰⁴ for prevention purposes. Preventative steps may include registering all individuals, entities or organisations

²⁰⁴ Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council implementing Decision 2022/382 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, OJ C 126I, 21 March 2022, pp. 1-16., available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022XC0321%2803%29&gid=1647940863274.

providing accommodation,²⁰⁵ developing monitoring mechanisms for safety and quality assurance, as well as providing for adequate complaint mechanisms and remedies in the case of violation of rights. One element of such a comprehensive approach is the development of a centralised and preferably supervised matching procedure between hosts and refugees, e.g. via the centralisation of offers on a trusted website, or through the implementation of standardised criteria to check the safety of the housing offered, including through periodic visits, background checks and the vetting of hosts.²⁰⁶

In the context of providing *means of subsistence*, LRAs have reported a growing need of basic supplies for the increasingly indigent new arrivals, such as food items. To prevent a gap between immediate needs and available resources, it is recommended that LRAs develop contingency plans for continued and/or larger influxes, together with being mindful of increased assistance needs with winter approaching. As part of the mid-term reception plan recommended above, it is also important to plan, and to communicate to these vulnerable population groups, the social benefits they can count on in the longer term.

In the context of *access to health care*, it is critical that LRAs proactively map capacity considering both future refugee flows, as well as the likelihood of a progressive worsening of the health status of new arrivals, given the lack of functioning medical care in Ukraine as well as growing epidemics in conflict settings. These, coupled with the expected escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the winter, makes the need for early preparation even more urgent. In any case, the strengthening of local and regional health care capacities, especially in the border regions, should be a priority along with the proactive involvement of Ukrainian-speaking support staff — even from among the already-registered refugees. In addition to the upscaling of general healthcare capabilities, where the medical infrastructure struggles to cope with the medical care needed by people fleeing the war, LRAs can also rely on the 'intra-EU medical transfers' solidarity mechanism, set up by the European Commission. The mechanism enables the transfer of persons in need of medical care from the frontline Member States²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (lead), "A Common Anti-Trafficking Plan to address the risks of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine", pp. 6 and 8, available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-anti-trafficking-plan-protect-people-fleeing-war-ukraine-2022-05-11_en.

²⁰⁶ See European Commission, "Solidarity and housing: Supporting Safe Homes - Considerations, key principles and practices", available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/safe-homes-guidance-en; Factsheet "Safe Homes initiative: Sustainable and safe housing for people fleeing the war in Ukraine", 6 July 2022, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs-22-4325. Also, European Union Agency for Asylum, "Practical recommendations on the provision of emergency placement in private accommodation for persons displaced from Ukraine", May 2022,

available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/private-accommodation-persons-displaced-ukraine.

²⁰⁷ See European Commission, "Factsheet Ukraine: EU preparedness to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine", 23 March 2022, p. 3, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_1948.

within the EU. The European Commission continues to work with the relevant EU agencies to provide public health guidance and support to Member States.²⁰⁸

LRAs are encouraged to ensure the equal access of refugee children to *education* in their national systems. The school integration of these children is essential not only for their continued education but also for their psycho-social well-being as well as the sustainable integration of their families. Children need targeted language and integration programmes given that the sustainable return of these populations to Ukraine cannot be expected in the short-term. Bridging classes, peer-to-peer learning, and mixed play and sports groups are just a few of the initiatives that can help ease their transition. At the same time, especially in the short-term when the host country's language is still foreign to refugee children, facilitating access to education that may still be ongoing in their Ukrainian home institutions is recommended. The European Commission has mobilised various instruments including by making available resources and materials²⁰⁹ and facilitating exchange of information and experiences.²¹⁰ The European Commission has also promoted the integration of displaced educational staff with relevant expertise.²¹¹

Proactive mapping and matching of needs and skills, targeted language and labour-market orientation courses and centralised access to simplified information in Ukrainian can all facilitate *access to employment for* refugees. LRAs are also encouraged to rely on guidance issued by the European Commission on the

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²⁰⁸ Namely on access to vaccination for children. See European Commission, "Factsheet Ukraine: EU preparedness to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine", 23 March 2022, p. 3, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_1948. European Commission, Ukraine: EU support to help Member States meet the needs of refugees, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1946.

²⁰⁹ The School Education Gateway makes available information on education and training, namely resources and materials for teachers, including learning materials in Ukrainian provided by the Ukrainian authorities. – European Commission, "Factsheet - Refugees from Ukraine: Support to school children and teachers", April 2022, pp. 1-2, available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/factsheet-refugees-from-ukraine-support-to-school-children-and-teachers.

²¹⁰ Via the School Education Gateway and the eTwinning online community, which gathers educational staff from the EU Member States and is also accessible to teachers from Ukraine. - European Commission, "Factsheet - Refugees from Ukraine: Support to school children and teachers", April 2022, pp. 1-2, available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/factsheet-refugees-from-ukraine-support-to-school-children-and-teachers.

²¹¹ In its Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Commission invites Member States to "facilitate the recruitment of educational staff enjoying temporary protection" – Commissions Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, OJ L 107I, 6 April 2022, paragraphs 19 and 20, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0554. Moreover, the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine supports countries hosting school-age children displaced from Ukraine "by pooling available expertise and providing guidance". - European Commission, "Factsheet - Refugees from Ukraine: Support to school children and teachers", April 2022, p. 3, available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/factsheet-refugees-from-ukraine-support-to-school-children-and-teachers.

recognition of professional qualifications²¹² and on access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning.²¹³ In addition, the European Training Foundation is helping national and Ukrainian authorities with comparing the Ukrainian and the European Qualifications Frameworks and provides information online for Ukrainians seeking to have their qualifications recognised.²¹⁴

Lastly, it should be noted that various additional challenges could be identified across the case study countries, the detailed analysis of which, however, do not fall within the scope of the present Study. Those challenges relate to, among others, the sustainability of volunteerism,²¹⁵ the prevention of human trafficking among a population on the move in their millions, and to meeting the specific needs of a vulnerable population that includes high proportions of unaccompanied minors or children from state institutions,²¹⁶ single mothers, the elderly, people with disabilities, and Roma people with a history of being subjected to discrimination, to name a few.

4.2 Tapping into EU Funding

Access to funding by the LRAs has emerged from the case studies as a crosscutting challenge. The difficulties in accessing funding seem to stem, to a certain extent, from lack of knowledge of relevant avenues, and, to a larger extent, to the management structure of the funds.

In fact, at EU level, a significant part of the assistance to Member States and LRAs dealing with the influx of people comes from EU funding that follows programming periods in line with the EU's long-term budget (the multiannual financial framework or 'MFF'). In December 2020, the MFF 2021-2027 was

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²¹² Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, OJ L 107I, 6 April 2022, pp. 1-8, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0554.

²¹³ "Communication from the Commission on Guidance for access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine", C(2022) 4050 final, 14 June 2022, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_3620. ²¹⁴ See European Commission, "Factsheet Ukraine: EU preparedness to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine", 23 March 2022, p. 3, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_1948. See also https://ec.europa.eu/en/education-and-work-information-ukrainians-and-eu-countries/information-for-people-fleeing-ukraine.

²¹⁵, IPOL – Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, European Parliament, "Research for REGI Committee: Cities and the Ukrainian refugees" (June 2022), p. 6, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_BRI(2022)699654.

²¹⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "The war in Ukraine - Fundamental rights implications within the EU - Bulletin 1", May 2022, pp. 20-21, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/ukraine-bulletin-1-2022.

approved,²¹⁷ replacing the previous MFF covering the years 2014-2020, which, nevertheless, have remained relevant in the local and regional responses to the refugee flow.

Various EU funding avenues are available to support the reception and integration of refugees, as referenced throughout the Study. Among those, the **European Regional Development Fund** (ERDF),²¹⁸ is of particular relevance given its regional dimension. Although it is generally directed at countering regional imbalances, the fund can also be relied on in the context of the regional response to refugee flows. Among others, examples of use of the EDRF for the purposes of refugee integration include a project implemented by the City of Vienna amounting to close to €5 million of the ERDF to develop the "CoRE - Centre of Refugee Empowerment" hosting various activities for the integration of refugees and functioning as a think tank.²¹⁹

Another structural fund with a relevant dimension is the **European Social Fund** (ESF)²²⁰ which, in the past, funded with over €7 million a project in Bremen supporting young immigrants in learning German by offering intensive language courses as well as other courses to facilitate adaptation to their receiving country.²²¹

Both the EDRF and the ESF, for instance, can help support the tackling of the problem of lack of available **accommodation**, which constitutes one of the main

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²¹⁷ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027.

²¹⁸ The EDRF is a structural fund regulated, for the programming period of 2014-2020, by the Common Provisions Regulation or 'RDC' (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013) and the Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund, and by the New Common Provisions Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021) for the current programming year. Its main task is "redressing the main regional imbalances in the Union through the sustainable development and structural adjustment of regional economies" (Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013). See European Commission, European Regional Development Fund, available at https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/.

²¹⁹ European Commission, Vienna is helping refugees to integrate, available at https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/Austria/vienna-is-helping-refugees-to-integrate.

²²⁰ The ESF is a structural fund regulated, for the programming period of 2014-2020, by the Common Provisions Regulation and Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund, and by the New Common Provisions Regulation for the current programming year, as ESF+. The mission of the ESF is to "promote high levels of employment and job quality, improve access to the labour market, support the geographical and occupational mobility of workers and facilitate their adaptation to industrial change and to changes in production systems needed for sustainable developments, encourage a high level of education and training for all and support the transition between education and employment for young people, combat poverty, enhance social inclusion, and promote gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, thereby contributing to the priorities of the Union as regards strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion" (Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 1304/2013). See https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp and https://ec.europa.eu/europa.eu/europa.eu/europa.eu/esf/home.jsp and https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp and https://ec.europa.eu/euro

²²¹ European Commission, Creating pathways to employment for immigrants through language learning, available at https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/projects/creating-pathways-employment-immigrants-through-language-learning.

concerns of LRAs in destination countries. According to the European Commission, the ERDF can help to "provide social housing for families and individuals in the community", as well as to cover "purchase and refurbishment of appropriate accommodation", while the ESF can "support investments in community-based accommodation, especially for those with special needs, disabilities, and children and older people".²²²

The funds from both the EDRF and the ESF under the 2014-2020 programming period are still available as a result of the **CARE** – **Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe**. The CARE is an extraordinary response of the EU to support Member States and regions dealing with the exceptional influx of persons displaced from Ukraine in providing emergency assistance, such as temporary accommodation, food and water supplies and medical care.²²³

In addition, to facilitate the reception of refugees from Ukraine, an additional €3.5 billion under the 2022 REACT-EU - Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe²²⁴ was made available through the increase of the resources allocated as initial pre-financing in 2022. This was done with a view to supporting especially those Member States where the number of arrivals from Ukraine was greater than 1% of the national population between the beginning of the full-scale military invasion and the end of March.²²⁵ In addition, Member States may make use of the 2022 envelope of the REACT fund, which amounts to €9.5 billion.²²⁶

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See also, European Commission, REACT-EU, available at

https://ec.europa.eu/regional policy/en/newsroom/coronavirus-response/react-eu/.

 ²²² See European Commission, "Factsheet Ukraine: EU preparedness to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine", 23 March 2022, p. 4, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_1948.
 ²²³ Through the CARE, the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy rules were amended, introducing simplification and flexibility, in order to allow a swift reallocation of available funding under the ERDF, the ESF and the FEAD.
 See Regulation (EU) 2022/562 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 amending Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and (EU) No 223/2014 as regards Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE).
 See also https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1607; https://ec.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/04/04/ukraine-council-unlocks-17-billion-of-eufunds-to-help-refugees/.

²²⁴ Programme under the NextGenerationEU launched as a reaction to the coronavirus pandemic and its social consequences, in the amount of €50.6 billion, regulated by Regulation (EU) 2020/2221 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 December 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 as regards additional resources and implementing arrangements to provide assistance for fostering crisis repair in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its social consequences and for preparing a green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy (REACT-EU).

²²⁵ An increase from 11% to 45% where the number of arrivals from Ukraine was greater than 1% of the national population (which includes the five case study Member States - Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Czechia, as well as Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania), and from 11 to 15% for the other Member States. See Regulation (EU) 2022/613 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 April 2022 amending Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and (EU) No 223/2014 as regards increased pre-financing from REACT-EU resources and the establishment of a unit cost. See also https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/04/06/ukraine-council-approves-immediate-disbursement-of-3-5-billion-to-eu-countries-welcoming-refugees/.

²²⁶ See https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP 22 1961;
<a href="https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/04/04/ukraine-council-unlocks-17-billion-of-eu-billion-of

The CARE and the changes to the REACT-EU also cover the **Fund for European** Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).²²⁷ These funds can be used, as is the case in Poland, to provide aid in the form of food parcels or meals. 228 Relevant initiatives in the past include supporting, with over €1 million, a project aimed at helping foreign marginalised people to find a way out of the streets of four Swedish cities. 229

Furthermore, on 29 June 2022, the European Commission proposed a new package, building on the CARE and providing further flexibility in the use of cohesion policy funds to address the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the needs of refugees – the "Flexible Assistance to Territories" (FAST-CARE).²³⁰ The FAST-CARE expressly recognises the crucial role played by LRAs (and civil society organisations) in this context and requires that at least 30% of the support granted to Member States is channelled to those authorities and organisations.²³¹ This new proposal follows calls made by the European Council²³² and the European Parliament, but also by the Committee of the Regions.²³³

funds-to-help-refugees/; https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/04/12/ukraine-increasedfinancing/.

²²⁷ The FEAD was regulated, for the programming period of 2014-2020, by Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Its objective is the promotion of social cohesion, enhancing social inclusion and contributing to the objective of eradicating poverty in the Union, notably, by providing non-financial assistance to the most deprived persons (food and/or basic material assistance), and social inclusion activities (Article 3(1)). For the current programming year, this fund was integrated in the ESF+. See https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fundplus/en/what-esf and https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089.

²²⁸ Under the Food Aid Operational Programme 2014-2020. See https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-onassistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-hasentered-into-force.

²²⁹ See https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/projects/information-helps-foreigners-streets-sweden. ²³⁰ See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "Upgrading Cohesion policy - Flexible Assistance to territories (FAST - CARE) - to address the consequences of Russian aggression", COM(2022) 324/2, 29 June 2022, available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/communications/2022/flexible-assistance-to-

territories-fast-care. The proposal needs to be approved by the Council and the European Parliament.

231 The proposal also foresees that Member States shall report on the fulfilment of this requirement and that failure to comply compromises reimbursement.

²³² European Council conclusions, 30-31 May 2022, para. 10, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/31/european-council-conclusions-30-31-may-<u>20</u>22/.

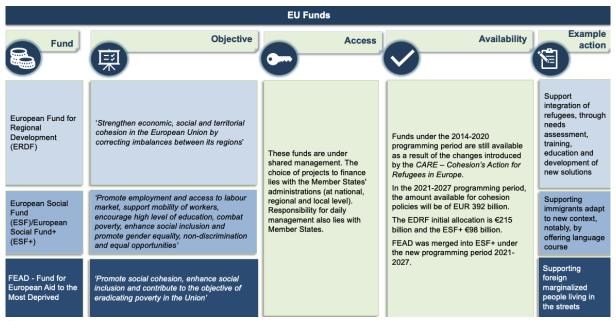
²³³ The issue of access to EU funding by the LRAs dealing with the reception and integration of persons displaced from Ukraine was the topic of the study visit to Rzeszów organised by the Conference of the Presidents of the COR on 6 April 2022, together with Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa Ferreira. More information on this meeting available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/Extraordinary-meeting-ofthe-Conference-of-Presidents.aspx.

Furthermore, it was the main topic of the 'Debate on Ukraine' at the 149th Plenary Session of the CoR, which took place on 29 and 30 April 2022, with the President of the CoR, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, calling for an "EU-Ukraine local refugee facility as an operational instrument that would mobilise funds from relevant EU programmes" with "simplified rules" and granting "eligible local and regional authorities timely access to funds". The minutes are available here:

https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Public/Documents/MeetingDocuments?meetingId=2182078&meetingSessionId =2227829. It was also the object of the statement of Prague's Mayor, Zdeněk Hřib, on "The Ukrainian war:

The infographic below summarises the main features of the EU funds mentioned above:

Figure 4. Regional EU Funds available to strengthen the LRAs reception and integration capacity



Source: own elaboration

Finally, LRAs can also tap into the **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund** (AMIF)²³⁴ given its aim of supporting Member States in their management of migration, including integration measures and infrastructures for reception. Through the AMIF, a variety of thematically relevant projects can receive funding. One illustrative example of this is the integration of migrant women in four EU Member States through the dissemination of knowledge and through measures to reduce isolation and barriers to their civic participation.²³⁵ In reaction to the current crisis, the implementation period of the 2014-2020 Home Affairs funds, including the AMIF, has also been extended, enabling the release of an

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hosting refugees and Cohesion funding implications" at the 150th Plenary Meeting of the CoR, which took place on 29 and 30 June 2022, claiming that it is "absolutely vital for the EU to immediately and directly financially support cities and regions".

Transmission available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/150th-cor-plenary-session.aspx.

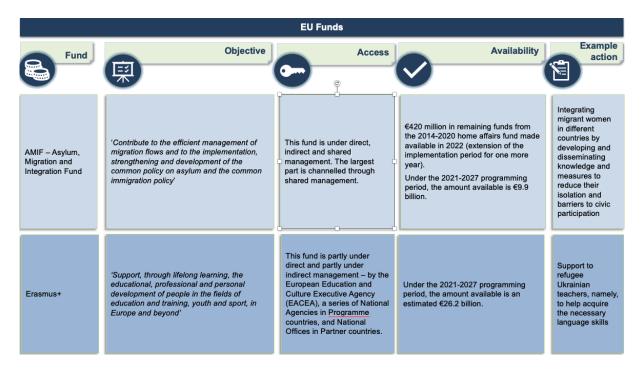
²³⁴ The AMIF is a Home Affairs fund regulated, for the programming period of 2014-2020, by Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management, and by Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, for the current programming period. Its main objective is the "to contribute to the efficient management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of the common policy on asylum and the common immigration policy" (Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1147. For more information see <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migrat

²³⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/31077795/776074/AMIF.

additional €420 million.²³⁶

In addition to the above funds, there a variety of other funds that may be used in particular areas relevant to the reception and integration of refugees.²³⁷ For example, the Erasmus+ fund²³⁸ may be relied upon to respond to the concrete challenges experienced in the field of education, notably by offering grants to refugee teachers and trainers from Ukraine to help them gain the necessary skills to work within the education systems of the hosting Member States.²³⁹

Figure 5. Thematic EU Funds available to strengthen the LRAs reception and integration capacity



Source: own elaboration

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 $\underline{https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/04/04/ukraine-council-unlocks-17-billion-of-eufunds-to-help-refugees/.}$

²³⁶ See Regulation (EU) 2022/585 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 amending Regulations (EU) No 514/2014 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for polic. See also https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1607;

²³⁷ For an overview of funds which may finance projects related to the integration of migrants, see https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/funding/how-do-eu-funds-integration-work en.

²³⁸ The Erasmus+ is governed by Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport for the new programming period and its general objective is "to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in the fields of education and training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond" (Article 3(1)).

²³⁹ European Commission, "Factsheet - Refugees from Ukraine: Support to school children and teachers", April 2022, p. 2, available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/factsheet-refugees-from-ukraine-support-to-school-children-and-teachers.

4.3 Strategic Foresight

The medium- to long-term reception and integration needs of people fleeing the war in Ukraine depends, to a very significant extent, on how the war evolves. Various future scenarios have been considered, notably, by the Interregional relations in Europe project of the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON IRiE). Four scenarios have been laid out depending on the duration and severity of the next phases of the war.²⁴⁰ In all the outlined scenarios, the regions bordering Ukraine will be particularly affected owing to their geographical proximity and migration networks. In the best-case scenario, where the war ends soon and only a limited portion of the Ukrainian territory is affected, the migration flows are expected to remain similar to the current situation. In the worst-case scenario, however, where the conflict is long-lasting and brings about a high degree of destruction, the total number of refugees fleeing Ukraine is estimated to reach 10 million people, with the border countries registering a growth in population of about 10%. Two intermediate scenarios have also been drawn: in one, the conflict drags on but causes limited damage, resulting in a scenario similar to the best-case scenario presented, although the higher number of refugees is expected to cause saturation in accommodation capacity in first reception countries and, thus, contribute to more refugees moving towards western European countries; in the other, the conflict ends shortly but produces significant destruction, resulting in an even larger inflow of refugees from Ukraine coming to Europe and concentrated in other western European countries. Both middle scenarios foresee a continued increase in incoming flows and forecast the need for increased preparedness for both reception and mid- to longterm integration.

Lastly, other factors shaping the dynamic of the refugee flow include the host countries' capacity to integrate refugees, the Ukrainian government's economic policy, and the availability of international assistance for its implementation.²⁴¹ The choice of destination by refugees is also highly determined by cultural and linguistic proximity, which explains and foresees the continued high preference for Poland. These also influence the long-term planning of people fleeing the war, with about one third of those in Poland already intending to stay longer.²⁴²

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²⁴⁰ ESPON IRiE - – Interregional Relations in Europe, "Testing impacts of existing/upcoming policy decisions and external shocks on interregional relations" (May 2022), pp. 42 and ff., available at: https://irie.espon.eu/pages/ukraine.

²⁴¹ ESPON IRiE – Interregional Relations in Europe, "Testing impacts of existing/upcoming policy decisions and external shocks on interregional relations" (May 2022), p. 58, available at: https://irie.espon.eu/pages/ukraine.

²⁴² *Ibid*.

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ISBN 978-92-895-1245-9 doi: 10.2863/060380

QG-07-22-992-EN-N



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