Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in higher education in Europe

Eurydice report

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FOREWORD

Since the start of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, more than 6.5 million people have fled the country. United Nations estimates suggest that nearly half of them are children and young people. They now need protection, care and support.

On 4 March, the European Council activated the Temporary Protection Directive, providing immediate and collective protection to those who fled Ukraine and the right to residence, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance and, very importantly, access to education up to the age of 18.

European countries have already taken major steps to integrate Ukrainian refugees in their school systems, and the European Commission is mobilising a variety of policy instruments and programmes to support them.

We are providing financial support for schools, vocational education and training, as well as for early childhood education and care through EU Cohesion Funds, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. We set up an EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine to identify the needs of Ukrainian children and to support Member States who host them. We have provided access to learning material in Ukrainian and offered online resources and courses for teachers through the School Education Gateway. We are supporting teachers' exchanges in the eTwinning community.

In addition, the European Commission is also empowering the higher education and research community to provide undivided support to Ukrainian universities, students and staff. Ukraine is a full member of the European Higher Education Area, and Ukrainian scientists and researchers are key participants in EU Framework programmes for Research and Innovation. We are supporting them through greatest flexibility in the implementation of Erasmus+ projects towards Ukrainian students and higher education staff. And Ukrainian research and innovation actors can now fully participate in Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training Programme, in addition to ongoing ERA4Ukraine, Horizon4Ukraine and ERC4Ukraine initiatives as well as the new MSCA4Ukraine fellowship scheme.

Schools and higher education institutions have a key role to play in ensuring refugee learners' return to stability and in helping to alleviate their psychological stress. This Eurydice report provides an extremely helpful overview of the initiatives taken in European education systems in this respect. It also shows that wide-ranging policies and measures have been put in place to support refugee learners, some of which can be considered as good practices. My hope is that these country examples may help authorities and educational institutions in other countries in their policy responses.

Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner responsible for
Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

CODES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Country codes

EU	European Union					
BE	Belgium	**CY**	Cyprus		**EEA and candidate countries**	
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	**LV**	Latvia	**AL**	Albania
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	**LT**	Lithuania	**BA**	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	**LU**	Luxembourg	**CH**	Switzerland
CZ	Czechia	**MT**	Malta	**IS**	Iceland
DK	Denmark	**NL**	Netherlands	**ME**	Montenegro
DE	Germany	**AT**	Austria	**MK**	North Macedonia
IE	Ireland	**PT**	Portugal	**NO**	Norway
EL	Greece	**RO**	Romania	**TR**	Turkey
ES	Spain	**SI**	Slovenia		
FR	France	**SK**	Slovakia		
HR	Croatia	**FI**	Finland		
IT	Italy	**SE**	Sweden		

INTRODUCTION

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has posed a serious threat to the lives of millions of people, who were forced to flee their home and search for protection in neighbouring European countries. These host countries now have a responsibility to respond to this situation by providing various support measures to facilitate the rapid and successful integration of refugees from Ukraine.

In order to offer immediate assistance and clarify the legal status of those fleeing the conflict, the Council of the European Union adopted Directive 2001/55/EC on 4 March 2022 regarding the granting of temporary protection to refugees from Ukraine ([1]). At the time of drafting this report (June 2022), over three and half million people from Ukraine have registered for Temporary Protection in European countries. On 23 March 2022, with the communication 'Welcoming those fleeing war in Ukraine: Readying Europe to meet the needs', the European Commission proposed a series of concrete actions to help displaced people from Ukraine in host countries (European Commission, 2022). In particular, access to education was recognised as an immediate priority for the integration and well-being of Ukrainian children and young people.

The disruption caused by the war also has a major impact on higher education staff and students from Ukraine. To this end, the European Commission issued the Recommendation of 5 April 2022 ([2]), prompting Member States, amongst other measures, to automatically recognise Ukrainian higher education qualifications. In addition to the recognition of academic qualifications, large-scale support measures, such as language training, financial support or reserved study places, are necessary to support refugee learners in accessing higher education in the Member States, or to help them continue their studies and later re-integrate in the Ukrainian higher education system.

This short Eurydice report on 'Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in higher education in Europe' ([3]) focuses on key policies and measures, developed by top-level education authorities across Europe, aiming to assist higher education institutions (HEIs) in integrating refugee learners from Ukraine ([4]). These include recent policies and measures targeting specifically Ukrainian refugee learners as well as non-Ukrainian learners who were studying in a Ukrainian HEI at the time of the Russian invasion.

The report builds partly on the findings of previous Eurydice reports on higher education, such as the Bologna Process Implementation Report (2020) (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice), and the 2019 report on Integrating Asylum Seekers and Refugees into Higher Education in Europe (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2019). It provides up-to-date information gathered through a survey of the countries that are part of the Eurydice network ([5]), except for Hungary and Serbia. The reference year is the 2021/2022 academic year (up to May 2022).

Respondents were invited to provide information on top-level policies and actions related to:

- large-scale measures supporting the integration of refugee learners in higher education;

([1]) Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of granting temporary protection, OJ L 71, 4.3.2022, p. 1–6.

([2]) European Commission Recommendation 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 'On the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russian's invasion of Ukraine'.

This report has been published at the same time as the Eurydice report, 'Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in schools in Europe'. See https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/supporting-refugee-learners-ukraine-schools-europe-2022

([3]) The term 'learner', as employed here, refers not only to actual, but also to potential HEI students. Thus, it refers also to upper secondary school students, adults and anyone aiming at studying at a HEI.

([5]) EU-27 plus Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey.

- the recognition of qualifications necessary for accessing, and progressing in, higher education; and

- the monitoring of refugee learners in higher education.

It is hoped that this report can contribute to informing and supporting European education authorities in their endeavour to ensure that refugee learners from Ukraine have access to education, training and support that correspond to their needs and aspirations.

1. MEASURES SUPPORTING THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1.1. Presence of large-scale measures

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a substantial degree of autonomy. This means that they may have taken some measures on their own initiative to help refugee learners from Ukraine to pursue their studies in their institutions. Although such measures may be considerable and impactful, they do not qualify as being large-scale, unless they are present in the great majority of HEIs. Thus, by large-scale measures we mean measures receiving public funding (or funded by the HEIs' own budget) that apply throughout the whole country (or education system), or at least to a significant geographical area.

Figure 1: Presence of large-scale measures supporting the integration of refugees in higher education, 2021/2022

Large-scale measures

No large-scale measures
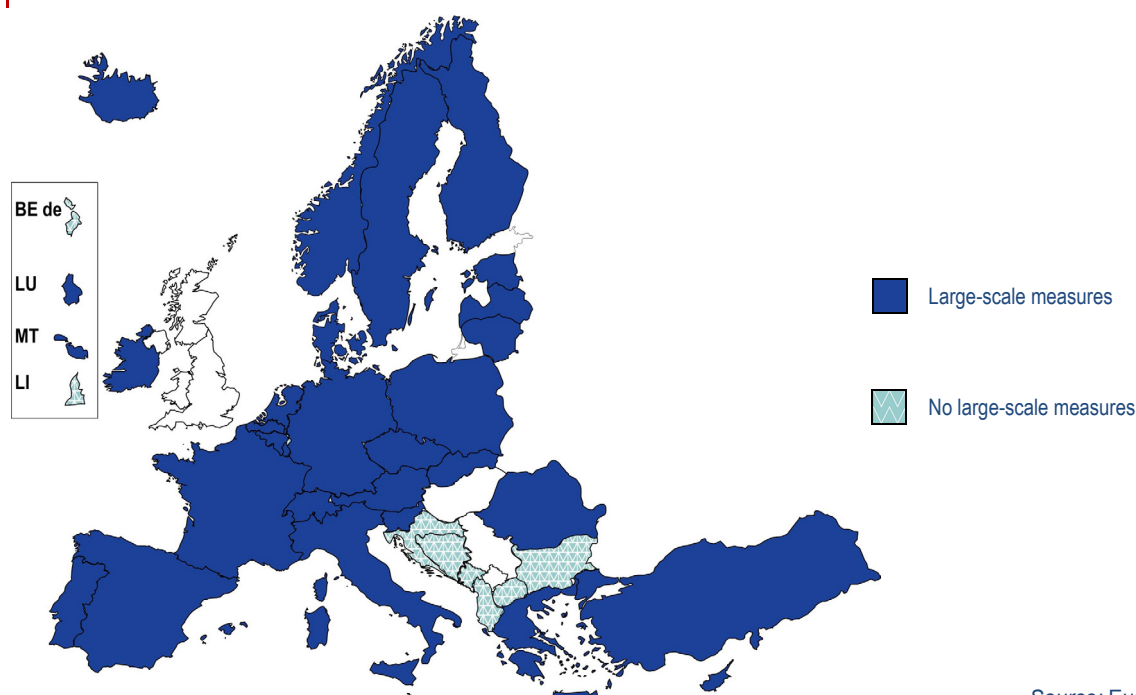
Source: Eurydice.

As Figure 1 shows, the vast majority of European countries have some large-scale measures in place that help with the integration of refugees in higher education. In particular, as many as 29 members of the Eurydice network indicated that they have such measures. This includes most Western and Eastern European countries. However, the majority of Balkan countries (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia) reported no large-scale measures for refugees.

1.2. Support measures for refugee learners

Taking into account that European countries have been welcoming refugees, asylum-seekers, but also other migrants well before the outbreak of war in Ukraine, it is not surprising that most of them have large-scale measures supporting the integration of refugee students. However, Figure 1 does not show if the existing measures were prompted by the war in Ukraine and, more importantly, does not show what these measures are. To this end, Figure 2 is very informative.

Figure 2: Support measures for refugee learners before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 2021/2022

Left before invasion / Right after invasion — Public funding — HEI funding — Public and HEI funding — : Data not available
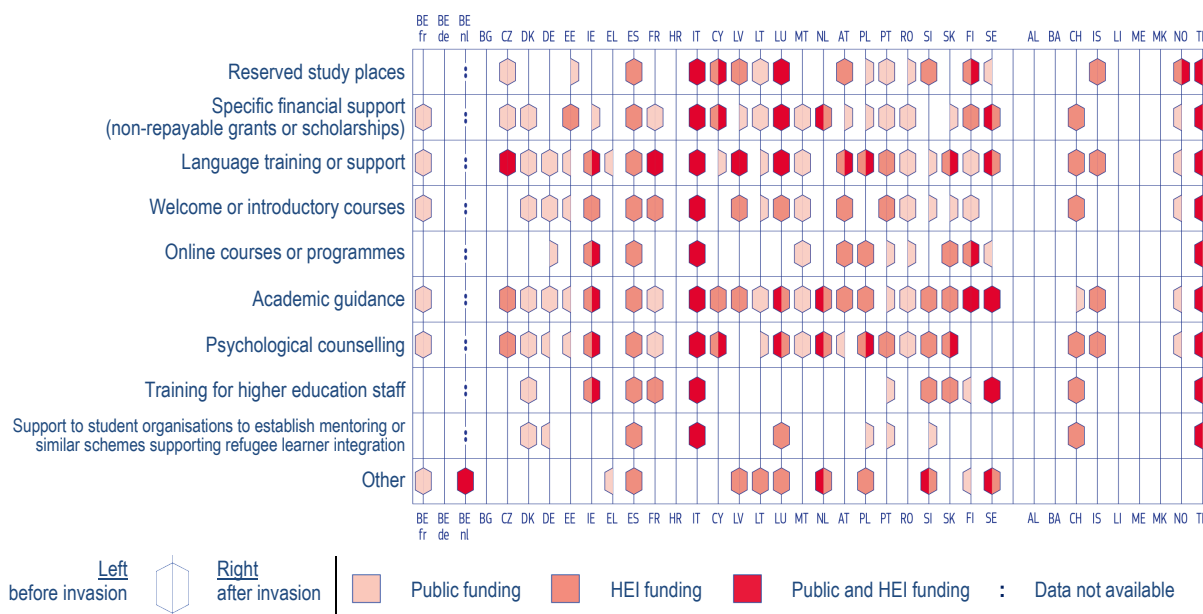
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

The figure illustrates the large-scale measures supporting the integration of refugee learners from Ukraine before and after the first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (24 February 2022) and their funding source (public funds or HEI budget).

The first noteworthy feature of Figure 2 is that among those countries that have large-scale measures for refugee learners, there are a variety of support instruments available. Indeed most countries have more than five different large-scale measures in place. Particularly common are host language training or support, psychological counselling, academic guidance, introductory or welcome courses, but also financial support (mainly in the form of non-repayable grants or scholarships) and reserved study places. In contrast, online higher education courses or programmes, staff training and support to student organisations establishing mentoring schemes are less frequent. More precisely, just 13 countries offer online courses or programmes, 12 offer higher education staff training and only 10 countries support organisations developing mentoring schemes supporting refugee learners.

One particular measure stands out in the sense of being one of the most direct forms of support helping refugee learners to access higher education. Figure 2 reveals that as many as 18 countries have reserved study places for refugees. Although reserving places for refugees does not necessarily mean unconditional access, it does mean that refugees do not have to compete on exactly the same terms as other student candidates. In other words, refugee learners who want to study in a HEI where some places are reserved for refugees, and who fulfil any criteria there may be in place, can be assured that they will be accepted in the HEI.

Direct financial support is also very important and Figure 2 shows that the great majority of European countries have specific financial instruments to support refugee students. In particular, no less than 24 education systems help refugee students by giving them the opportunity to apply for non-repayable grants or scholarships. Some countries, namely, Estonia, Ireland, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden, exempt refugee students from Ukraine from paying any higher education tuition fees ([6]).

Whilst quality is more important than quantity when considering support measures, it is nevertheless interesting to note that some education systems make more types of support measure available than others. For example, Spain, Italy and Turkey reported that they have all the measures listed in Figure 2. At the other end of the spectrum, some education systems are more selective in their approach. For instance, Greece focuses mainly on one type of large-scale measure (language training) while Iceland on four (reserved study places, language training, academic guidance and psychological counselling).

Figure 2 also illustrates that most countries adopted large-scale measures following, and in direct response to, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to cope with the latest wave of refugee arrivals. It also shows that most of these countries had the same type of measures in place also before the outbreak of the conflict. However, it is important to underline that having the same types of measures does not necessarily mean having exactly the same actions, nor does it mean that their scope, scale or intensity remained unchanged following the invasion.

Given the more or less uniform pre/post-conflict measures pattern, it is more interesting to consider the exceptions in Figure 2. Thus, we notice that the only new type of measure Germany introduced following the war in Ukraine is online courses or programmes. Some of these aim at the integration of refugee students in the German higher education system, while others aim at supporting students enrolled in a Ukrainian HEI to continue their studies online.

In the case of Ireland, the only novel (in the sense of not existing prior to the start of the Russian invasion) large-scale type of measure is financial support for refugee learners from Ukraine, including a tuition fee waiver.

In Latvia, two financial measures were clearly prompted by the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. The first was to extend the scholarship Latvian students normally receive to all Ukrainian refugee students (€140 per month), and the second is a state-funded research fellowship (€ 900 per month) awarded to all researchers from Ukraine who are offered an internship by a Latvian HEI.

Following the Russian aggression, Lithuania started offering psychological support to refugees, as well as welcome or introductory courses and language training. Austria lifted the obligation of paying tuition fees and issued special grants for Ukrainian students and researchers. Poland introduced three new types of measures (reserved study places and specific financial support and support to organisations establishing a mentoring scheme), Portugal four (online courses, academic guidance, training for HEI staff and support for mentoring schemes), Romania two (reserved study places and online courses), Slovenia three (language training, introductory courses, support to student organisations), Slovakia two (financial support, introductory courses), Switzerland one (academic guidance) and Norway one (reserved study places) ([7]).

All the other countries listed in Figures 1 and 2 as having large-scale measures also adopted instruments supporting refugee learners from Ukraine. As already pointed out, they were providing similar measures to refugees before the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine.

([6]) In Belgium (French Community), refugee students are exempted from paying some registration fees.

([7]) Prior to the Russian invasion, Norway was relying on the HEIs' own budget to fund the reserved study places. Following the invasion, both public and HEI funding have been mobilised for that purpose.

Some large-scale measures for helping out refugee students from Ukraine do not fit neatly in the categories listed in Figure 2. Nevertheless, they are worth mentioning, because they exemplify the variety of tools at the disposal of the education authorities. It is impossible to list all the measures or countries here, but a few examples are enough to make the point.

In **France**, refugee students from Ukraine are covered by the universal health insurance (including COVID-19 vaccination expenses). They also have a right to apply for student accommodation.

The **Netherlands** tries to support students studying in a Ukrainian HEI to continue their studies online. Similarly, following a request by the Ukrainian authorities, **Romania** is taking measures to organise the Ukrainian higher education entrance exams in its territory.

Poland, which has been particularly affected by very significant numbers of refugees from Ukraine, has made it easier for such refugees to study in its HEIs by adjusting the admission procedure (allowing access even when lacking official documents) ([8]) and criteria (lowering the necessary score-points threshold) and suspending tuition fees for full-time studies in Polish. In addition, some student accommodation is available for refugee students and non-students alike. A mobile device application ('Chatbot') helps users to find information on student enrolment, financial aid and working at Polish HEIs and research institutes. Last but not least, the University of Warsaw has developed a nationwide internet-based recruitment service to help Ukrainian candidates to work or volunteer at Polish HEIs and research institutes.

Switzerland has reduced the bureaucratic burden for the prolongation or earlier start of grants for Ukrainian recipients of the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships. Similarly, for Ukrainians, the period for doctoral studies and research projects funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation has been extended.

The data-packed Figure 2 also provides some information on the funding source of the available large-scale measures. It distinguishes between measures that are funded by the HEIs' own budget, by other public sources or by a combination of the two. Most countries tend to have a fixed funding pattern across measures. Belgium (French Community), Denmark, Germany, Greece, Malta and Romania, fund the large-scale measures exclusively from the public purse while leaving the HEI budgets untouched. In contrast, Spain and Iceland fund their measures only from the HEIs' budget. This applies also to Switzerland, except for academic guidance which is publicly funded from sources outside HEI budgets. Other countries, like Belgium (Flemish Community), Italy, and to a large extent Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Sweden and Turkey, draw on both sources for (nearly) every type of support measure. The remaining countries tend to alternate their funding sources between the HEI budget and other public funds, depending on the support measure in question.

It is interesting to note that, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, some countries topped up their efforts to support the integration of refugees in higher education, by mobilising not only the HEI budget, but also public funds flagged for that purpose. This is especially the case in Ireland, Cyprus and to some extent also in Poland and Finland. When it comes to language training or support, nine countries started using both funding sources, nine were relying on public funding only, but only six countries continued relying on HEI funding exclusively (Figure 2).

1.3. External Quality Assurance of support measures for refugee learners

The Eurydice data show that most European countries responded to the arrival of refugees from Ukraine by introducing new measures to support the integration of refugee learners in higher education, in addition to strengthening already established measures. Since the nature of our data

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([8]) For this purpose, the candidates have to sign a statement that, on 24 February 2022 they studied for a specific year in a given field and level of study at a HEI operating in the territory of Ukraine, and that they do not currently have any official documents confirming the periods of study, passed exams, etc. Next, the HEI verifies the candidates' achieved learning outcomes. The rules for carrying out this verification are set by the HEI itself and are separate rules from those that may have been in force before 24 February 2022. If differences in the curriculum or learning outcomes are found, the HEI may ask the student to address them by, amongst others, taking certain exams or undertaking complementary training.

(top-level policies) do not allow us to conclude anything about the impact or efficacy of the measures, inevitably a serious knowledge gap remains. To address this, albeit only in part, and however imperfectly, the national (top-level) education authorities were asked if the large-scale measures were evaluated in external quality assurance procedures. Figure 3 portrays the results.

Figure 3: Support measures for refugee learners evaluated by external quality assurance, 2021/2022

Legend:
- External quality assurance is required for *all* measures
- External quality assurance is required for *some* measures
- No external quality assurance
- Not applicable
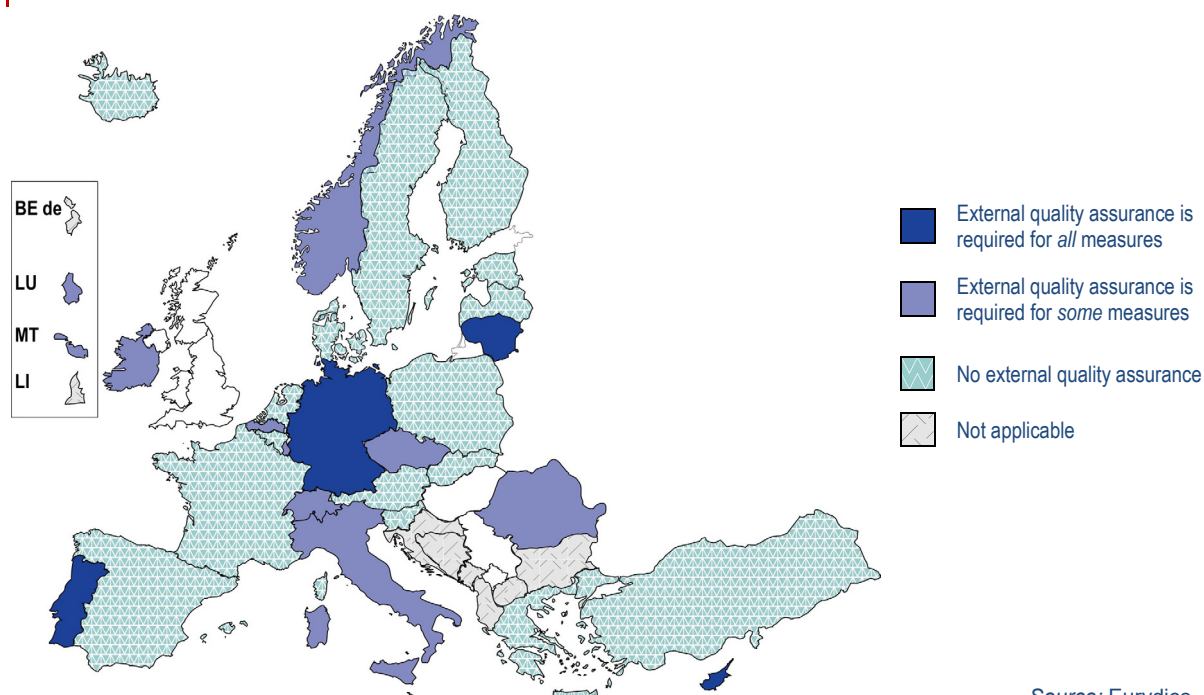
Source: Eurydice.

Whereas most countries have had higher education support measures for refugees in place even before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, very few of them have quality assurance processes in place. In fact, only Germany, Cyprus, Lithuania and Portugal have quality assurance for all large-scale measures. Nine education systems (Belgium – Flemish Community, Czechia, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Switzerland and Norway) indicated that quality assurance takes place, but only for some measures. The remaining 16 education systems that have large-scale support measures do not evaluate them through an external quality assurance mechanism.

2. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

2.1. Implementation of Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Although the invasion of Ukraine has seen the largest number of refugees entering the European Union since the Second World War, large numbers of individuals of all ages have entered European countries after fleeing other conflict zones in recent years. Students and other adults forced to interrupt studies or professional activity bring competences and skills acquired in their country of origin that can be further developed in the host country through further studies, sometimes in higher education.

However, institutions responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications may face particular challenges in the evaluation and recognition process. These are often associated with the lack of established recognition procedures and policy for undocumented qualifications, as well as a lack of information on legal obligations. In such cases, article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention – an

international convention on credentials evaluation ratified by all European states with the exception of Greece and Monaco – serves as a framework for developing good practice. It provides a legal framework for dealing with the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. It aims in particular to assist in situations where there can be a lack of established recognition procedures and policy for undocumented qualifications, documentary evidence of academic credentials and qualifications from the applicant, and information on legal obligations. The article states that:

> Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.

All parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention are required to implement fully Article VII. Figure 4 shows, however, that this is not always the case.

Figure 4: Implementation of article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, 2021/2022
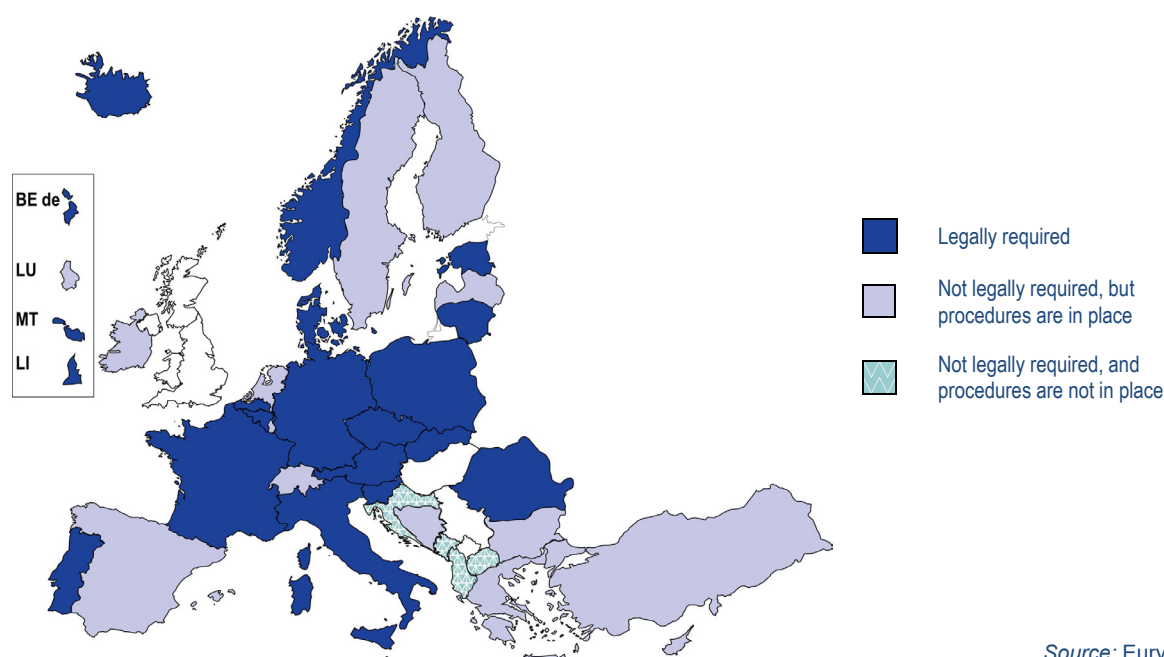
Source: Eurydice.

There are 17 countries that have failed to make changes to legislation in line with the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention – despite this being a legal obligation.

This reality did not change significantly following the increase in numbers of refugees into Europe in 2015 and 2016. Indeed, Portugal is the only country that has made any significant change to legislation. A Ministerial Order was issued in January 2019, and this provides for the possibility of waiving the delivery of diplomas, certificates and other academic documentation necessary for the recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas related to qualifications of applicants in an emergency situation for humanitarian reasons who are unable to provide proof of those qualifications.

Cyprus also reports recent developments. Although there is still no legislative implementation of Article VII, all higher education institutions now have procedures to deal with refugees that are unable to document their qualifications.

In addition to these national measures, on 5 April the European Commission published a Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine ([9]), providing guidance and practical advice to ensure a quick, fair and flexible recognition process for both academic and professional purposes. This was followed on 6 April by an online training seminar organised with CIMEA – the Italian National Academic Recognition Information Centre – to support fast-track recognition of Ukrainian qualifications ([10]). This training seminar gathered over 1 250 participants from 80 countries, and led to the subsequent publication of guidelines on fast-track recognition on 2 June ([11]).

2.2. The Council of Europe Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)

The EQPR ([12]) has been developed by the Council of Europe and project partners to facilitate recognition of qualifications held by refugees in cases where documentary evidence may be lacking. It consists of two parts: an assessment section and an explanatory section. The methodology for the evaluation is a combination of an assessment of available documentation and the use of a structured interview with a team of two qualified credential evaluators. Through a standardised format, it explains the qualifications a refugee is likely to have based on the available evidence. Although this document does not constitute a formal recognition act, it summarises and presents available information on the applicant's educational level, work experience and language proficiency. Thus, the document provides credible information that can be relevant in connection with applications for employment, internships, qualification courses and admission to studies.

Figure 5: Use of Council of Europe qualifications passport for refugees, 2021/2022

Systematically used

Occasionally used

Not used
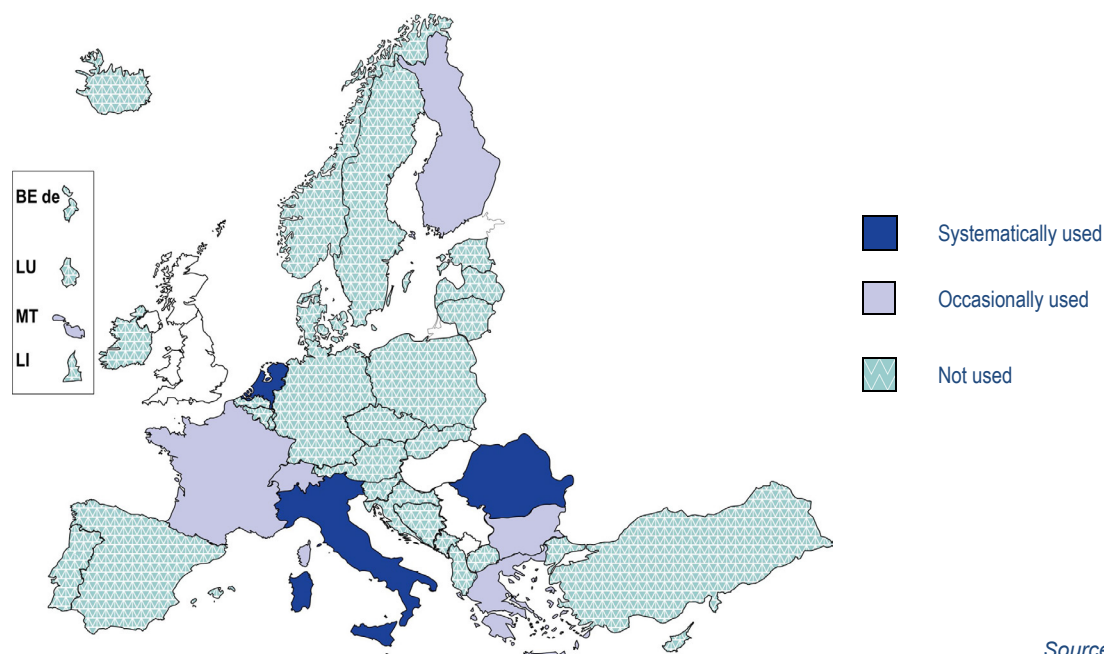
Source: Eurydice.

([9]) For more details, see: https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C(2022)2319&lang=en

([10]) For more details, see: https://education.ec.europa.eu/fi/node/2050

([11]) For more details, see: https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/guidelines-on-fast-track-recognition-of-ukrainian-academic-qualifications

([12]) For more details, see: https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications

Given the potential advantages to using the EQPR, countries were asked whether the tool is used, systematically or occasionally, in relation to refugees interested to access higher education programmes.
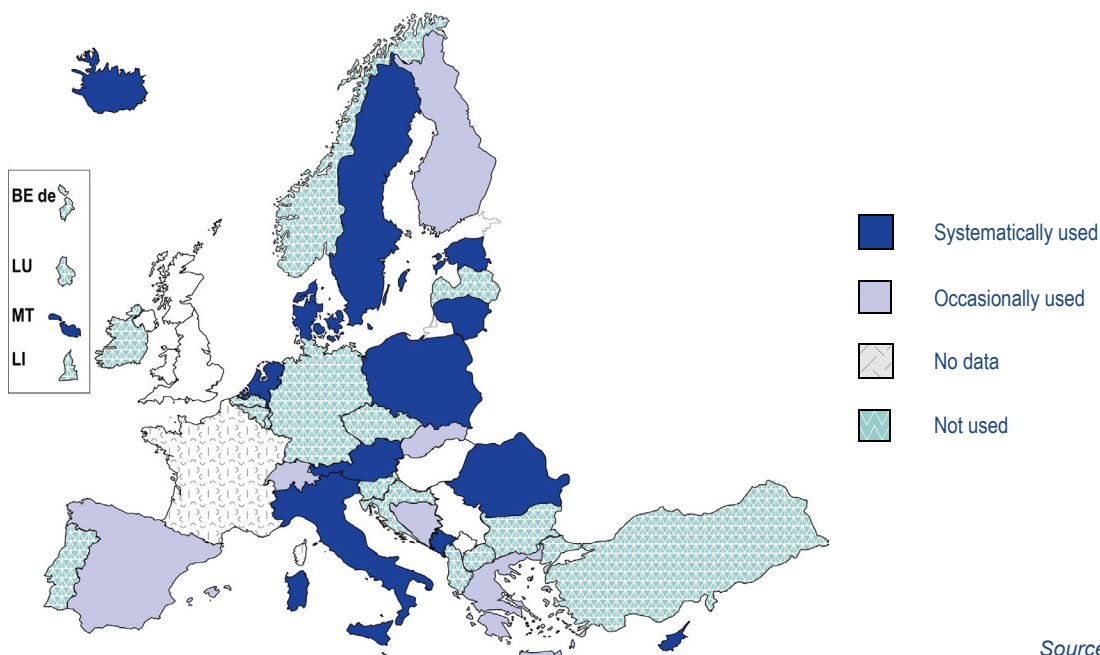
Figure 5 shows that, although some countries are now using the EQPR, more than three quarters of those participating in the report are not making use of the tool. Italy, the Netherlands and Romania are the three countries that use the EQPR systematically in dealing with applications from refugees. Norway, although it does not use the EQPR, uses a nationally-developed tool that is very similar and draws upon Article VII of the LRC, and indeed was used as a model for the EQPR.

Taking a systematic approach can be considered as best practice as it ensures a consistent and fair approach to dealing with refugee applications. Bulgaria, Greece, France Malta, Finland and Switzerland also report using the tool, but on a more occasional basis.

2.3. Toolkit for the recognition of refugees' qualifications

A toolkit for the recognition of refugees' qualifications has been developed by the ENIC-NARIC centres of several countries within an Erasmus+ funded project ([13]), which built upon a previous project lead by Norway's national recognition agency, NOKUT ([14]). The toolkit is a joint effort to assist ENIC-NARIC centres in the development of practical approaches to credential evaluation and recognition of the qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, even in cases of missing documentation or where the qualifications are scarcely documented. The toolkit consists of three parts – principles, tools and approaches. As it is designed to support people such as the citizens fleeing Ukraine and seeking to access higher education, it is highly relevant to the current reality. Figure 6 shows the extent of its use.

Figure 6: Use of toolkit for recognition of refugees' qualifications, 2021/2022

Legend:
- Systematically used
- Occasionally used
- No data
- Not used

Source: Eurydice.

([13]) For further information, see: https://www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx

([14]) For further information, see : https://www.nokut.no/om-nokut/internasjonalt-samarbeid/qualifications-passport-for-refugees/

Figure 6 shows that the toolkit is being more widely used than the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. Indeed, according to the data provided, it is being systematically used by credential evaluators in 13 higher education systems and occasionally used in a further 6. France has no data on the use made of the toolkit by higher education institutions.

However, half of the higher education systems are not making use of the tool. Surprisingly this includes Germany and Norway whose recognition centres were at the heart of the project to develop the Toolkit. However, in the case of Norway, very similar documents to those contained in the toolkit are routinely used.

3. MONITORING

Previous Eurydice reports have shown that it is rare for top-level authorities to collect data on participation of refugees in higher education. The situation has changed to some extent following the arrival of refugees from Ukraine, as illustrated in Figure 7 below

Figure 7: Monitoring of participation of refugees in higher education, 2021/2022

Participation of refugees is subject to top-level monitoring

No top-level monitoring
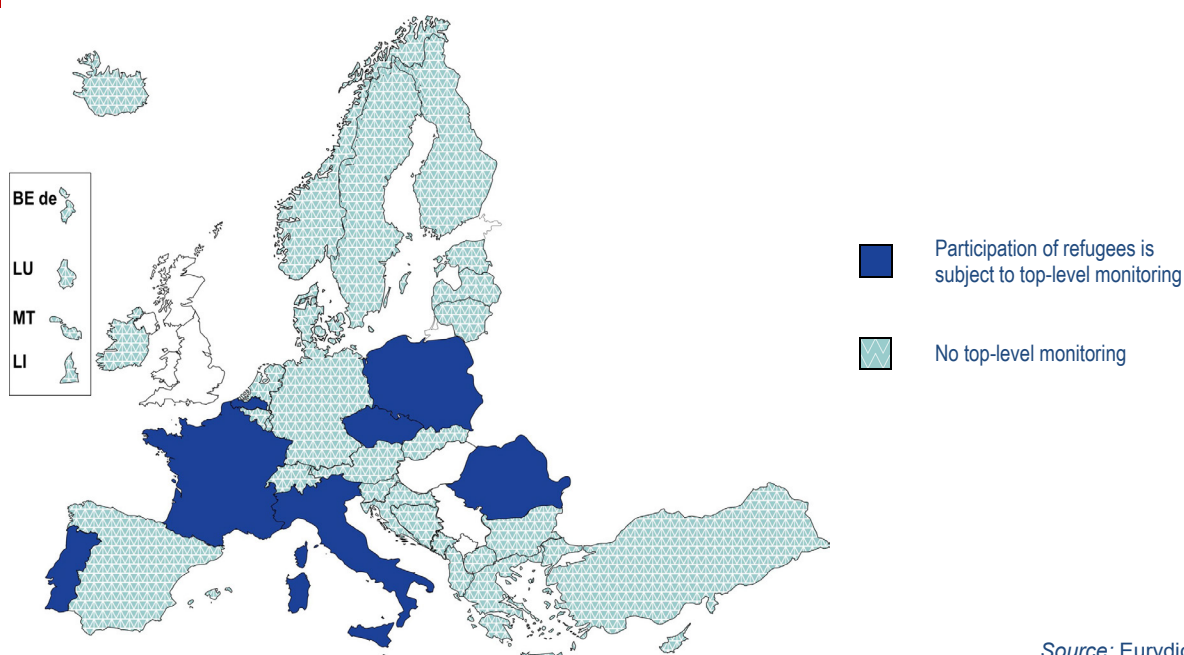
Source: Eurydice.

Although only seven higher education systems are monitoring the participation of refugees in higher education, this number is an increase on previous reporting, and indeed a monitoring process has been recently established in several systems.

In particular, Poland and Romania have established top-level monitoring systems following the arrival of people from Ukraine. Poland reports the highest number of enrolled Ukrainian students. At the time of the Eurydice data collection, 568 Ukrainian nationals were enrolled in higher education institutions in Poland, while 837 had started an enrolment process. In Romania, the number of enrolled students from Ukraine was 79 at the time of reporting the data for 2021/2022.

The French Ministry of Higher Education and Research has set up a platform to which Ukrainian students can subscribe in order to be selected by French Universities and other higher education institutions. This platform provides the ministry with weekly data on the number of students who are applying for immediate courses such as French language courses or specific preparation courses called '*DU Passerelles*'. The data provided also includes applications for the next academic year.

Students are asked to complete a questionnaire stating that they receive temporary protection and with the information concerning their choice of subjects of study and of location.

The French Ministry of Higher Education and Research also sends a weekly survey to higher education institutions to monitor the number of Ukrainian students enrolled immediately and for the next academic year. This survey also asks other questions including about financial assistance requests and student accommodation provided to Ukrainian students.

Portugal already had a system for monitoring refugee students, although from 2019 until 2021 had only one refugee student enrolled in the system. In 2021/2022 there are now 43 Ukrainian national students enrolled in Portuguese higher education institutions.

Italy has a more established system of monitoring refugee students. For 2021/2022 there are 31 Ukrainian nationals enrolled, while the largest number of refugees are from Afghanistan (110 enrolments). Czechia has 13 refugee students enrolled, and no more than 3 from one country.

The Flemish Community of Belgium is the only system that collects data not only on participation of refugee students but also on their completion rates. For other countries, Poland points out that this is because the data collection is new, and completion rate data may be planned as a future step.

As monitoring is necessary to understand the impact of policy and measures, the relatively low level of monitoring activity that has so far been put in place with regard to refugee students from Ukraine suggests that this is an area where countries may wish to consider action in the coming months.

CONCLUSION

As a response to the high numbers of people from Ukraine seeking protection in the rest of Europe, this report shows that there is a significant **variety in policy responses to integrate** these citizens **into higher education institutions**.

Most of the measures that have now been developed to respond to the arrival of displaced people from Ukraine existed prior to the outbreak of the conflict. Thus, in most countries, the approach has been to use and develop measures and instruments that were already in place. The **majority of countries have more than five different large-scale measures** in place. Only a handful of countries have introduced novel and specific higher education policy measures in response to the numbers of displaced citizens from Ukraine. However, there are national examples that could inspire future initiatives.

The most common support measures are host **language training** or support**, psychological counselling, academic guidance, introductory courses,** and also **financial support** (mainly in the form of non-repayable grants or scholarships) and **reserved study places**. Full **tuition fee exemption is offered only by seven countries**. Most countries tend to finance the measures either from public funds or from the HEIs' budget, but it is relatively common to use both sources for language training. More than half of the education systems have no external quality assurance evaluation mechanism in place for their large-scale measures.

Recognition of previous educational attainment can be a serious challenge, particularly when documentary evidence of qualifications cannot be provided. This is the reason why a specific **article on this topic was integrated into the Lisbon Recognition Convention**. Despite the **requirement for this article to be implemented** through national legislation, **this has not happened in 17 of the education systems** covered**.** More positively, 13 of them have now put in place procedures to deal with the recognition of qualifications held by refugees and displaced persons.

The **European Qualifications Passport for Refugees** has been developed by the Council of Europe and partners to facilitate recognition of qualifications held by refugees in cases where documentary evidence may be lacking. However, **it is being systematically used in only three countries.**

The situation is more positive for the **toolkit for recognition of refugees' qualifications,** which was developed within an Erasmus+ funded project in 2018/2019. Around half of European countries are making use of the toolkit to support citizens from Ukraine in accessing higher education programmes.

Only **seven higher education systems monitor the integration of refugees** in their institutions. The monitoring that is undertaken is basic – mostly tracking enrolment data. Only one system (Flemish Community of Belgium) has established a longer-term tracking mechanism in order to be able to see the completion rates of refugee students. As monitoring is necessary to understand the impact of policy and measures, this is an area where countries may focus on making improvements in the coming months.

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Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in higher education in Europe

Eurydice report

The Russian invasion of Ukraine forced many people to flee their home and seek protection in neighbouring European countries, amongst them a large proportion of children and young people. Higher education systems in the receiving countries now have a responsibility to support young people to continue their studies, and to provide them with quality education and support services.

This report investigates what higher education authorities across Europe have done so far to assist higher education institutions in integrating and supporting refugee learners from Ukraine. The aim is to inspire future efforts to respond in the best way possible to the needs and aspirations of these refugee learners.

The report presents qualitative Eurydice data on national policies and measures in 37 European education systems. The findings show that many countries have reacted rapidly to provide policy support to higher education institutions to address the needs of refugee learners from Ukraine. In most cases these measures build on pre-existing policy. The report also shows that monitoring of refugee status in higher education is not widespread, and that in some countries further work is required to recognise refugee qualifications that cannot be adequately documented.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). For more information about Eurydice, see: *https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/*