

Implementation of temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine

A systematic review of the
Nordic countries



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**Nordic Council
of Ministers**



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 4 March 2022, the EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EU) (EU Directive) to provide quick and effective assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Sweden and Finland are bound by this legal framework, whereas Denmark, Iceland and Norway responded by introducing specific national protection schemes for refugees from Ukraine that resemble the EU Directive.

This report provides an overview of how the Temporary Protection Directive and the national protection schemes have been implemented in the Nordic countries and identifies key success factors and challenges. [Overview table](#) presents a brief overview of the situation in each of the Nordic countries.

The analysis identifies differences between the Nordic countries when it comes to the categories of persons who qualify for temporary protection, as well as the protection status that refugees from Ukraine receive. This has implications for the level of support and rights to which refugees from Ukraine are entitled.

All the Nordic countries provide accommodation for refugees from Ukraine. Short-term housing is mainly provided at reception centres and in temporary or emergency accommodation until they are relocated to one of the municipalities in the country concerned. Relocation can take from four days in Denmark up to eight weeks in Iceland. Different municipalities offer different long-term housing solutions.

Introductory integration programmes are available in Denmark, Finland and Norway and include language training and/or work-related education and training. Iceland and Sweden offer an online community education course for refugees from Ukraine. Publicly funded language courses are available in all the Nordic countries except for Sweden. Refugees from Ukraine have the right to work, albeit that right is conditional in Iceland. The help given to find a job varies from country to country. Job counselling and the assessment of skills and qualifications are among the most common measures. Financial support varies significantly, with the highest levels in Iceland and the lowest in Sweden.

All the Nordic countries provide access to preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education for minors. They also provide opportunities for enrolling in tertiary education under certain conditions and upon meeting certain requirements. With one exception, they all provide health services to refugees from Ukraine on the same terms as the local population. Sweden only provides access to urgent primary health care.

In terms of success factors, activation of the EU Directive enabled Nordic governments to respond quickly and effectively to the refugee crisis. The simplified procedure helped alleviate pressure on the national asylum systems. Integration of new arrivals from Ukraine was also facilitated by the welcoming attitudes of the governments and civil society.

The study identified certain challenges to implementing temporary protection faced by all the Nordic countries. These include the fact that refugees from Ukraine are treated differently than other groups of refugees, the difficulties involved in monitoring secondary migration and the lack of vulnerability assessments.

OVERVIEW TABLE

Country-by-country implementation of temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine at a glance

	DENMARK	FINLAND	ICELAND	NORWAY	SWEDEN
Who is covered by temporary protection	(a) Ukrainian nationals residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; (b) Stateless persons, and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, who benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; and, (c) Family members of the persons referred to in points (a) and (b).				
	Those persons referred to above but who fled Ukraine on 1 February 2022 or later or who already lived in or had a residence permit in Denmark at the time	Ukrainian nationals regardless of their date of departure from Ukraine, or those already living in Finland and their family members. Those persons referred to above in (b) and those who were legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit (based on non-protection grounds), and who are unable to return to their country of origin	Those persons referred to above and who were in Iceland on 24 February 2022 (e.g., had unresolved cases with the government or their residence permit cannot be extended)	Those persons referred to above and Ukrainian nationals who were in Norway on or before 24 February 2022 (e.g., seasonal workers or students)	Those persons referred to above and those referred to in (a) and (b) if they entered Sweden from 30 October 2021 to 23 February 2022 and remained in the country
Duration of the permits based on temporary protection	Two years until 17 March 2024. Possible extension until 17 March 2025	One year until 4 March 2023. Can be renewed up to three years in total	One year until 4 March 2023. Can be renewed up to three years in total	One year until 11 March 2023. Can be renewed up to three years in total	One year until 4 March 2023. Can be renewed up to three years in total
Access to housing	Short-term housing in asylum centres and in private accommodation (households are financially compensated). Long-term accommodation provided by municipalities after settlement	Short-term (transit) centres and long-term housing at reception centres	Short-term housing (various housing solutions) for up to eight weeks. Long-term private rental housing after settlement in a municipality	Short-term housing at reception centres and MAMOT housing scheme, emergency accommodation. Long-term accommodation provided by municipalities after settlement	Short-term housing provided by the Swedish Migration Agency. Long-term accommodation provided by municipalities after settlement
Access to introduction programmes, incl. language	Basic Integration Education includes vocational/language studies and work experience	Integration Training includes language studies and work-related education and training. Guidance and counselling at reception centres	No introduction programme. Community education course and language training are available	Introduction Programme includes community education, work-related education and training and language studies	No introduction programme. No access to SFI "Swedish for Immigrants". Basic language training offered by folk high schools and adult education organisations

Access to labour market and labour-market measures	Direct access to the labour market after submitting an application. Assessment of skills and qualifications, wage subsidies. A new website to assist job seekers from Ukraine	Direct access to the labour market after submitting an application. Employment support assistance: career counselling, assessment of skills, language training, support in finding appropriate job openings	Conditional access to the labour market. Job counselling and help in finding jobs	Direct access to the labour market after the permit is granted. Work training as part of the Introduction Programme. Assessment of skills and career guidance	Direct access to the labour market after the permit is granted. Support in finding jobs through public employment service, incl. wage subsidies
Access to benefits and financial assistance	Same level as of asylum-seekers if they are under the provision of the Danish Immigration Service, i.e. EUR 222 per adult per month if meals are not included with their accommodation. No basic allowance if meals are included. Instead, supplementary allowance is available. Caregiver allowance for those with children	Same level as asylum seekers. In reception centres: EUR 323 per adult per month without meals and EUR 95 per adult per month with meals	Same level as beneficiaries of international protection for the first eight weeks - basic allowance EUR 235 per adult per month. After relocation to a municipality, the financial assistance ranges between EUR 1,046 and EUR 2,428 per adult per month depending on municipality. Special housing assistance grant; loans to cover a deposit /insurance and a furniture grant available	Same level as asylum seekers. In reception centres: EUR 260 per adult per month without meals and EUR 87 per adult per month with meals. During the introduction programme financial support is available	Same level as asylum seekers. Daily allowance: EUR 195 per adult per month without meals and EUR 66 per adult per month with meals. A special payment in cases of a particular need. No access to residence-based social security
Access to childcare and education	Compulsory primary and lower secondary education for children from Ukraine. Access to preschool and upper secondary education. Vocational training, if the beneficiary speaks Danish. Special programme for recognition of qualifications and transfer to higher education programmes in Denmark	Access to preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. Free vocational education. Non-degree courses and courses at Finnish Open Universities free of charge	Compulsory primary and lower secondary education for children from Ukraine. Access to preschool and upper secondary education. General admission requirements to higher education institutions apply	Compulsory primary and lower secondary education for children from Ukraine. Access to preschool and upper secondary education. Vocational training for adults available. Exceptions from the general admission requirements to higher education institutions apply	Access to preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. Vocational training, if the beneficiary speaks Swedish. Scholarships for Ukrainian scientists. Qualifications Assessment Tool available to compare foreign qualifications with Swedish ones
Access to health care	Access to healthcare services in the same way as permanent residents in Denmark	Access to healthcare services in the same way as permanent residents in Finland. Student welfare services focusing on trauma treatment	Access to healthcare services in the same way as permanent residents in Iceland	Access to healthcare services in the same way as permanent residents in Norway	Emergency medical and dental care only, except for children under the age of 18, who have access to regular care

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Photo: UNHCR/Caroline Bach

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022, millions of people fled Ukraine. Although the vast majority of Ukrainians fled to neighbouring countries, like Poland and Moldova, by 1 November 2022, over 158,200 refugees from Ukraine had applied for protection in the Nordic countries (UNHCR, 2022) (see Figure 1).

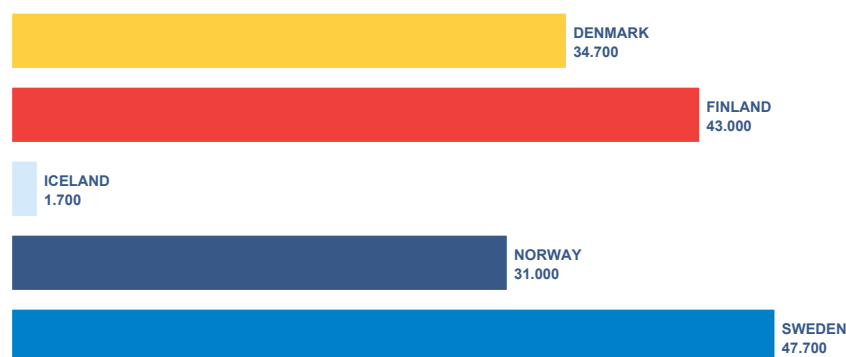


Figure 1. Number of applications for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in the Nordic countries (1 november 2022). Source: UNHCR 2022.

Temporary protection for a large number of refugees from Ukraine was made possible by the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EU) (hereafter EU Directive) by the Council of the European Union on 4 March 2022 (EU, 2022). It was the first time this legal framework has been used since its adoption in 2001. The temporary protection was due to stay in effect for a year but has recently been extended for another year until 4 March 2024 (Euronews, 2022). The total duration of the protection under the EU Directive may not exceed three years.

Sweden and Finland are bound by this legal framework, whereas Denmark, Iceland and Norway responded with national schemes that resemble the EU Directive.

The Faroe Islands and Åland have followed the national (Danish and Finnish) schemes for granting temporary protection, but Greenland has not (Lovtidende, 2022; Nathansen et al., 2022).

[The EU's Implementing Decision](#) providing refugees from Ukraine with temporary protection outlines, among other things, the persons to whom the temporary protection should apply (see Textbox 1). The EU Directive sets minimum standards when it comes to the conditions and rights of the refugees from third countries receiving temporary protection, including access to social welfare, the labour market, education, healthcare and the right to family reunification. The Member States are obliged to fulfil the minimum requirements but can also offer better conditions, including integration measures and more generous welfare entitlements (Parusel and Varfolomieieva, 2022).

The aim of this report is to provide an up-to-date overview of how temporary protection has been implemented in practice in the Nordic countries. While the Ukrainian refugee crisis continues to evolve, little systematic knowledge is currently available on how the temporary protection frameworks have been applied in practice in the Nordic Region.

The report provides a snapshot of the current situation and considers legal and policy developments up to October 2022. The study is based on publicly available reports, research articles and newspaper articles, as well as interviews and input provided by key national agencies, experts and researchers working with migration issues in the Nordic countries (see [list of informants](#)).

Due to a lack of harmonisation and comparable statistics, the data in this report provides an indication of current trends rather than a country-by-country comparison.

In this report, the term 'refugees from Ukraine' is used to refer to beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine. It should, however, be noted that Ukrainians benefiting from the temporary protection are treated separately from other refugees who may be recognised in the asylum procedure under other protection categories. In addition, the term 'refugees from Ukraine' is also used in this report to refer to other groups falling within the scope of the EU Directive, such as stateless persons, persons who benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine, as well as their family members (read more in [Overview table](#)).

Textbox 1. The persons to whom the temporary protection applies

According to **Article 2.1**, the Council Implementing Decision applies to:

- a. Ukrainian nationals residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022;
- b. Stateless persons, and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, who benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; and,
- c. Family members of the persons referred to in points (a) and (b).

According to **Article 2.2**. Member States shall apply either this Decision or adequate protection under their national law, in respect of stateless persons, and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, who can prove that they were legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit, and who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country of origin (EU 2022).



Photo: UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa

2. IMPLEMENTATION BY COUNTRY

DENMARK

On 16 March 2022, the Danish parliament passed a special law on the reception of refugees from Ukraine, referred to as the 'Special Act', mirroring the EU Directive. Temporary residence permits are provided for a period of two years, until 17 March 2024, with the possibility of a one-year extension.

Under the Special Act, persons fleeing the war in Ukraine have the same rights as ordinary refugees in Denmark. The difference is that residence permits issued under the Special Act cannot be extended. [Applications for residence permits can be submitted online.](#)

Key figures

By the end of October 2022, 30,481 permits under the Special Act had been granted. Women make up approx. 67% of the total, children 38% (The Danish Immigration Service, 2022). In August 2022, approx. 5,000 refugees from Ukraine were registered as employed in Denmark, which corresponds to approx. 47% of those eligible to work (The Ministry of Employment, 2022).

Services provided

The Special Act gives refugees from Ukraine rights to work, to education, to vocational education, health care, social welfare, national integration programmes, language courses and housing.

All applicants for a residence permit under the Special Act are entitled to temporary **accommodation** in a reception centre until being granted a residence permit and

relocated to a municipality. Furthermore, applicants can also be provided with temporary accommodation by the municipalities, if the municipalities offer this possibility. The municipalities assume responsibility within four days of a residence permit being granted, as opposed to the usual 30-60 days for refugees in the regular asylum system (EC, 2022a). To meet these requirements, municipalities offer different types of housing, including emergency accommodation in unused schools, refurbished sports facilities and welfare facilities (EC, 2022b). However, many refugees from Ukraine live in private accommodation. The Danish municipalities pay DKK 200-500 (EUR 26-67) per day per refugee from Ukraine to private households that provide accommodation to cover their food and rent.

From 22 April 2022, refugees from Ukraine have the right to **work** in Denmark as soon as they have applied for a residence permit under the Special Act and had their fingerprints and biometrics registered (Nyidanmark, 2022a). Provided that a temporary resident permit has been granted, refugees from Ukraine have access to Denmark's Basic Integration Education (IGU), in which work experience complements vocational or language studies and financial incentives (wage subsidies) are offered to both participants and employers. This programme is typically offered to new arrivals aged 18–40 (OECD, 2022).

A new partnership ('[Partnerskab om ukrainere i job](#)') was established to bring together national, regional and local authorities, and relevant stakeholders such as trade unions and employers to coordinate and facilitate the reception and integration of refugees from Ukraine in Denmark (KL, 2022). This includes help with finding jobs, access to Danish language and employment skills courses, as well as the evaluation of individual competencies (Ministry of Employment, 2022). A new webpage (www.JobguideUkraine.dk) was established by the partnership to assist Ukrainian job seekers. Another [website was launched to connect and match Ukrainian job seekers](#) with backgrounds in tech, science and engineering with Danish employers.

Under the Special Act, refugees from Ukraine receive the same **basic allowance** as asylum-seekers, if they are under the responsibility of the Danish Immigration Service, i.e. DKK 1,653 (EUR 222) per adult per month if meals are not included with their accommodation. If meals are included, refugees from Ukraine do not receive the basic allowance. Instead, they receive the supplementary allowance of DKK 276 (EUR 37) per adult per month while their application is being processed and DKK 965 (EUR 130) per adult per month once they have been granted a residence permit, as well as caregiver allowance if they have children (Nyidanmark, 2022b). There might be different allowances for refugees from Ukraine who are under the provision of a municipality.

All Ukrainian children of school age have full access to the Danish **school** system on the same terms as Danish children. This means that primary and lower secondary education is compulsory for them. As of 27 April 2022, an exception from the education law has been made, allowing Ukrainian children to be taught in either Ukrainian or English for a limited period in a preschool or school. This incentive aims to ensure that Ukrainian children can continue to follow the Ukrainian curriculum and also make it possible for teachers from Ukraine to play a part in educational provision (Szumski, 2022).

The Special Act provides refugees from Ukraine with access to vocational **education**

and training for adults and young people. They can also apply to have their qualifications recognised or credits transferred from a Ukrainian higher education programme to a Danish one under the [special programme](#) run by the Minister of Higher Education and Science. Applicants must comply with the qualification requirements for the English language and other specific entry requirements (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2022).

Those who are waiting for a decision on a residence permit under the Special Act have access to essential **medical services**. Once refugees from Ukraine have a temporary residence permit, a Danish civil registration number and a yellow health card, they are entitled to free treatment in most medical institutions on an equal footing with other residents (The Danish Ministry of Health, 2022).



Photo: UNHCR/Caroline Bach

FINLAND

The Finnish Government's decision to grant temporary protection to respond to the crisis in Ukraine came into force on 7 March 2022. Residence permits granted to provide temporary protection are valid until 4 March 2023 and will be extended automatically until at least 4 March 2024, or for as long as the temporary protection is in effect in the EU, based on the Special Act drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior in autumn 2022 (Ministry of the Interior, 2022a). Refugees from Ukraine are neither regarded as asylum-seekers nor seekers of international protection. Finland treats them as a separate category.

Key figures

By 16 October 2022, 40,857 temporary protection permits had been granted in Finland. Approximately 32% (over 14,000) of all applicants for temporary protection were children. Among the Ukrainian nationals registered in the reception system, about 46% live in private accommodation, 41% in reception centres and the rest live in other types of accommodation (Data provided by the Finnish Immigration Service).

Services provided

Refugees from Ukraine may be accommodated in reception centres or arrange their own **accommodation** (without financial support). The Finnish Immigration Service has significantly increased its reception capacity: from 27 reception units in March 2022 to 93 in October 2022. Eight reception units for children and 85 for adults are currently operating (Data provided by the Finnish Immigration Service). For the first time, a reception centre has also been established in Åland. It opened on 6 June 2022 (Helsinki Times, 2022). Reception centres offer different types of accommodation; both short-term transit centres and more long-term alternatives are available across the country.

Refugees from Ukraine are covered by **reception services**. These services include healthcare, a reception allowance and any social services needed. Reception centres also provide interpretation and translation services, guidance and counselling and

other support to maintain and promote the safety and wellbeing of individuals and families (EUAA, 2022). Refugees from Ukraine are also eligible to participate in [integration training](#) offered by Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices).

From spring 2023, refugees from Ukraine will be assigned to a municipality of residence if certain requirements are met (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2022). The municipalities will then assume responsibility for the service provision, including integration services and housing (Integration.fi, 2022).

Refugees from Ukraine have the right to **work** immediately after applying for temporary protection. They are entitled to receive assistance for job seekers provided by the TE Offices, including job-search coaching, internships, training, wage subsidies and education, as well as Finnish or Swedish language courses (Sánchez Gassen and Hildestrand, 2022).

The **reception allowance** in Finland is determined individually on the basis of the needs and financial situation of the person concerned. The reception allowance for those living alone and for single parents is EUR 323,21 per month with no meals and EUR 94,73 per month with meals at the reception centre (Finnish Immigration Service, 2022b).

Refugees from Ukraine with children of preschool age have the right to preschool in Finland if they are working or studying. Ukrainian children are entitled to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary **education** in Finland, but it is not compulsory. Some of the Ukrainian children take part in both remote schooling in Ukraine and attend school in Finland. Adults are allowed to study at places that provide educational services for free, such as adult education centres, folk high schools, learning centres, sports training centres and summer universities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Special funding was earmarked in Finland to allow refugees from Ukraine to transfer from Ukrainian higher education programmes to similar levels in Finland (Eurofound, 2022). Refugees from Ukraine are eligible to participate in non-degree education and study at Finnish Open Universities free of charge. No exceptions from the general rules apply to the recognition of qualifications or diplomas for refugees from Ukraine in Finland (European Labour Authority, 2022a).

Refugees from Ukraine are entitled to **health services** on the same footing as other residents of Finnish municipalities and have the right to essential social welfare services. The reception centre plays a key role in arranging health and social services (Integration.fi, 2022).

Ministry of the Interior survey of Ukrainians who fled to Finland

According to a [survey conducted by the Ministry of the Interior in Finland](#) between 15 June and 6 July 2022, refugees from Ukraine were largely satisfied with the reception services, particularly the advisory and guidance services. Of 2,136 respondents, approximately 23% reported that they had found jobs, and the majority responded that they would like to learn the language and work in Finland. Among the key challenges to finding jobs mentioned by the respondents were poor language skills, bureaucracy and difficulties in arranging childcare (Ministry of the Interior, 2022b).



Photo: UNHCR/Valerio Muscella

ICELAND

The Ministry of Justice in Iceland activated Article 44 'Collective protection in a mass flight situation' in the Act on Foreign Nationals on 4 March 2022. Refugees from Ukraine receive residence permits on humanitarian grounds, usually within 48 hours of submitting an application.

Key figures

Of over 1700 refugees from Ukraine registered in Iceland by October 2022, ca 50% are women and 23% are children. As of October 2022, 537 temporary work permits had been issued to refugees from Ukraine (Data provided by the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration).

Services provided

Refugees from Ukraine in Iceland have access to housing, essential social services, health care as well as education for children.

Upon arrival in Iceland, refugees from Ukraine are directed to a reception centre in the centre of Reykjavík that was set up recently to provide initial help and services to refugees from Ukraine and ordinary asylum-seekers, including health checks. The government provides temporary **housing** for up to eight weeks. Old hotels, university campuses and empty buildings have been refurbished and used as short-term housing.

The Multicultural Information Centre helps refugees from Ukraine find long-term housing in one of the municipalities. Any refugee from Ukraine who does not wish to move to the municipality that offers to house them becomes responsible for their own long-term housing needs. Ordinary asylum-seekers and refugees from Ukraine are free to decide where in Iceland they want to live and there are no quotas for the distribution of refugees among the different municipalities. The majority choose to settle in the Southern Region: in Reykjavik, Reykjanesbaer and Hafnarfjörður in particular.

Residence permits issued on humanitarian grounds provide conditional access to the Icelandic **labour market**. Employers must apply for work permits for the individuals concerned and have the applications approved by the relevant authorities. The Directorate of Labour provides advice and help to refugees from Ukraine seeking jobs. Services include job counselling, Icelandic language training and community education courses.

For the first eight weeks, refugees from Ukraine in Iceland are entitled to a basic allowance of EUR 235 per adult per month. After relocation to one of the municipalities, refugees from Ukraine have the same rights to social financial assistance as other residents in Iceland. Social **financial assistance** varies between the municipalities. It ranges between ISK 150,000 (EUR 1,042) and ISK 348,000 (EUR 2,418) per adult per month (Multicultural Information Centre, 2022). For example, the amount is ISK 217,779 (EUR 1,519) in Reykjavik, ISK 174,297 (EUR 1,216) in Reykjanesbaer and ISK 206,752 (EUR 1,442) in Hafnarfjörður. Refugees from Ukraine are also entitled to apply for housing benefits, loans to cover a deposit or housing insurance and furniture grants (Multicultural Information Centre, 2021).

Children from Ukraine aged 1-20 have the right to attend preschool and enrol in primary school, lower secondary **school** or upper secondary school. Primary and lower secondary education is compulsory for all children aged 6-16 residing in Iceland. Municipalities have a certain degree of freedom as to how they provide education. The city of Reykjavík, for example, provides direct access to schools and "Skóla-og fjölskyldumiðstöðin" (school and a family centre), which was set up to educate Ukrainian children and has several Ukrainian-speaking members of staff (Reykjavik, 2022). General admission requirements to higher education institutions apply to refugees from Ukraine. No exceptions from the general rules apply to the recognition of qualifications or diplomas.

Refugees from Ukraine in Iceland have full access to healthcare services on an equal footing with other residents in Iceland (Multicultural Information Centre, 2022).



Photo: UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa

NORWAY

On 11 March 2022, the Norwegian authorities activated an existing general provision of Article 34 of the Immigration Act on the introduction of temporary collective protection for refugees from Ukraine, mirroring the EU Directive (EUAA, 2022).

Refugees from Ukraine are categorised as asylum-seekers and given all the rights associated with that status (housing, financial assistance, access to education and healthcare, family reunification) apart from the right to work while their application is pending.

Key figures

By the end of October 2022, more than 31,000 Ukrainian nationals had applied for temporary protection and approx. 350 non-Ukrainian nationals. Approximately 80% of the 29,000 successful applicants are women and children. 20,700 have already been settled in various municipalities. Prior to relocation, approx. 56% (of the 20,700) stayed in reception centres, 23% were accommodated in private households and 20% lived in [a temporary alternative to a reception centre \(MAMOT\)](#) (Data provided by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security).

There are no official statistics for the number of refugees from Ukraine who have found jobs in Norway since the onset of the crisis. However, in September 2022, more than 6,250 people with Ukraine as their country of birth were registered as working in Norway. The number has increased by more than 2,000 since March 2022, and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration NAV estimates that around 1,650 of these are Ukrainian refugees (Data provided by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security).

Services provided

Refugees from Ukraine are allowed to settle anywhere in Norway provided they are able to support themselves financially and do not intend to participate in the Introduction Programme. Relocation to a municipality is a precondition for receiving

financial support and being able to participate in the Introduction Programme. Upon arrival, **housing** is provided at reception centres, [a temporary alternative to a reception centre \(MAMOT\)](#), specialist facilities for vulnerable people and unaccompanied minors, as well as in emergency accommodation provided by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration. After the residence permit is granted, public assistance is provided to find a place to live in one of the Norwegian municipalities (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, 2022).

After relocation to a municipality, refugees from Ukraine have the right to take part in the **Introduction Programme** and language training. Participation is not compulsory, but the municipality is obliged to offer an introduction programme to those aged 18–55 and language training for those aged 18–67 (IMDi, 2022). The Introduction Programme includes community education, work-related education and training, help to find jobs and language training. The municipalities are free to add additional content beyond that required by law. Those who take part in the programme receive financial support for living expenses. The length of the programme may vary depending on the participant's level of education and training (approx. 6–12 months) (CEDEFOP, 2022).

In addition to the Introduction Programme, refugees from Ukraine have the right to skills mapping and career guidance. Refugees from Ukraine in Norway have the right to work once a temporary residence permit has been granted.

The amount paid in **reception allowance** in Norway depends on criteria such as the type of reception centre, whether food is included or not and the family constellation. For example, those in emergency accommodation receive a lower allowance but have access to more services. Refugees from Ukraine can apply for additional financial support in special cases, e.g., children starting school or medical costs. In the ordinary reception centres, refugees from Ukraine are paid a sum of NOK 859 (EUR 87) per adult per month with meals and NOK 2,688 (EUR 260) without.

Norway provides access to all levels of **education** to refugees from Ukraine. Children between the age of six and 16, who reside in Norway for three months or longer, have a duty to participate in primary and lower secondary education. Ukrainian children have the right to education in their mother tongue until they can participate in regular classes. Those aged 16–24 have the right to upper secondary education upon application and Norwegian language competence is not required for admission (IMDi, 2022). For the academic year 2022/2023, the Norwegian government has granted additional funding to universities and university colleges all over the country to give refugees from Ukraine access to higher education. Exceptions from the general admission requirements for individuals may be applied (StudyinNorway, 2022).

Refugees from Ukraine in Norway have the same right to **healthcare** as all other citizens. Most of the health services are free, except for small fees for some services. All children under the age of 16 and pregnant women are entitled to free healthcare.

NIBR study of Ukrainian experiences in Norway

The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) conducted a [study of the experiences of Ukrainian refugees in Norway](#), which also included a survey (680 respondents). The survey showed that Ukrainians have generally been satisfied

with their reception in Norway, especially when it comes to preschool and school education, but also other services and procedures. A lack of updated and understandable information about registration procedures and services was identified as a major challenge by those who participated in the survey. For those staying in private accommodation, there was a shortage of information about their rights. Some concerns have been raised about the inability to influence where in Norway they would be settled. Almost all respondents in the survey would like to participate in the Introduction Programme and learn Norwegian, and almost 80% hope to find work if their stay in Norway becomes long-term (Hernes et al., 2022).



Photo: UNHCR/Andrew McConell

SWEDEN

The Swedish Government's decision to grant temporary protection to respond to the crisis in Ukraine came into force on 4 March 2022. Individuals who are granted temporary protection are covered by the Act (1994:137) on the reception of asylum-seekers (LMA). On 7 April 2022, the Swedish Government decided to widen the scope of temporary protection to include persons who have travelled and stayed in Sweden during the period from 30 October 2021 to 23 February 2022, provided they belong to the categories mentioned in Article 2.1 (a) and (b) of the EU Directive (see Textbox 1).

Refugees from Ukraine in Sweden have the same rights as asylum-seekers. This means that they are not registered in the Swedish Population Register and do not receive a personal identity number ("personnummer"), unlike people with refugee status or subsidiary protection status in Sweden.

To improve the processing of the large influx of applications for temporary protection, a **new e-service** was set up by the Swedish Migration Agency. The e-service can be used by Ukrainian citizens who have a valid passport or another identity document.

Key figures

By 1 November 2022, 44,427 temporary residence permits had been granted in Sweden. Of all applicants registered in the Migration Agency's reception system, approx. 62% were women, and 33% were children aged 0–17 (Swedish Migration Agency, 2022a). Some 64% of refugees from Ukraine live in private accommodation, 29% in accommodation provided by municipalities and 4,5% in temporary accommodation provided by the Swedish Migration Agency (Swedish Migration Agency, 2022a).

Services provided

Refugees from Ukraine in Sweden have the right to education (for children), the right to work, urgent health care and a daily financial allowance (European Labour

Authority, 2022b).

Refugees from Ukraine may choose between living in an **accommodation** facility provided by the Swedish Migration Agency, long-term housing provided by municipalities or arranging their own accommodation (not financially supported). The types of housing can vary. On 1 July 2022, a new law came into force in Sweden, according to which the municipalities assume greater responsibility for arranging accommodation for refugees from Ukraine. This legislation may help promote integration and facilitate a more equal distribution of responsibilities among the Swedish municipalities (Swedish Migration Agency, 2022b).

The introductory courses in Swedish for immigrants (SFI) and other vocational adult education are not available for refugees from Ukraine. A community education course is available online and is offered by the Swedish Migration Agency (Informationsverige.se, 2022).

Refugees from Ukraine have the right to **work** immediately after they are granted a residence permit. Refugees from Ukraine who need help finding a job in Sweden can register at the Swedish Public Employment Service. No particular labour market integration measures have been designed for refugees from Ukraine in Sweden. Folkuniversitetet has recently launched a free programme, '[Work for Ukrainians](#)', in several places across the country. The programme includes individual coaching, skills mapping, language training, skills development and validation, as well as matching with employers (Folkuniversitetet, 2022).

'Swedish from day one', which is run by folk high schools and adult education organisations, such as ABF and Folkuniversitetet, and 'TIA - early interventions for asylum-seekers' run by municipalities, are both available for refugees from Ukraine. However, these courses are limited in time and are not available everywhere across the country (SALAR, 2022).

The **daily allowance** in Sweden is the smallest in the Nordic countries, i.e. SEK 2,130 (EUR 195) per adult per month without food and SEK 720 (EUR 66) per adult per month with food at the place of accommodation (Swedish Migration Agency, 2022c). Those who settle in private accommodation are also entitled to a daily allowance. A special payment is also available in cases of a particular need. However, the Swedish Migration Agency may refrain from paying a daily allowance to those who settle in certain socio-economically challenged areas (European Website on Integration, 2022a).

Children who are granted temporary protection have a right, but not an obligation, to attend preschool and enrol in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary **education**. By the end of September 2022, four out of five Ukrainian children aged 6–17 who have settled in the municipalities either attend or have applied for a place in a Swedish school. In total, there were approx. 6,100 students from Ukraine in the Swedish school system (The National Agency for Education, 2022). Refugees from Ukraine may apply for higher education if they meet the entry requirements. Some universities exempt refugees from Ukraine from tuition fees while they have temporary residence permits.

Refugees from Ukraine are entitled to health care that cannot wait, as well as essential treatment for illness. Children under 18 have access to regular health care on an equal footing with other residents.



Photo: UNHCR/Caroline Bach

3. NORDIC OVERVIEW

The cross-country overview of the implementation of the EU Directive and similar national frameworks highlights some of the key similarities and differences between the countries.

With regard to **third country nationals** who lived in Ukraine, all the Nordic countries grant temporary protection to stateless persons and other third country nationals who benefited from international protection (e.g., refugee status or subsidiary protection) or equivalent national protection in Ukraine. Finland is the only Nordic country to also extend protection under the EU Directive to those who lived in Ukraine on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit (based on non-protection grounds), and who are unable to return to their country of origin.

Finland also extends the eligibility requirement to all Ukrainian nationals regardless of their date of departure from Ukraine. Temporary residence permits in Iceland, Norway and Sweden are granted to those who fled Ukraine on 24 February or later, and in Denmark to those who fled Ukraine on 1 February 2022 or later. Some exceptions apply in Sweden for those who travelled and stayed in Sweden between 30 October 2021 and 23 February 2022.

The **protection status** accorded refugees from Ukraine varies between the Nordic countries. In Sweden and Norway, they are categorised as asylum-seekers, in Denmark as refugees, while in Finland they have their own category and refugees from Ukraine in Iceland are granted residence permits on humanitarian grounds. The protection status has implications for their rights and the level of support received. In all the Nordic countries, the first three years do not count towards permanent residency or citizenship should a refugee from Ukraine decide to stay longer in the country.

The Nordic countries rely on a mix of accommodation options for new arrivals. Refugees from Ukraine are initially **accommodated** in reception centres or other temporary facilities. Iceland, Norway and Denmark also rapidly set up emergency accommodation by refurbishing existing buildings like schools, campuses or military barracks. Once they have temporary residence permits, refugees from Ukraine in Denmark, Norway and Sweden are offered a place to live in municipalities where

more long-term accommodation alternatives are available. In Finland, refugees from Ukraine are relocated to various reception centres across the country that provide long-term housing. The reception centres are mainly run by the Finnish Immigration Service. From spring 2023 the municipalities will assume a greater responsibility for the service provision and accommodation for refugees from Ukraine. In Iceland, refugees from Ukraine are largely responsible for finding long-term rental accommodation themselves with support and guidance provided by the Multicultural Information Centre. Denmark is the only Nordic country where private households hosting refugees from Ukraine are eligible for financial compensation from the municipalities. The relocation to municipalities can take from four days in Denmark to up to eight weeks in Iceland.

Introductory integration programmes are offered to refugees from Ukraine in Denmark, Finland and Norway and include language training and/or work-related education and training. All the Nordic countries offer support to refugees from Ukraine in **finding a job** (e.g., job counselling and career guidance). Iceland and Sweden offer a community education course for refugees from Ukraine, mainly online. Publicly funded **language courses** are available in all Nordic countries, except for Sweden, where folk high schools and adult education organisations run some language courses.

The mechanisms for providing **financial support** to refugees from Ukraine to cover basic needs vary between the Nordic countries. In Finland, for instance, refugees from Ukraine receive the same allowance as individuals seeking international protection and the amount is based on the family situation and level of housing support. In Sweden, refugees from Ukraine are entitled to the same allowance as asylum-seekers, and the amount is based on whether food is included with accommodation or not (OECD, 2022). Financial support varies significantly, with the highest levels in Iceland and lowest in Sweden.

All the Nordic countries offer children from Ukraine access to preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary **education**. In Denmark, Iceland and Norway, minors from Ukraine have a duty to participate in primary and lower secondary education, whereas in Finland and Sweden schooling for Ukrainian children is not compulsory. In Denmark and Norway, Ukrainian children in some cases have access to education in their mother tongue until they are able to participate in regular classes. Exceptions from the general admission requirements to higher education programmes for refugees from Ukraine may be applied temporarily in Norway. In Denmark, a special programme for the recognition of qualifications and transfer to higher education programmes was launched. Refugees from Ukraine in Finland may take non-degree courses free of charge, and special funding was earmarked for refugees from Ukraine to transfer to higher education programmes in the country. Refugees from Ukraine are exempt from paying tuition fees in some universities in Sweden while their permits under the EU Directive are valid.

Sweden offers access to **health care** "that cannot wait" on par with asylum-seekers, while other Nordic countries open their social security system to provide health services to refugees from Ukraine on the same terms as the local population. Ukrainian children have full access to health care in the Nordic countries, including Sweden.



Photo: Mostphotos

4. SUCCESS FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

In the context of a mass influx of refugees, activation of the temporary protection mechanisms enabled the Nordic governments to respond quickly by giving almost immediate protection to those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Due to a simplified procedure, granting a temporary residence permit allowed the Nordic countries to alleviate pressure on the national asylum systems, as the applications have been processed collectively (in many cases handled automatically).

According to preliminary employment data, the signs for labour market participation of refugees from Ukraine in the Nordic countries are promising. This may be because they are relatively highly educated and, in some cases, already have professional and social networks and because employers have been particularly welcoming (Vincenza Desiderio and Hooper, 2022). However, it is too early to jump to conclusions about the future since many refugees from Ukraine have had seasonal jobs, and the situation may change due to a looming economic recession and a worsening labour market outlook.

Text box 2. Good practices in the Nordic countries

Denmark has introduced a generous support package for new arrivals from Ukraine by extending eligibility for the Basic Integration Education programme to the refugees from Ukraine and launching a website to support Ukrainian job seekers.

In **Finland**, the flexibility of the reception system was highlighted as an example of good practice. When the need emerged to scale up the capacity to accommodate arrivals, Finland was able to do so relatively quickly.

In **Iceland**, the city of Reykjavík, for example, provides direct access to schools and “Skóla-og fjölskyldumiðstöðin” (the school and a family centre) which was set up to educate Ukrainian children and has several Ukrainian speaking members of staff.

In **Norway**, rapid relocation to municipalities around the country reduced the need for reception centres and ensured faster integration into Norwegian society. Refugees from Ukraine have access to a municipal Introduction Programme, which includes work-related education and training, as well as language training.

In **Sweden**, setting up of a digital application system enabled the Swedish Migration Agency to remove bottlenecks in the reception system and improve the processing of applications.

Common challenges in the Nordic countries

Other grounds for protection. The EU Directive guarantees access to the national asylum procedures by giving refugees from Ukraine the right to submit an application for asylum at any time. The EU Member States may, however, pause the examination of asylum requests for those who qualify for temporary protection (Parusel and Varfolomieieva, 2022), as has been done in the Nordic countries. This means that a status change to other grounds for protection is possible only after the end of the temporary protection period. This may be unfortunate for those individuals who are entitled to stronger international protection (e.g., refugee status or subsidiary protection), which provides a more lasting basis for a residence permit and also entitles them to wider social rights and other benefits than those provided to people with temporary residence permits.

Vulnerability assessment. Unlike the regular asylum procedure, the EU Directive does not require an individual assessment before granting protection status. While it simplifies the procedure, identifying vulnerable people in need of additional support (e.g., victims of human trafficking) from the start may be more difficult.

Secondary migration. Refugees from Ukraine have the right to visa-free movement in the Schengen area and the Dublin regulations do not apply to them. This means that they are entitled to secondary movements and the Member States are not required to return them to the first country that issued a temporary residence permit. While this gives refugees from Ukraine flexibility, secondary migration is difficult to monitor because not all refugees from Ukraine inform public bodies about their relocation plans. There is no good system in place to track the flow of refugees from Ukraine and to analyse whether some of them have multiple residence permits. The European Commission set up a co-operation platform to exchange information among the countries, but this process is currently slow.

Differential treatment. The integration of refugees from Ukraine has been facilitated by many factors, including an unprecedentedly welcoming attitude in the political discourse in the Nordic countries, as well as an enormous will to help on the part of civil society. This included help to find private accommodation for new arrivals, help with transport and collecting and redistributing clothes, food, medicines etc. Free admission to various institutions, such as museums and leisure activities, has been offered to Ukrainian nationals. In Denmark, for example, the government decided temporarily to prioritise processing the cases of those arriving from Ukraine, thereby delaying or putting on hold applications from refugees from other countries (European Website on Integration, 2022b). The interviewees stated that the differential treatment offered to refugees from Ukraine raised concerns about potentially racist and discriminatory practices against other immigrants while the temporary protection schemes were being implemented.

High integration expectations. Interviewees in Norway and Finland – and this may well apply to the rest of the Nordic countries – noted that the integration expectations in the educational system and the labour market towards refugees from Ukraine have been higher than towards other refugee groups. These expectations may be difficult to fulfil as many refugees from Ukraine are still dealing with trauma caused by the war, face obstacles to the recognition of their formal qualifications and practical work experience and lack language skills.

Country-specific challenges

Accommodation. Denmark and Iceland have struggled to provide accommodation to a large number of arrivals from Ukraine. This has put additional pressure on municipalities that already had housing shortages and faced rising costs. Moreover, as refugees from Ukraine are expected to pay for their accommodation, finding housing that they can afford to live in has been a challenge considering the low level of financial support in Denmark.

Preschool. In Finland, challenges in organising preschool were brought up by respondents to the survey of refugees from Ukraine. In Iceland, long waiting lists for a place in a preschool have also been seen as a challenge.

Communication. According to the expert interviews, refugees from Ukraine in Norway and Finland have generally been difficult to reach and locate, especially those who have organised accommodation themselves. These people may not be aware of all the services they are entitled to, although this might not be a major challenge. In Norway, a lack of coordinated and targeted communication, including updated and easy-to-understand information for refugees from Ukraine, has hindered integration.

Financial support. In Sweden and Denmark, the low level of financial support is certainly a problem for many people. Inflation might aggravate this problem because the daily allowance is not automatically adjusted. In Sweden, the daily allowance has not changed since 1994, as determined in the Reception of Asylum-Seekers and Others Ordinance (1994:361).

Personal identity number. The fact that refugees from Ukraine are not recorded in the population register and do not receive a personal identity number in Sweden can have a negative impact as well. A personal identity number is often needed in everyday life and not having one makes integration more difficult. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) also criticised the lack of measures to promote integration through work and the lack of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) courses for refugees from Ukraine.

Access to labour market. Although the employment rate among refugees from Ukraine has been relatively high in Iceland, conditional access to the labour market for people who receive residence permits on humanitarian grounds was identified as a barrier to employment because it generates more paperwork.



Photo: ASPHOTOFAMILY/Mostphotos

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The temporary protection mechanisms provided a good short-term response to the crisis. To date, the focus has mainly been on measures to assist refugees from Ukraine to meet their immediate needs. The current system emphasises the short-term nature of their stay and does not provide strong incentives for this group to integrate. This is particularly evident in Sweden, where refugees from Ukraine are not registered and are not given the right to participate in SFI language courses for immigrants. The Nordic countries have been careful about making long-term plans, and no official statements on long-term integration measures have been made.

By 4 March 2025, at the latest, the temporary protection regime will expire. Under the current rules, applicants must either apply for individual asylum or return to Ukraine after a maximum of three years with temporary permits. Conditions for international protection (refugee status or subsidiary status) will depend on whether or not they still need protection.

The uncertainty about developments in the war and its implications for the duration of the refugee situation requires that the Nordic countries shift to more forward-looking policies. A discussion is needed about potential changes and extensions to the status of refugees from Ukraine and about an integration strategy for them in the long-term. More long-term responses should also involve better matching of Ukrainian refugees' skills and labour-market needs in order to help new arrivals find quality jobs and avoid skills being wasted (Vincenza Desiderio and Hooper, 2022).

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The Nordic Cooperation Programme for Integration of Immigrants was initiated in 2016 and is designed to support the national integration efforts by developing new Nordic knowledge and encouraging the Nordic countries to share experiences and work more closely together on the integration of refugees and immigrants.

Please visit our website www.integrationnorden.org for knowledge on integration in the Nordic Region. The project is run by the Nordic Welfare Centre in collaboration with Nordregio, two institutions under the Nordic Council of Ministers.

UNHCR

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, was created in 1950 with a global mandate to protect refugees. UNHCR's Representation for the Nordic and Baltic Countries is located in Stockholm. UNHCR has been active in the region since 1985. UNHCR's work the Nordic and Baltic countries focuses on supporting governments in implementing legal instruments related to asylum and statelessness and ensuring that all the people UNHCR serves in the region enjoy access to their rights in these areas. UNHCR also focuses on raising awareness and mobilizing support for the organization's global efforts to protect people forced to flee. Read more about UNHCR in the region at <https://www.unhcr.org/neu/>.

Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

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