

## II

*(Information)*INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES  
AND AGENCIES

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## 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**

(2022/C 233/01)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, over 6.5 million people have fled Ukraine and reached the EU; about 3 million have registered for temporary protection and the majority are women with children <sup>(1)</sup>. From the information available so far, only a relatively small number of those of working age has entered the EU labour market or registered with Public Employment Services. This could be due to physical and psychological traumas, ongoing acclimatisation in the host Member States, lack of information on the opportunities available or other barriers (such as language and childcare duties).

Despite the uncertainty about the number of people likely to stay in the EU and prospects for return, the number of people wanting to enter the labour market in the Member States is expected to rise.

Swift and effective integration into the labour market will be important both for the host communities and for the people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine as they will be able to rebuild their lives and continue developing their skills. This will be for the benefit of the persons concerned, the EU and, eventually, for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

This Communication presents policy guidance for Member States' actions on access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning for people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The present guidance complements and builds upon actions already undertaken at the EU level aimed at supporting those arriving in the EU. On 4 March 2022, the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 <sup>(2)</sup> establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC ("Temporary

<sup>(1)</sup> Most recent data obtained from the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Management Mechanism (Blueprint) Network.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 71, 4.3.2022, p. 1.

Protection Directive'), and having the effect of introducing temporary protection <sup>(3)</sup> was adopted. The Commission presented Operational guidelines on the implementation of this Decision on 21 March <sup>(4)</sup> ('Operational guidelines'), a Communication on welcoming those fleeing war in Ukraine on 23 March <sup>(5)</sup> ('23 March Communication'), as well as a Commission Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 5 April <sup>(6)</sup> ('Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications'). At the extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council of 28 March, the Commission, in coordination with the French Presidency of the Council, presented a 10-Point Plan for stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war from Ukraine <sup>(7)</sup>. These key documents will be subject to updates as required to reflect changing circumstances and where supplementary guidance will be helpful.

Beneficiaries of temporary protection have the right to access the EU labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning. In its 23 March Communication, the Commission encouraged Member States to grant access to the labour market and to extend the provisions of Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive also to persons receiving adequate protection under national law, as provided for in Article 2(2) of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 ('adequate protection under national law'). In a similar vein, with the present Communication the Commission invites Member States, to the extent possible, to extend the provisions related to vocational education and training and adult learning under Article 14 of the Temporary Protection Directive also to persons receiving adequate protection under national law. This Communication therefore refers to people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine who are eligible for temporary protection under the Temporary Protection Directive, as well as those who are eligible for adequate protection under national law.

The Commission is exchanging through a broad range of channels with national authorities, social and economic partners, the private sector, and civil society organisations involved in the reception and integration of those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Solidarity Platform <sup>(8)</sup> coordinates cooperation between Member States, for instance on the mapping of needs, resources, reception capacities and transfers, paying particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable, in particular children. The Commission has set up a multilingual website providing information to people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine about their rights, opportunities and procedures to follow once they arrive in the EU <sup>(9)</sup>. Moreover, a series of initiatives at the EU level ensure that Member States can make full use of available EU funds, notably as part of the 'Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe' (CARE initiative) <sup>(10)</sup>.

The scale and the speed of arrivals is unprecedented and requires an effective response at all levels. This document aims to provide policy guidance to Member States in view of facilitating the integration of people arriving from Ukraine into the labour market. It outlines concrete actions that can be taken by Member States based on lessons learnt and best practices gathered in the recent months and since the 2015-2016 migration crisis. Successful integration into the labour market depends also on measures taken in other areas such as access to accommodation, healthcare (including mental and reproductive healthcare), social protection and services, as well as, for parents, early childhood education and care and school education. The actions the Commission is undertaking in all of these areas <sup>(11)</sup> are complementary.

<sup>(3)</sup> As set out in the Operational guidelines and in the 23 March Communication, in addition to Ukrainian nationals, Article 2(1) of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 foresees that third country nationals or stateless persons benefiting from international protection in Ukraine and their family members should be granted temporary protection if they resided in Ukraine before or on 24 February 2022. For third country nationals residing in Ukraine before or on 24 February with a permanent residence permit and who cannot safely return to their country of origin, Member States shall apply either temporary protection or adequate protection under their national law (Article 2(2) of the Council Implementing Decision). Member States may also grant temporary protection to other third country nationals who were legally residing in Ukraine and are unable to return (Article 2(3) of the Council Implementing Decision). As set out in the Operational guidelines, temporary protection as introduced by the Council Implementing Decision lasts one year from the entry into force of the Decision, i.e. from 4 March 2022 until 4 March 2023, in accordance with Article 4(1) of Directive 2001/55/EC. If during this period the Council does not take a Decision, on a proposal from the Commission, to end the temporary protection, it will be extended automatically by six months, i.e. until 4 September 2023, and again by six months, i.e. until 4 March 2024.

<sup>(4)</sup> 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 126 I, 21.3.2022, p. 1).

<sup>(5)</sup> COM(2022) 131 final.

<sup>(6)</sup> Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine (OJ L 107 I, 6.4.2022, p. 1).

<sup>(7)</sup> Home Affairs Council: Ten-Point Plan (europa.eu)

<sup>(8)</sup> Set up by the Commission based on Articles 24-27 of the Temporary Protection Directive.

<sup>(9)</sup> Information for people fleeing the war in Ukraine | European Commission (europa.eu)

<sup>(10)</sup> Ukraine: final adoption of CARE | European Social Fund Plus (europa.eu)

<sup>(11)</sup> Further action in these areas is ongoing - see for instance the initiatives to implement the 10-Point Plan, including the 'Safe Homes' initiative; on education, the Commission has prepared Policy guidance on supporting the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in education: considerations, key principles and practices (schooleducationgateway.eu)

Member States are encouraged to implement the guidance in the present Communication in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights <sup>(12)</sup>, which are essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and social protection systems in Europe. Numerous actions included in the Commission's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion for 2021-27 <sup>(13)</sup> are of particular relevance for people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Attention should also be paid to non-discrimination and the specific vulnerabilities of particular groups at greater risk of discrimination, including Roma and people with a minority racial or ethnic background, persons with disabilities and the LGBTIQ community.

The EU will pursue its cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities to support measures ensuring that people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine can exercise their rights. The Ukrainian diaspora in the EU plays a particular role in supporting those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.



## 2. ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET AND TRAINING

### 2.1. Employment and self-employment

Fast and effective access to and integration into the labour market is crucial for the people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine who are able and willing to work. They can engage in employed or self-employed activities which also allows them to be financially independent, rebuild their lives, and to contribute to and integrate into the local community during their stay in the EU. This will be for the benefit of the persons concerned, the EU and, eventually, for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Beneficiaries of temporary protection shall be authorised to engage in employed or self-employed activities, subject to rules applicable to the profession. For reasons of labour market policies, Member States may give priority to EU citizens and citizens of States bound by the Agreement on the European Economic Area and also to legally resident third-country nationals who receive unemployment benefit. The general law in force in the Member States applicable to remuneration, access to social security systems relating to employed or self-employed activities and other conditions of employment shall apply.

In its 23 March Communication, the Commission recommended that Member States interpret the rights granted by the Temporary Protection Directive to access the EU labour market in the broadest possible way, applying exceptions to free movement in the internal market only in duly justified circumstances. The Commission encourages Member States to grant such access to their labour market also to beneficiaries of adequate protection under national law. In the Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications, the Commission also recommended that Member States do not introduce or maintain any requirement for companies to prove that they could not hire an EU national before recruiting a person enjoying temporary protection.

It is also important to avoid exploitation and undeclared work. The European Labour Authority supports the exchange of best practices via its Platform Tackling Undeclared Work <sup>(14)</sup>, to fight against possible abuse or labour exploitation. In recent years, the Platform has promoted a comprehensive approach combining preventative measures (such as awareness-raising and providing information) and sanctions following workplace inspections <sup>(15)</sup>.

Public Employment Services play a key role when it comes to integrating people into the labour market, providing information to those arriving and acting as matchmakers between jobseekers and employers. They cooperate and coordinate actions with other stakeholders, such as other national administrations, municipalities, social partners and civil society organisations, including migrant and Ukrainian diaspora organisations, to ensure timely and targeted support. Public Employment Services are also key providers of EURES services <sup>(16)</sup>, some of which can be used by those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Commission stands ready to further facilitate exchanges and cooperation on these issues through the European Network of Public Employment Services.

<sup>(12)</sup> European Pillar of Social Rights | European Commission (europa.eu)

<sup>(13)</sup> COM(2020) 758 final.

<sup>(14)</sup> European Platform tackling undeclared work | European Labour Authority (europa.eu)

<sup>(15)</sup> The ESF has also funded such projects, see e.g. Integrazione migranti Progetto PIU' SUPREME (lavoro.gov.it).

<sup>(16)</sup> EURES (europa.eu) is a European cooperation network of employment services, designed to facilitate the free movement of workers. See in particular the 'working and living' section.

### Survey of Public Employment Services:



In March 2022, the Commission launched a survey among Public Employment Services, which showed that they have adjusted relevant processes quickly, through online information in multiple languages (sometimes including Ukrainian) and dedicated counsellors. In some countries, Public Employment Services have set up dedicated branch offices for jobseekers fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and, in some cases, are advertising job offers specifically targeting them. Some Public Employment Services are already present at Welcome Centres and services, and some are involved in joint emergency response groups or taskforces for people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Many Public Employment Services have gained substantial experience in recent years in registering, profiling, and supporting the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market, and are therefore encouraged to cooperate and exchange good practices through the European Network of Public Employment Services.

The Commission is also working with social and economic partners through the European Partnership for Integration <sup>(17)</sup> to advance the labour market integration of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Member States are encouraged to adopt also a multi-stakeholder approach at national level with economic and social partners, as they are key in ensuring the effective creation and availability of employment and self-employment opportunities with the necessary support.



The Commission invites Member States, when taking measures regarding access to employment and self-employment, to:

— **Make information available:**

- **On available support to the people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.** This goes beyond the legal obligation to provide them with information about their rights and concerns information about support, such as career guidance, counselling, mentoring, protection against discrimination (especially during pregnancy and early parenthood) and work-life balance measures. Information of this kind could be included in the document to be provided under Article 9 of the Temporary Protection Directive, ideally in the language of the recipient and also made available through dedicated websites, apps, or advertisements. Member States are encouraged to make a similar document and set of information available also to those eligible for adequate protection under national law.
- About the rights of the beneficiaries of temporary and adequate protection under national law **to integration service centres, local authorities, social security institutions, potential employers and social partners.** This can be done through information and training sessions, and by encouraging them to participate in EU-level initiatives, such as the Pact for Skills <sup>(18)</sup>.
- **Facilitate the integration in the labour market** of beneficiaries of temporary protection and, where relevant, of adequate protection under national law by:
  - Encouraging those arriving in the EU to **register promptly with the local Public Employment Services**, e.g. by providing such information upon arrival or in welcome centres and services.

<sup>(17)</sup> European Partnership for Integration (europa.eu) The Partnership includes the European Commission and the five social and economic Partners organisations (ETUC, Business Europe, SMEUnited, CEEP, Eurochambres). Since the launch of the Partnership in 2017, social and economic partners have implemented a wide range of actions in the field of labour market integration in more than 20 EU countries. The European Commission has co-funded several innovative projects to help refugees and other migrants integrate into the labour market. The Commission is working with the social and economic partners to reinforce the European Partnership for Integration and cover integration into the labour market of people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

<sup>(18)</sup> The Pact for Skills is a shared engagement model for skills development in Europe. The Commission is mobilising the Pact's stakeholders to offer concrete training and employment opportunities for those fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

- Reflecting **the needs of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** in the work of national authorities and Public Employment Services by:
  - Giving, in first instance, specific attention to **occupations where beneficiaries of temporary protection and adequate protection under national law can support others fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers and trainers, early childhood education and care workers, labour market counsellors, as well as in the offices of Public Employment Services). This could be ensured by reducing the barriers to accessing such professions and cooperating with the Ukrainian authorities and diaspora.
  - Paying particular attention to **labour market access for women**, and, as a matter of priority, addressing the needs of women with children, also in relation to their rights to access to early childhood education and care and school education as this can help them take up employment opportunities.
  - Encouraging placements in sectors and occupations where there are **labour market shortages** in the host Member States. **Cedefop's analysis of job vacancies across Europe** <sup>(19)</sup> can help Member States to examine what skills are needed and where, including at the regional level. Moreover, the Shortage and Surplus Occupations <sup>(20)</sup> report by the European Labour Authority can support Member States in identifying needs.
  - **Raising awareness about diversity in the workplace and providing civic/social-cultural orientation courses**, reflecting the needs of specific groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, minorities, etc.), and informing them on non-discrimination rights and what to do in case of a breach of these rights.
- Reinforcing the enabling framework for accessing **employment and self-employment** by:
  - **Providing support to employers** hiring people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and **allowances for the creation of start-ups**. **Social economy** businesses and networks can also support the integration efforts.
  - **Opening up entrepreneurship support programmes** to people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, e.g. training, mentoring, coaching and networking support, as well as microfinance, or a combination of financial and non-financial support measures. The **Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool** <sup>(21)</sup> can be used for this purpose.
  - **Promoting European entrepreneurship support programmes**, such as Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs <sup>(22)</sup> and the Enterprise Europe Network <sup>(23)</sup>.
- **Provide the broadest possible access to the labour market** for those who pursue employed and self-employed activities by:
  - **Addressing the risk of exploitation and undeclared work** <sup>(24)</sup>, by ensuring cooperation between different actors, including law enforcement and labour inspectorates, in line with the holistic approach promoted in recent years by the Platform Tackling Undeclared Work, the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025) <sup>(25)</sup> and the Common Anti-Trafficking Plan to address the risks of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine <sup>(26)</sup>.

<sup>(19)</sup> Skills-OVATE | CEDEFOP (europa.eu)

<sup>(20)</sup> Analysis of shortage and surplus occupations 2021 | European Labour Authority (europa.eu)

<sup>(21)</sup> Homepage | The Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool: developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Commission is an online tool designed for policy-makers and other interested parties at local, regional and national level who wish to explore how public policy can: support youth, women, migrants and the unemployed in business creation and self-employment; support the development of social enterprises.

<sup>(22)</sup> Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu): it helps provide aspiring European entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to start and/or successfully run a small business in Europe.

<sup>(23)</sup> Enterprise Europe Network (europa.eu): it helps businesses innovate and grow on an international scale. It is the world's largest support network for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

<sup>(24)</sup> See for instance Early Warning Notification - War in Ukraine: refugees arriving to the EU from Ukraine at risk of exploitation as part of THB | Europol (europa.eu)

<sup>(25)</sup> COM(2021) 171 final.

<sup>(26)</sup> A new Anti-Trafficking Plan to protect people fleeing the war in Ukraine (europa.eu)

- **Not making use of the possibility under Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive to give priority to access the labour market to EU nationals** and nationals of States bound by the Agreement on the European Economic Area or legally resident third-country nationals who receive unemployment benefits.
- Ensuring that actions on labour market **always include the perspective of persons with disabilities**, ensuring accessibility of information and services, in line with Principle 17 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the commitments under the United Nations Conventions for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

### Examples of relevant EU-funded projects



EU funded projects <sup>(27)</sup> can serve as inspiration and showcase good practices. For instance, **'fast-track' integration programmes**, with a dual focus on language and on-the-job training have proven particularly effective in integrating asylum seekers and refugees.

**Fostering Opportunities of Refugee Workers (FORWORK)** <sup>(28)</sup> is an EaSI-funded pilot project targeting the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees hosted in reception centres (CAS) in Piedmont (Italy) and Albania. The project offers skills assessments and gender-specific mentoring services, combined with language and professional training, to develop an individualised integration plan.

Another EaSI-funded pilot project is **Fast track action boost (FAB)** <sup>(29)</sup>, which focused on a city-approach to fast-track integration pathways to the labour market for refugees and their families, with a special focus on female refugees. Its partnership brought together Belgrade, Berlin, Madrid, Milan, Stockholm and Vienna.

A successful example of multi-stakeholder partnerships is the project **Labour INT** <sup>(30)</sup>, which promotes multi-layered integration paths (from arrivals to the workplace, and including education, training and job placements) for asylum seekers and refugees, building on the interest and capacities of businesses, chambers of industry and commerce, trade unions and migrant associations.

Examples of ESF-funded projects focusing on the labour market integration of female migrants include **Stark im Beruf** <sup>(31)</sup> (Germany) for mothers with a migrant background, **Mirjam** <sup>(32)</sup> for women arriving in Sweden, and **CIAO** <sup>(33)</sup> (Luxemburg) for women with a migrant background.

## 2.2. Mapping skills and speedy recognition of qualifications

Beneficiaries of temporary protection and adequate protection under national law need to be able to demonstrate what skills and qualifications they have in order to be swiftly integrated into the labour market. Several Member States are putting in place procedures to assess the equivalence of studies and qualifications when the documentation is available and, when this is not the case, to validate skills and prior learning and experience (e.g. through tests, practical skills assessment or skills demonstrations, interviews, or online self-evaluation). It is important that those measures do not introduce unnecessary obstacles to enjoying effective access to the labour market, including for instance language requirements.

<sup>(27)</sup> Examples of projects can be found on: the ESF website, the ESF+ website and the European Website on Integration. The most recent good practice examples on integrating refugees and migrants are summed up in the final and thematic reports from the Mutual Learning Conferences 2021, 2020 and 2019.

<sup>(28)</sup> Forwork

<sup>(29)</sup> FAB

<sup>(30)</sup> Labour-INT

<sup>(31)</sup> Stark im Beruf

<sup>(32)</sup> Mirjam

<sup>(33)</sup> CIAO

To access regulated professions, such as different groups of health and teaching professions, an assessment and formal recognition of the foreign qualification is usually needed. The Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications provides guidance and practical advice to ensure a quick, fair and flexible recognition process, and further highlighted the importance of facilitating academic recognition, e.g. of university diplomas. Most learning programmes, however, including labour market and employer-based learning or certificates, are not linked to regulated professions. Moreover, many people may also have skills gained through work, running a business, or in other contexts such as volunteering. These skills can be very valuable in the labour market but risk going unrecognised and undervalued.

The Commission offers several skills-related tools for end-users and intermediaries such as the Skills Profile Tool for third country nationals <sup>(34)</sup>, now available in Ukrainian. The tool can support Ukrainian-speaking jobseekers and those who wish to continue their training and studies. The tool maps skills and collects evidence of qualifications and experience as part of a structured interview. The European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations classification (ESCO) <sup>(35)</sup> will be also available in Ukrainian in June to facilitate the use of the Skills Profile Tool and similar tools used by private implementers. The ePortfolio of Europass <sup>(36)</sup> was made available in Ukrainian at the end of April 2022. The Commission is also in the process of launching the EU Talent Pool Pilot initiative <sup>(37)</sup> by piloting the development of an EU-wide web portal, enabling people that fled Ukraine to register their skills and interest in finding employment, thereby facilitating the mapping of the skills available amongst this community and potential matches with employers. The design of the pilot is advancing in discussion with Member States and key stakeholders.

To ensure that Ukrainian qualifications can be understood more easily across borders, by employers, education and training providers alike, the Commission has worked with the European Training Foundation (ETF), Ukrainian authorities <sup>(38)</sup> and EU Member States to compare the Ukrainian national qualification framework and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The ETF has established a resource hub <sup>(39)</sup> to help those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine with information on how to continue education and training and seek assistance in getting their qualifications recognised, and others who need help in interpreting them. The Commission is also exploring the potential of European Digital Credentials for Learning to reissue diplomas digitally for those who, having fled the war, do not have the necessary documents.



The Commission invites Member States, when taking measures regarding mapping and recognition of skills and qualifications, to:

- **Ensure that people's skills and qualifications can be valued, assessed and swiftly recognised, as necessary, whether or not documentation is available**, e.g. through support with preparing CVs, testing skills, and retrieving missing qualifications. Cooperation between Public Employment Services, social partners, institutions responsible for validating and recognising qualifications such as National Academic Recognition Information Centres <sup>(40)</sup>, as well as with Ukrainian authorities, is indispensable to support the swift, cost-free and simple mapping and recognition of skills and qualifications, and to ensure that information about these options is effectively available to those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.
- Encourage services responsible for assessing and recognising prior experience and learning, including non-formal and informal learning, to **engage proactively with people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** and the organisations supporting them to ensure that people from all skill backgrounds can be supported to identify and map their skills.

<sup>(34)</sup> Skills Profile (europa.eu): this multilingual tool is intended for use by organisations offering assistance to third country nationals. It helps to map the skills, qualifications and work experiences of the third country nationals and to give them personalised advice on further steps, e.g. a referral to recognition of diplomas, skills validation, further training or employment support services.

<sup>(35)</sup> Homepage (europa.eu): ESCO is the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations. It works as a dictionary, describing, identifying and classifying professional occupations and skills relevant for the EU labour market and education and training.

<sup>(36)</sup> Home | Europass: it is a set of online tools to help with creating CVs, cover letters and also help users to find jobs and courses in the EU.

<sup>(37)</sup> Steps for launching the pilot are set out in the Commission Communication 'Attracting skills and talent to the EU', 27 April 2022 (COM(2022) 657 final).

<sup>(38)</sup> Such as the Ministry of Education, the National Qualifications Agency, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the ENIC NARIC Centre.

<sup>(39)</sup> Education and work information for Ukrainians and EU countries | ETF (europa.eu)

<sup>(40)</sup> Enic-Naric: the ENIC-NARIC network (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region-National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union) developed the Erasmus+ Q-entry project, a database that covers Member States and non-EU countries and provides information on school-leaving qualifications giving access to higher education.

### Examples of relevant EU-funded projects



In Belgium (Wallonia), '**Skills validation centres** <sup>(41)</sup>', supported by ESF funding, can help people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine with professional experience to get their skills validated officially and free of charge. The official recognition helps to prove skills to an employer, resume training with a dispensation or gain access to a profession.

### 2.3. Initial vocational education and training

The Commission is cooperating with the European Training Foundation to support the continuation of learning by VET students via online means. In particular, the European Training Foundation cooperates with Ukrainian authorities and other partners in order to identify and collect online learning content and training resources, such as micro courses and short professional modules from Member States and partner countries, which could be broadly disseminated to provide displaced learners from Ukraine with learning opportunities leading to specific VET competences and micro-credentials.

### Survey on VET-related measures



To obtain information on VET-related measures taken so far in the Member States and to support exchanges of good practices, in March 2022, the Commission has launched a **survey** to members of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, Directors-General on Vocational Education and Training, European Associations of VET providers and Pact for Skills members (businesses, associations, chambers of commerce, training providers and others).

The preliminary results <sup>(42)</sup> give an overview of Member States' actions to date and provide examples of good practices which can serve as inspiration to others. These include accelerated procedures, equivalence of studies and validation procedures, individual plans, mentoring and counselling, work-based learning, and preparatory classes including language and interpersonal skills.



The Commission invites Member States to:

- **Ensure swift access to initial VET including apprenticeships** and, in cooperation with social and economic partners, **expand the provision of quality work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities**, in line with the principles of the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships <sup>(43)</sup>, including as regards remuneration.

<sup>(41)</sup> CVDC | Site de la validation des compétences (validationdescompetences.be)

<sup>(42)</sup> Preliminary results: Survey on integration of Ukrainian refugees in Vocational Education and Training (VET) - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu)

<sup>(43)</sup> Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (OJ C 153, 2.5.2018, p. 1).



- **Support VET providers** through additional funding, increased flexibility in the adaptation of training programmes for the needs of learners fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and by **considering employing beneficiaries of temporary protection or adequate protection under national law who are vocational teachers and trainers.**
- **Recognise previous learning experiences and qualifications** by using existing validation processes to correctly allocate specific learning paths; and involve social and economic partners to help young learners from Ukraine to undergo a professional examination in order to issue competence-based professional certificates.
- **Explore possibilities to prolong ongoing Erasmus+ mobility stays** of Ukrainian vocational learners who are unable to go back home and who may seek temporary protection.

#### Examples of relevant EU-funded projects



With First Room, a Bucharest-based project co-funded by the ESF, **Concordia Vocational School** <sup>(44)</sup> provides training and counselling services to support the social integration of children and young people who have recently been under state protection systems. The Vocational School provides certification of their competences, as well as employment and job orientation. The integrated services also support young people who exited the system by renting housing and available rooms within the Concordia transit centre. It is currently also supporting people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

#### 2.4. Upskilling and reskilling opportunities for adults to ease access to the labour market

Beneficiaries of temporary protection must be granted access to educational opportunities for adults, vocational training and to practical workplace experience. Practical on-the-job training has proven very effective in integrating migrants and refugees. In addition, improving soft and hard skills (including entrepreneurship skills, self-development and computer literacy), in particular language training (including through work-based activities), is an essential element for successful participation in the labour market and society (also in terms of migrants' awareness and enjoyment of their rights). Moreover, by investing today in the skills of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Member States can deliver an important contribution to the future reconstruction of Ukraine.



The Commission invites Member States, when taking measures regarding education and training for adults, to:

- **Provide, as quickly as possible, targeted upskilling and reskilling opportunities, vocational education and training and/or practical workplace experience for beneficiaries**, taking into account the needs of specific groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, minorities) and supporting them in making effective use of such opportunities. Member States are encouraged to cooperate with education and training providers, social and economic partners and the private sector, to ensure that these opportunities are in line with labour market needs and skills gaps.
- **Provide support measures and outreach to facilitate their uptake of up- and reskilling opportunities**, including help with identifying appropriate programmes and financial support (such as training vouchers and individual learning accounts).

<sup>(44)</sup> Commissioner Schmit visits ESF-funded projects in Romania supporting refugees from Ukraine | European Social Fund Plus (europa.eu)

### Examples of relevant EU-funded projects



The **Omnia Skills Centre** <sup>(45)</sup> (Finland), supported by ERASMUS+, provides services to immigrants in Espoo to increase their professional skills and promote employment. Among others, it organises training, coaching, counselling and provides Finnish language courses.

The ESF-funded **Bremen Integration Qualification** <sup>(46)</sup> (Germany) project focuses on access to learning and creating pathways to work for immigrants between 18 and 26, including through intensive language courses. Managed by the Red Cross, this project is already providing support to young people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

### 2.5. Providing opportunities for adults to complete their education

Member States may give adult beneficiaries of temporary protection access to the general education system. This can be helpful for people who could not complete their formal initial education and obtain an upper secondary qualification or where higher education studies had to be interrupted due to the invasion, or for people who did not have the opportunity to progress to higher education. These efforts will not only benefit of the persons concerned, but also the EU and, eventually, Ukraine.



The Commission invites Member States, when taking national measures regarding the completion of education of adults, to:

- **Make available opportunities for adults fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine to access general education, including through second chance schooling.** These opportunities would need to be flexible and targeted, taking into account the needs of beneficiaries of temporary protection and adequate protection under national law. For this Member States are invited to cooperate with stakeholders, including from civil society and community-based settings, to support individuals effectively making use of such opportunities.
- **Make available opportunities for adults fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine interested in enrolling in higher education institutions** to complete studies already begun or embark upon new programmes. To do so, Member States can encourage and support higher education institutions to enrol them or allow them to continue studying remotely, including for example through the promotion of cooperation between EU and Ukrainian higher education institutions – also to facilitate reintegration into the Ukrainian system when appropriate.
- **Provide access to infrastructure, such as examination centres and IT equipment, and co-operate with Ukrainian authorities, to enable displaced people to sit entrance examinations** for access to Ukrainian higher education.

<sup>(45)</sup> Support and training for immigrants at the Omnia Skills Centre | Omnia

<sup>(46)</sup> Creating pathways to employment for immigrants through language learning | European Social Fund Plus (europa.eu)

### 3. SUPPORT FROM EU FUNDS



The actions outlined in this Communication can be supported by various EU funds and initiatives. Recent amendments to existing Regulations have focused on unspent funds under the 2014-2020 programming period, notably the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

The CARE initiative ('Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe'), by amending the Regulations governing the Funds <sup>(47)</sup>, has focused on providing greater flexibility to Member States to quickly mobilise EU Cohesion Funds, without changing their scope.

#### CARE initiative

The main changes introduced with the CARE Regulation are the following:

- Support for operations addressing the Ukraine crisis as of 24 February 2022, also for requests submitted after that date.
- Member States can use the ESF or ERDF to support actions eligible under the other Fund without any limitations. For example, ERDF resources earmarked for infrastructure projects can be reallocated to social inclusion, care and education for ESF type of measures, and, conversely, ESF resources can be used to finance equipment and infrastructure for refugees people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
- Member States can benefit from a 100 % reimbursement of expenditure declared to the Commission up to 30 June 2022 <sup>(48)</sup>.
- In addition, Member States may also programme their REACT-EU allocation (up to €10 billion overall) to address the crisis.
- Member States received EUR 3.5 billion of additional REACT-EU pre-financing (benefitting especially those Member States that received the highest numbers of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine <sup>(49)</sup>).
- Member States can use a new unit cost of EUR 40 per week per person, which will help to provide immediate relief while simplifying the rules on expenditure declaration <sup>(50)</sup>.



<sup>(47)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320) and Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1).

<sup>(48)</sup> For the accounting period starting on 1 July 2021 and ending on 30 June 2022.

<sup>(49)</sup> Increase of the initial REACT-EU pre-financing of 11 % to 15 % for all Member States, and to 45 % for frontline Member States (HU, PL, RO, SK) and those with the largest numbers of arrivals compared to their population (above 1 % of their population on 23 March: AT, BG, CZ, EE, LT).

<sup>(50)</sup> Ukraine: making it easier and quicker for Member States to use cohesion funding to support immediate needs of refugees | European Social Fund Plus (europa.eu). This will apply to each of those who have been granted temporary protection under the Temporary Protection Directive, to be used for up to 13 weeks after their arrival.

Regulation (EU) 2022/585, adopted on 6 April <sup>(51)</sup>, extends the implementation period for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) Borders, Visa and ISF Police by one year (until June 2024) and releases 2014-2020 AMIF funds previously earmarked to specific purposes.

To help Member States to make the most of available funding possibilities and programming arrangements, the Commission has established an indicative list of eligible measures under the ESF, FEAD, ERDF, AMIF and ISF borders and Visa, and set up a Q&A webpage <sup>(52)</sup>, primarily but not exclusively accessible to programme authorities, to provide quick and coordinated replies to Member States.

The ESF can help fund most of the measures presented in the previous sections, including mentoring, career guidance, upskilling and reskilling, placements in work, apprenticeships and traineeships, support to Public Employment Services, as well as arrangements to avoid discrimination and ensure the accessibility of information for all workers. The ESF can also fund staff working with people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, either at the border or elsewhere in the Member States, as well as education for both children and adults, and access to health, housing and social services.

In addition, the ERDF can support access to mainstream non-segregated services in education, employment and training, housing, health and social care through accessible infrastructure development (e.g. building/refurbishing/extending) and related equipment. AMIF and the ISF Borders, Visa and ISF Police funds can cover first reception needs of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as – in the case of AMIF – their integration in host countries.

Complimentary to its core mission to improve employment opportunities in the long-term, the ESF can support emergency measures, such as food and basic material assistance, accommodation or transportation costs, provided those are combined with an individual integration pathway in the country providing assistance. The FEAD has an even broader scope and can be used irrespective of recipients' status and residence for basic material assistance, such as food, hygiene products, items for babies and children, etc.

Funding under InvestEU, notably under the Skills and Education Guarantee, can also be used to support people to improve their skills, or by education and training organisations to expand their provision, as well as in self-employment and support for enterprises which recruit and train displaced people. In addition, the Technical Support Instrument <sup>(53)</sup> will be able, on request, to provide technical support to Member States to facilitate access to employment and training, social inclusion and education.

Erasmus+ funding opportunities have been mobilised thanks to the programme's in-built flexibility. For instance, teachers and trainers fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine can receive financial support to facilitate their integration and to help them gain the necessary skills to work within the EU education systems. Qualified staff may be sent, on a temporary basis, to regions where people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine are accommodated. Pupils can also be welcomed quickly by education and training institutions involved in Erasmus+ cooperation projects. Project funds of Erasmus+ cooperation projects can be used flexibly to facilitate the integration of children fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Finally, any needs related to the support of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine can still be taken into account in the ongoing work to prepare the 2021-2027 Cohesion programmes. Once adopted these programmes will also be used to fund measures supporting those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the areas of employment, education and training, social inclusion, housing, health and social care, as well as food and basic material assistance (due to the merging of the FEAD into the ESF+) <sup>(54)</sup>. Expenditure under these programmes is eligible as from 1 January 2021.

<sup>(51)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/585, 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 police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management, (EU) No 516/2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and (EU) 2021/1147 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

<sup>(52)</sup> This is a semi-public webpage, primarily but not exclusively accessible to programme authorities.

<sup>(53)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument.

<sup>(54)</sup> The Commission published a 'Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background for the 2021-2027 programming period' to foster the use of ERDF, ESF+ and AMIF in a complementary manner for the integration of people with a migrant background.



The Commission invites Member States to:

- **Make the best use of the available funds** for all the actions on which the present Communication provides guidance.
- **Coordinate between the various responsible authorities, including regional and local authorities**, to ensure relevance and complementarity.
- **Coordinate with the Commission** and use the above-mentioned Q&A webpage.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



Member States are invited to continue their efforts to support those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and facilitate their integration into the labour market, in line with the guidance in the present Communication and the other initiatives presented so far at the EU level. They are encouraged to cooperate with relevant stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response, and to make use of all available support at the EU level, including funding.

The Commission stands ready to further work with the national authorities and other relevant stakeholders, and will continue to provide guidance in the light of the evolving situation, including through the Solidarity Platform and the funds Q&A platform. The Commission will also continue to support mutual learning between Member States, collect information on the actions undertaken by the Member States <sup>(55)</sup> in particular through the dedicated networks such as the European Network of Public Employment Services and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, and provide relevant information to those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine through the dedicated web space <sup>(56)</sup> and social media. Every euro and every effort spent today in the human development of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is a contribution towards the future of the EU and Ukraine.

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<sup>(55)</sup> Making use of surveys and further monitoring activities such as those carried out by the agencies Eurofound, Cedefop and ETF.

<sup>(56)</sup> Information for people fleeing the war in Ukraine | European Commission (europa.eu)