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## ”Beyond Temporary: Building for the Future”

An EMN Estonia conference<sup>1</sup>

### Overview and Conclusions

#### Introduction

According to UNHCR, 6.3 million people have been forced to flee Ukraine since the Russian full-scale military invasion to Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Ukraine has suffered massive human casualties and the destruction of infrastructure, with people being forced to flee their homes in search of safety, protection, and assistance.

The Council of the European Union extended temporary protection until March 2026, yet there remains a need to identify sustainable solutions to ensure stability and economic independence of the war refugees both in their host countries and, when possible, upon their return to Ukraine.

The conference brought together local and international policymakers, experts and stakeholders to discuss strategies for transition from temporary protection to alternative legal pathways, address employment related integration challenges, share best practices, and examine the role of the diaspora in supporting Ukrainian war refugees. The conference was divided into two sessions. The first session focused on long-term plans and strategies for persons under temporary protection or similar protection statuses, following the end of these arrangements. The second session focused on the successful integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTP), including main challenges, lessons learned and good practices in the labour market integration as well as the role of the Ukrainian diaspora.

### Opening of the conference and welcome remarks

**Veiko Kommusaar** (Deputy Director General, Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, the PBGB) opened the conference with offering his support for the discussions on the legal status of Ukrainian refugees beyond temporary protection. Kommusaar stated that refugees from Ukraine need more than temporary assistance, but if the temporary protection will be extended

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<sup>1</sup> EMN Estonia Conference took place as an in-person event at the Academy of Security Sciences in Tallinn on 28 May 2025. Presentations and a video recording of the conference are available at EMN Estonia’s website.



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beyond March 2026, then the PBGB is ready to provide extensions by offering counselling and referring to a self-service portal for an optimised application procedure. Kommusaar introduced a possibility to obtain a temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia for those Ukrainians who qualify for such permit.

**Annely Kolk** (Ambassador of Estonia to Ukraine) offered her overview of the current situation in Ukraine online from Kyiv. She began by stating that Ukraine remains steadfast, even as the war continues into its fourth year. In 2023, reconstructing the country was a focus topic, but 2024 and 2025 it has changed a lot, because the war is back in Ukraine's big cities and the capital. She gave an overview in numbers: since 2022, more than 13 200 civilians have been killed, among them more than 630 children; more than 32 000 people are wounded. Almost 4000 education establishments and 2000 medical facilities are damaged or destroyed. There are no families in Ukraine untouched by the devastation of war. According to Ambassador Kolk, Ukraine is trying very hard to already reconstruct their country. The demographic situation is worsening, and the negative impact will be seen in 10-20 years. With 70% of the state budget going into defence, Ukraine is looking for allies to help rebuild the country and provide safe environments for Ukrainians who are willing to return. Ambassador Kolk stressed the resilience of Ukrainian people in Ukraine and in host countries as well, and that somehow Ukrainians have managed to keep their moral high. Ambassador also emphasized that Ukraine wants their people to return and Ukrainian society has to be rebuilt and described Ukraine's aspirations to become a member of EU and NATO.

## Keynote and introductory speeches

**Dr Meltem Ineli Ciger** (Associate Professor, Suleyman Demirel University Faculty of Law, Public International Law Department) delivered a keynote speech, starting out with outlining the successes of activating the Temporary Protection Directive, such as providing immediate access to legal status, residence permits, education and labour market; enabling group registration, which gave access to swift protection; and upholding individual agency in the process, by allowing refugees to choose the member state, and reunite with families, among others. Dr Ciger highlighted that temporary protection was never meant to be permanent. She continued by exploring the risks of yet another possible extension of directive, such as a risk of fragmentation faced by EU, when extended yet again after 2026 without offering a transition plan. Dr Ciger suggested that the possible continuation of legal ambiguity may hold human costs and elaborated further on ways in which EU member states have taken matter in their own hands, by either restricting the temporary protection regime or allowing to apply for national residence permit. Dr Ciger also addressed the legal options that might follow temporary protection directive for Ukrainians in the EU and ended with five policy



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recommendations for a coordinated, humane, and flexible exit strategy from temporary protection to more permanent legal statuses.

**Elena Gobbetti** (European Commission, DG Home Asylum Unit) joined the conference online and presented the European Commission's overview and possible plans regarding the future of temporary protection beyond March 2026. According to Gobbetti, the Council of the European Union might consider the possibility to extend temporary protection for up to one year beyond March 2026 due to volatile situation in Ukraine but pointed out that the next extension would possibly be accompanied by an exit strategy.

## Session I: Transition from temporary measures to long-term approaches

The first panel focused on long-term plans and strategies for persons under temporary protection or similar protection statuses, following the end of these arrangements, covered by experts from ICMPD, EUAA, Czech Republic, Moldova and Norway.

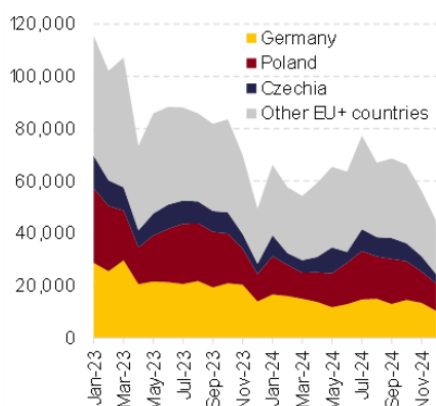
**Martin Wagner** (Senior Policy Advisor Asylum, ICMPD) based his presentation on the newly published ICMPD Policy Paper (May 2025): [Four million people, one crossroads: Charting the future of temporary protection](#). Wagner started out by outlining policies implemented so far regarding temporary protection on the EU and Member States levels, then continued with outlining seven strategic approaches regarding phasing out temporary protection. The strategies fall into the following categories: the Pragmatic Approach, the Innovative Approach, the Hybrid Approach, and the Do-Nothing Approach, discussed further in his presentation.

**Marja Lahtinen** (Asylum Processes Officer, EUAA Asylum and Reception Cooperation and Guidance Unit) examined the latest trends on displaced persons from Ukraine in her presentation. Lahtinen presented the data regarding temporary and international protection in 2025.



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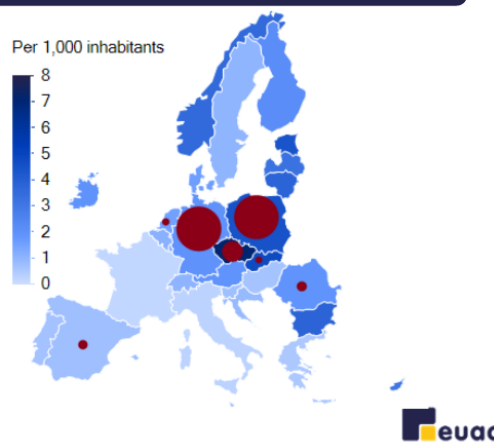
## Overview on temporary protection



In 2024 Germany (167,000) and Poland (166,000) issued the most decisions granting temporary protection

Source: Eurostat

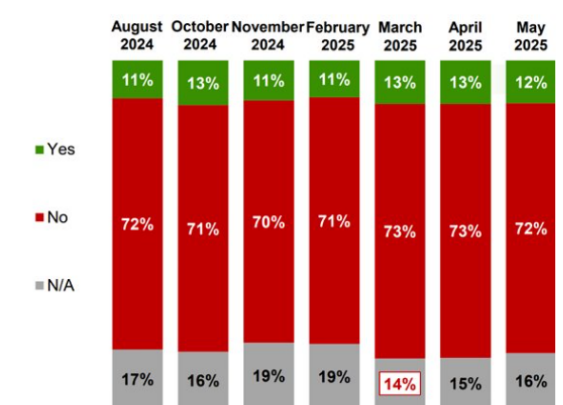
The most decisions per capita were granted by Czechia and Slovakia



## Abstract from Ms Lahtinen presentation

She also presented key findings from surveys of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine: Movements and Returns.

## Migration intentions of Ukrainians in Ukraine



10 Source: EUAA/Gradus Research Company

- **Intention to leave Ukraine** for temporary protection or permanent residence remains **consistently low**
- In May, **Poland** top destination, followed by Germany
- Primary factors in choosing a destination: **access to the labour market, safety**, the presence of a **support network** and **financial assistance**

Lahtinen discussed survey topics such as demographics, returns and back-and-forth movements in her presentation. According to the survey data, most respondents reside in Germany and Poland, and only 60% indicated that at the moment, they are in their preferred



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destination. Main reasons for choosing the destination country differ among demographic groups: for younger generations, work opportunities and education are most important, and for older people, the availability of family, friends and access to support and benefits are the main factor, in addition to safety, which is important to all respondents. Lahtinen also shared data on movements: most respondents have not been to Ukraine since displacement but expressed their intention to go there in the future. Regarding returning to Ukraine, data shows that those people who fled Ukraine in 2022 are more likely to return than those who fled in 2023 or 2024.

**Jan Werner** (Head of the Unit for EUAA Affairs, Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic) reflected on the best practices and lessons learned from the period following 24 February 2022 in Czechia, such as creating a one-stop-shop for temporary protection procedures and setting in place balanced social subsidies. Werner followed with sharing the current state of play in Czechia with more than 373 600 active temporary protection holders and introduced country's next steps regarding gradual paths to possible long-term stay of refugees from Ukraine.

**Elena Coliujco** (representative of EMN Moldova and head of the Directorate for Integrated Border Management, Migration, and Asylum Policy at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova) shared the Republic of Moldova's perspective on implementing temporary protection as a non-EU country bordering with Ukraine. Coliujco introduced the national program for the phased integration of foreigners, which also includes displaced persons from Ukraine, ensuring the living standards and contribution to Moldova's socio-economic development. Coliujco continued with sharing best practices of implementation of TP directive in Moldova, introducing also the challenges faced as the neighbouring country to Ukraine, such as the burnout of frontline personnel and high pressure on the border police.

**Hege Laskemoen** (Senior Adviser in the Legal Affairs unit in the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration) described the temporary collective protection in Norway and ways in which it differs from EU's temporary protection. In Norway, temporary collective protection is accessed through the ordinary asylum procedure, whereas in EU member states the TP directive is implemented immediately and in a simplified form. Laskemoen shared data on displaced persons from Ukraine and highlighted that Norway had initially more favourable policies for Ukrainian refugees, compared to other countries. The increasing arrival of Ukrainian refugees to Norway in 2023 resulted in a set of more restrictive policy measures.

## Moderated discussion on transition from temporary measures to long-term approaches

**Indrek Treufeldt** moderated a panel discussion between **Martin Wagner** (ICMPD), **Marja Lahtinen** (EUAA), **Jan Werner** (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic), **Elena Coliujco**





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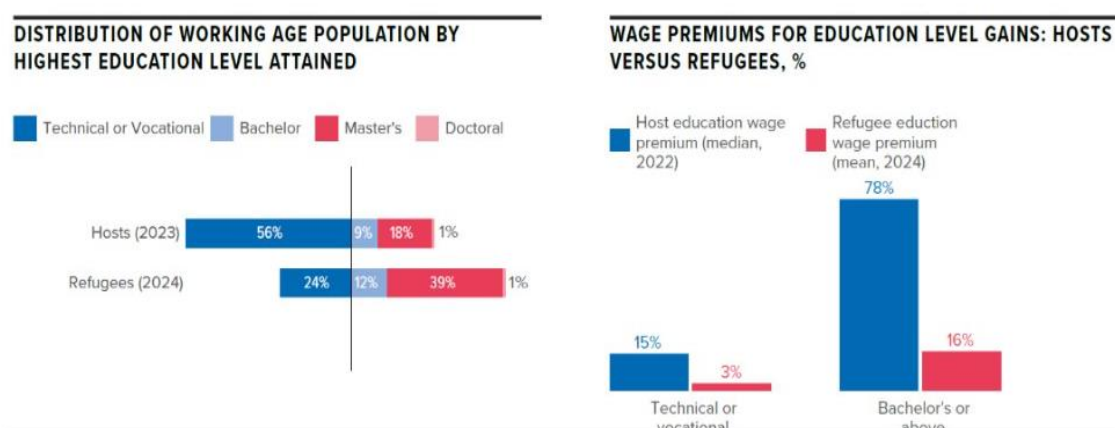
(EMN Moldova, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova), and **Hege Laskemoen** (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration) where they discussed the legal and policy options for BoTP to transition to more permanent residence statuses and ways how temporary protection status could be aligned with the labour market needs in different host countries where Ukrainians fill in the labour shortages. The latter evoked a fruitful conversation, due to a dilemma of careful balancing and political debates in the situation where host countries wish for well-integrated refugees on one hand, but Ukraine needs to rebuild its society with the help of its people on the other.

## Session II: Rebuilding lives following displacement: labour market integration and role of diasporas

The second panel focused on the integration of BoTP, including main challenges, lessons learned and good practices in the labour market integration as well as the role of the Ukrainian diaspora.

**David Mosler** (Policy and Data Analyst, International Labour Organization) shared an overview of Ukrainian refugees in host labour markets in his online presentation, based on an inter-agency analysis [“High Employment Rates, But Low Wages: a Poverty Assessment of Ukrainian Refugees In Neighboring Countries”](#). Mosler covered topics such as reasons for skills mismatches and gaps between wages and qualifications, among other findings.

## Gap between wages and qualifications



*Abstract from D. Mosler presentation*



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**Ave Lauren** (Migration Policy Analyst, OECD) focused on the role of the Ukrainian diaspora in integration, recovery and return to Ukraine. She outlined the history of Ukraine's global, institutional diaspora which dates to 150 years and explained how existing diaspora structures have been supporting displaced Ukrainians. Lauren brought France and Germany as examples of host countries who work with diasporas in the context of recovery, reconstruction and economic development and introduced the benefits of engaging with Ukrainian diaspora for host countries.

**Aleksandra Jawornicka** (Chief Specialist, Integration Team, Social Integration Department at Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy in the Republic of Poland) gave an overview of Ukrainian migrants in the Polish labour market and introduced good practices from Poland regarding diploma recognition. She highlighted the Kwalifikator system, which contains qualifications from 84 countries worldwide, and Polish Centre for International Aid, which helps with diploma recognition of Ukrainian female teachers, who want to work in educational institutions in Poland, among others.

**Eugenija Kovaliova** (CEO of Ucreate Hub and International Projects Lead at Open Lithuania Foundation) introduced the initiatives of a Vilnius-based competence centre Ucreate Hub in her presentation. Kovaliova highlighted the Ukrainian Women Entrepreneurship Programme among other activities and suggested the importance of supporting and engaging with grass-root civil society initiatives, to equip Ukrainian refugees with knowledge, skills, network and other tools for successful integration and possible return to country of origin.

**Kristi Lillemägi** (Ukraine Project Manager, NGO Mondo, Estonia) introduced the multi-donor initiative Skills4Recovery in her presentation. There is a growing demand for skilled workers in Ukraine, but 32% of employers struggle to find skilled workers. Lillemägi stated that enhancing the level of digital competences of teachers and managers of VET schools and developing educational technology curricula is vital for retraining and upskilling Ukrainians to meet the needs of the current labour market. Lillemägi concluded by stating that vocational education holds great potential for responding to the changing needs of the labour market and the key factors are ensuring lifelong learning, teacher training, digitalisation and the development of learning tools in the process.

**Natalja Pavlova** (Chief Specialist and Internal Trainer at Unemployment Insurance Fund, Estonia) started out with bringing a successful example of a proactive refugee from Ukraine who learned the Estonian language, accessed the labour market and uplevelled in her career during a relatively short time, which highlights the two-way path of successful integration – the government's support alongside with individual motivation. Pavlova continued by introducing data on skills and profiles of registered unemployed BoIP in Estonia and gave an overview of



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participating in labour market training. Pavlova shared that the reason for supporting employers with a mentoring fee and translation costs is to contribute to the self-sufficiency and adaptation of BoIP into Estonian labour market and thus society.

## **Moderated discussion on rebuilding lives following displacement: labour market integration and role of diasporas**

**Indrek Treufeldt** moderated a discussion between **David Mosler** (ILO), **Ave Lauren** (OECD), **Aleksandra Jawornicka** (Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy in the Republic of Poland), **Eugenija Kovaliova** (Ukreate Hub, Open Lithuania Foundation), and **Ulla Saar** (Deputy Secretary General for Labour and Equality Policies, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Republic of Estonia), where they discussed different pathways to easing labour market barriers in the host countries and the dilemma of learning the host country language versus Ukrainian. The main labour market barrier discussed was poor knowledge of host country's language, as speaking the local language is usually required for working, especially for women, who tend to be engaged in service or hospitality-related jobs. While men are on the frontlines, women are usually juggling many things at once including working and caretaking, thus little time is left for reskilling and upskilling, including language learning. OECD elaborated on the dual intent approach: giving young refugees a chance to learn both, the host country language and Ukrainian, to give them an opportunity to choose to stay or return to Ukraine one day and thus increase the human capital.

## **Conference Agenda**

### **9:00 – 9:30 Opening of the conference and welcome remarks**

- **Veiko Kommusaar**, Deputy Director General, Estonian Police and Border Guard Board
- **Annely Kolk**, Ambassador of Estonia to Ukraine (*online presentation*)

### **9:30 – 10:40 Keynote and introductory speeches**

A broader perspective, including migration prospects, impact of ongoing conflict dynamics in Ukraine on long-term planning, rights and responsibilities of war refugees, diaspora engagement, possible exit strategies.

- Keynote speech: **From Temporary Protection to Durable Solutions: Envisioning the Future of Ukrainians in Europe**, **Dr Meltem Ineli Ciger** – Associate Professor, Suleyman Demirel University Faculty of Law, Public International Law Department





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- **Elena Gobbetti**, European Commission, DG Home Asylum Unit (*online presentation*)

## **11:00 – 13:00 Session I: Transition from temporary measures to long-term approaches**

The first panel will focus on long-term plans and strategies for persons under temporary protection or similar protection statuses, following the end of these arrangements. What are the legal and policy options for BoTP to transition to more permanent residence statuses? Should there be an EU-wide approach to long-term solutions for BoTP, or should policies remain country-specific? How should policymakers balance the stability and initial integration of war refugees in host countries against the ethical and strategic considerations of return?

- **Options for phasing out temporary protection, Martin Wagner** – Senior Policy Advisor Asylum, ICMPD
- **Latest trends on displaced persons from Ukraine: Temporary protection and Surveys with Arriving Migrants from Ukraine, Marja Lahtinen**, Asylum Processes Officer, EUAA Asylum and Reception Cooperation and Guidance Unit
- **Czechia and the migration wave from Ukraine: Taking stock and planning for next steps, Jan Werner**, Head of the Unit for EUAA Affairs, Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic
- **Moldova's Outlook After the End of Temporary Protection: Challenges and Scenarios for Next Steps, Elena Coliujco**, representative of EMN Moldova and head of the Directorate for Integrated Border Management, Migration, and Asylum Policy at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)
- **Temporary Collective Protection in Norway – Experiences So Far And Challenges Ahead, Hege Laskemoen**, Senior Adviser in the Legal Affairs unit in the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration

*The presentations were followed by a panel discussion.*

## **14:00 – 16:00 Session II: Rebuilding lives following displacement: labour market integration and role of diasporas**

The second session will focus on the successful integration of BoTP, including main challenges, lessons learned and good practices in the labour market integration as well as the role of the Ukrainian diaspora. What are the primary barriers to Ukrainian BoTP's participation in the labour market? What role can the Ukrainian diaspora play in integration? Have the benefits provided to BoTP been proportionated?



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- **Ukrainian Refugees in Host Labour Markets – a Snapshot, David Mosler**, Policy and Data Analyst, International Labour Organization (*online presentation*)
- **Bridging Here and There: The Multifaceted Role of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Integration, Recovery and Return, Ave Lauren**, Migration Policy Analyst, OECD
- **Integration Under Crisis Conditions: Lessons from Poland, Aleksandra Jawornicka**, Chief Specialist, Integration Team, Social Integration Department at Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy in the Republic of Poland
- **Eugenija Kovaliova**, CEO of Ucreate Hub and International Projects Lead at Open Lithuania Foundation
- **Labour Market Bridges and Skills for the Future: How Education Can Support Ukraine's Reconstruction, Kristi Lillemägi**, Ukraine Project Manager, NGO Mondo, Estonia
- **Beneficiaries of International Protection at Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, Natalja Pavlova**, Chief Specialist and Internal Trainer at Unemployment Insurance Fund, Estonia

*The presentations were followed by a panel discussion.*

**16:00 – 16:10 Closing remarks: Barbara Orloff**, EMN Estonia



The European Migration Network (EMN), established by the Council of the European Union in 2008 and coordinated by the European Commission, is a network for information collection and exchange on migration and asylum issues, comprised of National Contact Points and national networks of relevant stakeholder organisations. The EMN plays a key role in providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum topics to policy makers (at EU and Member State level) and the general public.



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