



Lifelong guidance policy **for Ukrainian refugees** in the EU

Views from CareersNet

01

Data on Ukrainian refugees coming into the EU

7 996 573

refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe since February 24, 2022 (*).

Almost 5 million

have been registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe. The majority of those granted temporary protection are women and children ([Eurostat data](#)).

(*) [Data taken from UNHCR January 24, 2023](#). 'Europe' includes all Europe sub-regions as identified by EuroVoc.

02

Initial considerations for career guidance providers

Basic needs

Food, shelter, safety, security, and psychological support are among the first services provided.

Care of children

Providing full access to arrangements for pre-school and school children is a necessary condition to enable parent(s) willing to work or study to access guidance services. Students need access to career education in schools.

Context for career guidance provision

Once basic needs are secured, a second support level is the provision of career guidance providing access to suitable labour market and education opportunities.

Uncertainty in decision-making

Refugees from Ukraine live with a high level of uncertainty. Decision-making is made difficult for the individual and affects job search and education. It is important to adopt long-, medium- and short-term perspectives. As the conflict continues, services must adapt for the longer term.

Uncertainty in employment

Will Ukrainian refugees decide to remain in the host country/in the EU? This continued uncertainty may prevent employers from recruiting refugees, for example, in apprenticeship schemes or in offering career support.

Potential context and barriers career services need to understand

Career guidance provision should meet the diverse needs of refugees. Career leaders, managers, and practitioners need to be aware of the relevant and specific barriers, resources and opportunities, particularly for providing career support to adults.

Language barriers

(cited most often, depending on host country)

Guidance services may sometimes be accessed using English; understanding of Slavic languages eases access, but might not be enough to access education and/or work. Most training and job opportunities require knowledge of the local languages, with only a few economic sectors/occupations allowing for working in English. Not knowing the local languages also constitutes a barrier in interaction with the local administration.

Labour market barriers

Although beneficiaries of the *Temporary Protection Directive* and of international protection have the right to work and education, barriers exist as the necessary procedures are not always in place. Local employers might have doubts about recruiting refugees who are uncertain about the duration of their stay. According to the data reviewed, variations exist in ease of access to the labour market.

Outreach barriers

Complexity of information on rights could be considered and eased. Existing information on education, employment, and rights should be accurate and adapted to specific needs that evolve with changes. Refugees with lack of trust or negative past experiences with public administration may avoid registration or use of career services. Providers must carefully choose the appropriate format and channels for services and consider low threshold measures.

Lack of understanding

There may be gaps in understanding of host and Ukrainian education, training, employment, and career support systems alike, between career guidance provider and guidance clients. This poses difficulties in comparing qualifications and assessing/certifying competences. Career guidance and advice on training in adopting long- to short-term perspectives can prepare for potential transfer of experience back to Ukrainian settings. In some EU countries, guidance may only be available in the form of ad hoc or tailor-made support, without a systemic or integrated vision.

04

System and policy level experiences in career guidance for refugees

The level of readiness of the guidance system to receive new refugees tends to depend on past experience and existing structures (across sectors, including NGOs). Overall capacity of the lifelong guidance systems in relation to refugees may largely depend on experience with previous refugee flows. Gaps can appear in services for existing refugee groups when high numbers of newcomers arrive.

The level and types of cooperation among key supporting actors in the lifelong guidance ecosystem and nearby fields varies substantially across countries but appears to be inadequate across all relevant levels. To support complex needs career guidance and psychological support need to work together (e.g. via referrals). There seems to be limited interinstitutional cooperation and patchy cross-institutional activity.

This points to a need for better coordination and collaboration in the lifelong guidance ecosystem, vertically and horizontally.

Sufficient attention should be placed on providing basic information, especially using existing information tools, including translating self-help tools (EU and national ones), and transferring existing tools to new contexts.



Suggestions for developing career guidance policy

- The now activated *Temporary Protection Directive* supports immediate labour market and education access for beneficiaries; however, accompanying language learning support and adequate career guidance are needed to enable Ukrainian refugees to access meaningful jobs and/ or learning opportunities.
- There is a need to develop robust, adequate guidance systems, flexible enough, with stable financing, and ensuring smooth collaboration, to accommodate the evolving demands of Ukrainian refugees; career guidance and training designed with both shorter-term and long-term perspectives in mind need to be integrated in these systems.
- Building on past experience with other refugee populations helps, as the lifelong guidance systems are better prepared and able to learn from prior successes and difficulties; however, needs can change with each new demographic profile and context.
- The provision of information (e.g. help desks or single access points) is a starting point for further career guidance but some countries lacking these features need to develop them.
- To support complex needs, some countries have integrated psychological support into career guidance.
- There is a need for trained guidance professionals to enable crisis management; they should be sensitive to the challenging situation of refugees and regularly updated on their changing circumstances and specific needs.
- ICT is useful in accommodating a large number of career guidance clients who have access, helping in the translation process and in follow-up steps. It can improve accessibility to information, availability of education and linguistic resources, admissibility to labour markets and entrepreneurship opportunities, communicability with the home country, connectedness with the local population, interactivity with the host government, and can facilitate peer-help as well as volunteer coordination.
- It is important that public administration work with NGOs which are directly in contact with the evolving flow of arrivals, their changing situations, addressing their different needs.

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This flyer draws on an ad hoc data collection volunteered by independent CareersNet experts in lifelong guidance and career development during May 2022, with views from: AT, BG, CH, CZ, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, RS, SE, SK, TR. The CareersNet advisory group (Wolfgang Bliem (AT), Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze (HU), Jaana Kettunen (FI), and Ema Perme (SI)) drafted the material and Cedefop coordinated the process.

Experts provided independent assessments and illustrations, with suggested solutions to challenges in the field of career guidance for Ukrainian refugees, particularly adults, based on evidence available. Content and access to information varied widely among countries due to the dynamic nature of the situation.

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