



European
Commission



ASSESSMENT OF
COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION
(EU) 2022/554 OF
5 APRIL 2022 ON
**THE RECOGNITION
OF QUALIFICATIONS
FOR PEOPLE FLEEING
RUSSIA'S INVASION
OF UKRAINE**



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Completed in June 2023

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The purpose of this report is to assess how successful Commission Recommendation (EU) 554/2022 has been in supporting Member States to facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications of individuals who have fled the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and to determine the degree to which it has resulted in practical improvements. Key findings of the analysis include:

- The countries that have received the highest numbers of individuals fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine are Poland, Germany, and Czechia. Although these countries have received many recognition applications (e.g., Poland received over 5,000), the countries with the highest number of applications relative to the number of people under temporary protection are Hungary, Lithuania, and Latvia.
- Many applications for recognition are still pending (33%). For those requests that have been processed, the success rate of recognition decisions issued to people under temporary protection is high (92%). It is the same as the success rate of recognition decisions issued to EU nationals.
- Of the 4.6 million people registered under temporary protection, around 1 million are participating in the labour market ⁽¹⁾. If they wish to exercise a regulated profession, such as a doctor, nurse, dentist, architect, pharmacist, or teacher, they must have their professional qualifications recognised. For non-regulated professions, recognition is not necessary.
- The Recommendation sent a strong political signal to Member States to maximise their efforts in adjusting to the urgent needs of the situation. However, the implementation of the Recommendation varies significantly across Member States. Not all Member States have followed it and those who did, implemented specific elements rather than the whole Recommendation.
- Member States have made significant strides in facilitating the integration of Ukrainian professionals, especially in the fields of health and teaching. Common practices among Member States include allowing qualified Ukrainian professionals to work under supervision, hiring them for assistant-level positions, and granting them temporary and provisional rights to pursue their activities without prior recognition. However, there is a potential risk that qualified Ukrainian professionals may become trapped in assistant-level positions.
- Several Member States put in place websites that include information on recognition in Ukrainian. It remains unclear if the information provision was efficient enough to reach the relevant group.
- Electronic tools and exchange of information are crucial to support Member States in the challenge of taking quick recognition decisions:
 - ▶ The Commission received very positive feedback on the usefulness of the eTranslation tool, which was made available in Ukrainian.
 - ▶ The European Training Foundation (ETF) managed to put in place a resource hub bringing together information on Ukrainian qualifications.
 - ▶ The Commission published a report on the “Comparison of the European Qualifications Framework and the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework” ⁽²⁾.
 - ▶ The Commission's wiki, designed to facilitate the exchange of information between Member States, was not utilized to its full potential.

1 https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10491&pk_source=newsletter&pk_medium=email&pk_campaign=eu_social_newsletter

2 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10513>

- The challenge of missing evidence of qualifications turned out to be less important than during previous inflows of refugees. Thanks to the Ukrainian EDEBO database many people fleeing the Russian invasion were able to provide evidence of their qualifications. The close cooperation with Ukrainian authorities to help Member States use the database has been very useful. At the same time, the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees has hardly been used by people enjoying temporary protection.
- Member States considered meetings of the Taskforce to follow up on the implementation of the Recommendation useful (rating the usefulness 7.7/10). The participation rate in the meetings of the Taskforce was high with 23 to 26 Member States attending each meeting. All Member States participated in at least one of the meetings of the Taskforce.
- Stakeholders expressed their appreciation for the Recommendation. In their feedback, they often raised the question of whether the measures should also be extended to other third-country nationals.

1. Introduction

It has been over a year since the unprovoked military aggression and invasion of Ukraine by Russia. In the context of providing temporary protection to those fleeing Ukraine, and their right to engage in employed and self-employed activities, the Commission adopted **Recommendation (EU) 2022/554** on the recognition of their qualifications on 5 April 2022. The primary objective of this Recommendation was to ensure that individuals benefiting from temporary protection could access jobs that align with their level of qualifications and areas of expertise.

This report assesses the application of the Recommendation by Member States, and examines its potential positive impacts. The report incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data from various sources available to the Commission as of April 2023, including data from a survey conducted in February 2023 to which 17 Member States provided responses. Annex I provides a summary of the sources used for the assessment. The report will be updated in case additional data becomes available.



2. Key results on labour market participation and recognition

2.1. Destination countries and labour market participation

In February 2023 the estimated number of active registrations for temporary protection in all 27 Member States amounts to 4.6 million ⁽³⁾. PL, DE and CZ are the top three recipient countries in terms of absolute numbers of Ukrainian refugees whereas CZ, PL and EE record the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita.

Member State	People under temporary protection	in % of total population
Poland	1,573,267	4.18%
Germany	881,399	1.06%
Czechia	499,887	4.75%
Italy	171,739	0.29%
Spain	170,973	0.36%
Bulgaria	154,590	2.26%
Romania	122,362	0.64%
France	118,994	0.18%
Slovakia	112,154	2.06%
Austria	94,984	1.06%
Netherlands	89,730	0.51%
Ireland	77,685	1.54%
Lithuania	75,954	2.71%
Belgium	68,977	0.59%
Portugal	58,242	0.56%
Sweden	52,325	0.50%
Finland	50,692	0.91%
Latvia	46,660	2.49%
Estonia	44,232	3.32%
Denmark	38,538	0.66%
Hungary	34,248	0.35%
Cyprus	21,842	2.41%
Croatia	21,352	0.55%
Greece	20,955	0.20%
Slovenia	8,885	0.42%
Luxembourg	6,756	1.05%
Malta	1,744	0.33%

³ source: UNHCR data <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> as of 28.03.2023

Of the 4.6 million people registered under temporary protection, around 1 million are participating in the labour market (4). Evidence shows that displaced Ukrainians have made good progress in entering European labour markets, although employment rates vary widely between countries. Many new arrivals have prioritised finding employment quickly rather than finding a job that reflects their skills, especially when they have family members to support or plan to return to Ukraine (5). If they wish to exercise a regulated profession, such as a doctor, nurse, dentist, architect, pharmacist, or teacher, they must have their professional qualifications recognised. For non-regulated professions, recognition is not necessary.

A significant proportion of individuals under temporary protection are either children or elderly and are thus not part of the working-age population. Additionally, other factors may hinder individuals from taking up work in the host Member State, such as:

- lack of childcare for single parents;
- temporary nature of the stay: The idea of a temporary stay might have hampered people from applying for recognition if there was no wish/intention to stay on a long-term basis in the recipient country. Surveys suggest that many hoped to return to Ukraine in the next few months, either on a long-term or more circular basis (6);
- being employed in Ukraine with a possibility to work remotely.

2.2. Requests and decisions on recognition

To access regulated professions, people enjoying temporary protection must request recognition of their professional qualifications in the host Member State. Depending on the regulation on national level it differs for how many and for which professions recognition is needed.

The **number of recognition applications varies widely among Member States**, ranging from zero since February 2022 to over 5,000. This reflects the differences in the inflow of people between Member States and partially explains why the implementation of the Recommendation 2022/554 has been heterogeneous.

Neighbouring countries, such as PL, SK, HU, RO, and countries in close proximity, such as LV, and LT, which have received a high number of people under temporary protection, have faced greater pressure to adapt to the needs of the situation and establish mechanisms to integrate these individuals into the labour market quickly. Conversely, some Member States, such as PT and ES, have reported very few recognition applications.

Member States' policy concerns regarding the potential brain drain from Ukraine may have led them to not create an easier path for full recognition in some cases.

In its Recommendation the Commission also encouraged Member States to implement alternative means of employment to facilitate a rapid integration into the labour market. Several Member States have opted for this option and thus, even though people have been allowed to exercise a regulated profession, they have been employed without prior formal recognition of their professional qualifications. This can lead to a lower number of requests for recognition.

The table below compares the number of recognition requests reported by Member States with the total number of people under temporary protection in the country. It also compares recognition requests from people under temporary protection with requests from EU nationals asking for recognition in the host country (n.b.: figures for UA are more recent data than for EU nationals).

4 https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10491&pk_source=newsletter&pk_medium=email&pk_campaign=eu_social_newsletter

5 Migration Policy Institute: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpie_ukrainians-europe-labour-markets_final.pdf

6 Migration Policy Institute: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/european-labor-market-integration-displaced-ukrainians>

Member state	Recognition applications received from people under temporary protection (Feb 2022 - Feb 2023)	Recognition applications received from EU nationals (Jan-Dec 2021) ⁽⁷⁾	Recognition applications received per 100.000 people under temporary protection
Hungary	1 432	354	4 181
Lithuania	1 067	51	1 405
Slovakia	1 045	641 ⁽⁸⁾	931
Latvia	376	18	806
Ireland	409	448	526
Malta	9	146	516
Poland	5 413	315	344
Finland	79	402	156
Spain	184	1 734	108
Czechia	488	831	98
Romania	112	67	92
Sweden	36	1 956	70
Portugal	34	120	58
Estonia	21	70	48
Belgium	27	3 943	39
Italy	53	5 434	31
Slovenia	0	61	0
Germany	no data	no data	n/a
Bulgaria	no data	27	n/a
Greece	no data	no data	n/a
France	no data	7 270	n/a
Croatia	no data	107	n/a
Cyprus	no data	438	n/a
Luxembourg	no data	3 340	n/a
Netherlands	no data	3 373	n/a
Austria	no data	2 102	n/a
Denmark	no data	1 313	n/a

7 Decisions taken on establishment. Obtained through the Regulated Professions Database on 22 May 2023; <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/statistics/establishment/overall>.

8 Jan-Dec 2020

HU, LT and SK have not been the top recipient countries, but they have received a higher number of applications per capita from people enjoying temporary protection than other Member States. In these countries the number of applications from people enjoying temporary protection has highly exceeded intra-EU figures. FR has not yet put in place statistics on the recognition of Ukrainian qualifications but indicates that the number of comparability certificates issued by the French ENIC-NARIC center for Ukrainian diplomas reached 1239 in 2022, compared to less than 500 in 2021.

The success rate of recognition decisions issued to people under temporary protection is high, standing at 92 %, which is the same level as for EU nationals. However, the number of pending cases for Ukraine is still higher (n.b.: figures for UA are more recent data).

Success rate of recognition decisions	APPLICATIONS PENDING	APPLICATIONS COMPLETED...	...out of which POSITIVE	...out of which NEGATIVE
For people under temporary protection (Feb 2022- Feb 2023)	33%	67%	92%	8%
For EU nationals (2021)	21%	79%	92%	8%

3. Uptake of recommended measures by Member States

With the Recommendation the Commission proposed several concrete measures to make recognition of qualifications easier and faster for people enjoying temporary protection. This section analyses to what extent these measures have been implemented by Member States in national law or administrative practice.

3.1. Reducing formalities to obtain recognition

The Commission recommended **minimizing the formalities** for recognising professional qualifications for people enjoying temporary protection. **At least 12 Member States have made significant efforts** to adapt their national recognition procedures to meet the specific needs of the situation. Some countries have introduced legislation to introduce fast-track recognition procedures or waived document requirements. Other countries may not have formally adopted such measures but reported to apply a greater margin of discretion when receiving applications from people fleeing Ukraine in practice.

A few Member States (AT, CY, FI, LU, MT, SI, SE) have continued to apply their regular recognition procedures for third country nationals. This is either because they did not receive a high number of requests for recognition (e.g. MT, LU) or because they already had similar measures in place, partially developed previously for refugees.

Neighbouring countries faced higher pressure in adjusting their national procedures to the specific needs of the situation. Adapting the procedure does not preclude or define in any way the outcome of a recognition decision.

Examples on how Member States reduced formalities to a minimum when assessing applications of people benefitting from temporary protection include, inter alia:

- Adoption of emergency legislation or other measures to **waive document requirements**, e.g. accept other types of proof than the original documents and require only the indispensable ones (e.g. BE, CZ, DE, LV, PL, PT, RO; SK, ES);
- Applying more **flexible deadlines** or start processing applications even if the file was incomplete (e.g. PL, CZ);
- **Dropping in-depth assessments** on the basis of findings of previous recognition procedures, when the circumstances are similar and no serious doubts about equivalence arise (e.g. HU, PT);
- **Prioritizing** applications from people fleeing from Ukraine over applications of other third country nationals (e.g. LT);
- **Reducing time to issue a recognition decision** (e.g. LT);
- **Reducing or eliminating costs** related to the recognition procedure, e.g. by waiving fees or reimbursing (e.g. BE, HU, IT, IE, PT; RO);
- **Increasing capacity** of competent authorities to manage the increased number of applications (e.g. HU);
- Facilitating the recognition of professional qualifications for Ukrainians for access to the crafts professions (e.g. FR)

An overview with national measures and practices can be found in Annex II.

3.2. Information provision

In its Recommendation the Commission emphasized the significance of providing **guidance and information** on recognition to individuals arriving from Ukraine. To this end, many Member States have established **dedicated websites** ⁽⁹⁾ where people under temporary protection can find relevant information on how to obtain recognition of their professional qualifications. To make it simpler for individuals under temporary protection to understand their rights and the procedures they must follow, most of these websites have also been translated into Ukrainian.

In some Member States **specific information sessions** were provided upon arrival to inform people enjoying temporary protection about their rights. In some cases, these sessions included information on recognition of academic and professional qualifications (e.g. BE, DE(10)).

In addition, a few Member States have established hotlines (e.g. DE, ES, PT) where people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine can call and receive assistance.

It is not clear though if information provision is already sufficient. Raising awareness on the rights and processes for recognition is crucial to avoid that people do not apply for recognition due to lack of information, and instead take up jobs below their qualification levels. To avoid that, providing the information should be accompanied by offering **assistance and personalised support** to guide people throughout the process.

9 e.g. Portugal: <https://portugalforukraine.gov.pt/en/pagina-inicial-english/>
 Sweden: <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/about-the-council/information-regarding-ukraine/>
 Netherlands: <https://www.nuffic.nl/onderwerpen/beroepserkenning/werken-in-nederland-met-een-buitenlands-diploma>
 Romania: <https://cnred.edu.ro/en/information-access-education-and-or-labor-market-ukraine>
 Spain: <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/ucrania-urgente/w/convalidar-estudios-ucrania>
 Germany: <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/uk/index.php>
 Latvia: <https://www.vmgov.lv/lv/darba-iespejas-ukrainas-medikiem-pracevlashtuvannya-ukrainskikh-likariv>
 Lithuania: <https://lrv.lt/lt/informacija-apie-kara-ukrainoje/informatsiia-dlia-gromadian-ukrayini-information-about-support-for-ukraine-informacija-apie-pagalba-ukrainai>

10 Webinar des BQ-Portals zur Anerkennungsfähigkeit von ukrainischen Berufsabschlüssen: <https://www.bq-portal.de/Anerkennung-f%C3%BCr-Betriebe/Ukrainische-Berufsabschluesse>

3.3. Facilitating recognition with eTranslation

In its Recommendation the Commission encouraged Member States to use the Commission's **eTranslation tool** to expedite the recognition process for professional qualifications.

In March 2022 the Commission expanded the eTranslation tool to include Ukrainian as a supported language and provided training to competent authorities in Member States on how to use the tool. In total, the eTranslation tool served around 32,000 registered users from across the EU (by January 2023). Since the inclusion of the Ukrainian language in the tool, roughly 57,000 pages have been translated from Ukrainian, and approximately 7,000 pages have been translated into Ukrainian.

When asked which topics or presentations were particularly relevant or useful for their assessments of recognition applications, 6 Member States (HU, DE, LT, LV, SE, ES) replied that the eTranslation tool is **very helpful and is used on a regular basis** by competent authorities.

3.4. Ukrainian EDEBO database

Although not explicitly mentioned in the Commission Recommendation, the **Ukrainian EDEBO database** ⁽¹¹⁾ has proven to be a valuable tool for supporting evidence of qualifications for the purpose of recognition. Managed by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, the database contains information on qualifications issued in Ukraine after 2015.

In the context of the Taskforce for implementation of the Recommendation, the Commission facilitated information exchange and cooperation between Member States and Ukrainian authorities. This collaboration helped to resolve practical issues related to accessing and using the database.

Since April 2022 about 580,000 people have visited the EDEBO public website, mainly from Ukraine (78%), Germany (5%) and Poland (3%).

3.5. Dealing with incomplete evidence of qualifications

The Commission recommended that Member States consider using the **European Qualifications Passport for Refugees** (EQPR), developed by the Council of Europe, in cases where evidence of formal qualifications could not be obtained.

However, most Member States did not report having difficulties in obtaining evidence of qualifications, largely due to the availability of the EDEBO database. The issue of missing qualifications appeared to be of lower relevance than during previous periods of refugee inflow.

IT has made the EQPR a mandatory requirement to be able to work on a temporary basis in national legislation. This goes beyond the intended scope of the EQPR, which would typically only be used if other means of obtaining evidence of qualifications were unavailable.

Overall, the **use of the EQPR was very low**. According to data provided by the Council of Europe, only around 200 people fleeing from Ukraine applied for an EQPR between April 2022 and January 2023. Of these, 91 EQPRs have been issued by February 2023, and about half of the applications are still pending. On average, it takes 8 to 10 weeks from the completion of an application until the EQPR can be issued. Only two Member States (Portugal and Italy) reported using the EQPR, with the majority of applicants residing in Italy, where it is a legal requirement for temporary work.

11 <https://info.edbo.gov.ua/>

3.6. Facilitating recognition for specific professions

In its Recommendation the Commission placed a particular emphasis on the recognition of qualifications for **healthcare and teaching professionals**, as the demand for these professions was (and continues to be) high due to the significant number of patients and children among the displaced population. According to figures reported by Member States, up to 90% of requests for recognition by people enjoying temporary protection related to three key professions: nurses, doctors, or teachers. ⁽¹²⁾

At least 16 Member States have introduced legislation or measures with special provisions for these professions, allowing for faster integration into the labor market. A summary of the national measures taken in each Member State is available in Annex III. Most common practices reported by Member States are:

- Hiring Ukrainian professionals at **assistant level positions** (e.g. LT, DE, FR, EE, SK, AT);
- Allowing them to work under **supervision** of a professional of the host Member State (e.g. AT, PT, DE, FR, LV, PL, RO; SK, CZ, HU);
- **Limiting the range of activities** to be performed by them (e.g. PL, PT);
- Issuing a **temporary and conditional right** to work without prior recognition (e.g. IT, PL);
- Using **special employment contracts** (e.g. AT).

While it is commendable that individuals under temporary protection are able to secure employment in their respective fields and as quickly as possible through alternative means, it is crucial for Member States to encourage these individuals to pursue formal recognition in tandem or provide pathways for them to upgrade their skills once employed. Failure to do so may result in individuals enjoying temporary protection remaining stuck in assistant-level positions.

The measures implemented in Hungary are a good example of how to ensure that, as they allow a professional to work upon arrival under supervision with the condition that they start the recognition procedure in parallel. This approach enables professionals to obtain full recognition and work as any other professional in the host Member State. Estonia is also taking positive steps, with its Healthcare College developing a program to upgrade the skills of Ukrainian professionals in nursing and midwifery. This program will help these professionals bridge the gap with European training standards and ultimately obtain full recognition.

3.7. Participation in follow-up measures on EU level

To ensure successful implementation of Recommendation (EU) 2022/554, the Commission established a **Taskforce**, which included relevant Ukrainian authorities⁽¹³⁾, experts, and other stakeholders as needed⁽¹⁴⁾. The Taskforce met five times to facilitate national practice sharing, peer learning, and practical solutions to common challenges⁽¹⁵⁾.

By working closely with Ukrainian authorities, the Taskforce was able to identify challenges, such as difficulties in using the EDEBO database or obtaining criminal records, at an early stage and find practical solutions.

12 Data from the survey suggests that some Member States might have reported incomplete data only including these three professions.

13 Ukrainian Ministry for Education and Science, Ukrainian National Qualifications Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and Mission of Ukraine to the European Union.

14 World Health Organization, ZNP (Teachers' Trade Union in Poland), Council of Europe, etc.

15 Meetings of the Taskforce on Recommendation 2022/554: 25 March 2022, 13 April 2022, 5 May 2022, 7 June 2022 and 30 September 2022.

Overall, the meetings of the Taskforce were **well-received by Member States** with an average usefulness rating of 7.7 out of 10⁽¹⁶⁾. Participation levels were comparable to those in regular Commission expert groups.

However, participation levels varied, with two Member States only attending one out of five meetings. Additionally, the Commission used online surveys to gather information on the implementation of the Recommendation, but the data provided by Member States was inconsistent and incomplete, with participation rates ranging from 63% to 74% and four Member States not participating at all (BG, DK, GR, HR).

3.8. Cooperation and information sharing between Member States

Obtaining reliable information on qualifications obtained in a third country can be challenging, which is why the Commission encouraged Member States in its Recommendation to share information on Ukrainian qualifications and the Ukrainian education system.

This objective was effectively achieved through an exchange of information during meetings of the Task Force on the Implementation of the Recommendation. Six Member States (SK, RO, CZ, HU, PL, DE) shared their assessment results for specific professions and presented their conclusions regarding compliance with EU minimum training requirements. This helped to establish a more common understanding of how Ukrainian training relates to European standards and avoid unnecessary duplications.

To facilitate information sharing, the Commission also deployed a wiki website⁽¹⁷⁾ specifically for sharing information on Ukrainian qualifications and assessment results among Member States. However, this instrument was not widely accepted. Apart from Member States' presentations uploaded by the Commission Member States made little use of the wiki and did not share any further assessments.

3.9. EU activity to enhance transparency of Ukrainian qualifications and support recognition

To complement the exchange of information between Member States the EU put in place measures to increase the transparency of Ukrainian qualifications.

To facilitate the comparison of levels of qualifications the Commission published a **report comparing the European Qualifications Framework and the Ukrainian national qualifications framework** in February 2023. ⁽¹⁸⁾

The **European Training Foundation** (ETF) also made significant progress since the launch of its **Ukraine Resource Hub** ⁽¹⁹⁾. ETF has focused on expanding the information in the hub and promoting it to Member States' and Ukrainian users, including through social media. The resource hub provides key information about Ukraine's education system, guidance in understanding and recognising all types of Ukrainian qualifications, recognising study periods, and guiding Ukrainians to education, further learning, and employment opportunities. Between March 2022 and January 2023, the Ukraine Resource Hub was visited around 21,000 times. Most visits came from Germany (37%), Ukraine (10%) and Poland (5%).

In April 2022, the Commission presented a dedicated call of the **Technical Support Instrument** for Ukraine, to which Member States could apply for assistance. The assistance can cover a wide range of public administrations needs in charge of welcoming and integrating those fleeing the war in Ukraine. As a result, three Member States (FR, PL, IT) will receive technical support provided by the OECD, the Council of Europe and the IOM in the field of recognition of qualifications and labour market inclusion. Particularly the Polish project, to be delivered in June 2023, may be beneficial for other Member States, as it focuses on how a selected number of Ukrainian qualifications relate to training standards of Directive 2005/36/EC.

16 Austria: 6, Estonia: 8, Finland: 8, France: 8, Germany: 8, Hungary: 9, Italy: 10, Latvia: 6, Lithuania: 10, Luxembourg: 3, Malta: 8, Netherlands: 8, Poland: 8, Portugal: 9, Romania: 9, Slovenia: 8, Spain: 7, Sweden: 6, Slovakia: 7.

17 <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/wikis/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=1173685929>

18 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10513>

19 <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/education-and-work-information-ukrainians-and-eu-countries>

4. Reactions by Member States and stakeholders

The Commission Recommendation gave a strong signal to Member States and encouraged them to take the necessary measures. To put it in words of Member State's representatives:

—“—

The guidance outlined the role of national competent authorities and the expectation that Member States should make every effort to facilitate the recognition of Ukrainian professional qualifications.

—”—

(Ireland)

—“—

We appreciated the approval or sort of 'green light' from the Commission, for the processes that were partially already being developed to make recognition processes easier.

—”—

(Slovakia)

—“—

[...] a clear position from the Commission was helpful in order to develop a national position and action on this issue.

—”—

(France)

The Recommendation was generally well-received by stakeholders, with some even replicating its messages and encouraging their members to follow suit. For example, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) adopted its own recommendation to facilitate the recognition of Ukrainian lawyers.

The approach taken by the Commission for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered the reaction and discussion of how to tackle recognition applications from other third country nationals, given there are no harmonized rules at EU-level in this domain.

Some stakeholders shared similar reflections. While they appreciated the usefulness of the Recommendation due to its concrete and practical examples of how competent authorities should deal with the situation, they regretted that it only applied to people under temporary protection and not to other third-country nationals in a similar situation. They reported facing difficulties in distinguishing between people fleeing from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and others who are treated less favourably. Some Member States, including NL and ES, also raised concerns about how to justify preferential treatment given to people fleeing from Ukraine over other third-country nationals.

In addition to the benefits of facilitating the recognition of qualifications of people enjoying temporary protection, this effort can also address the significant skills shortages in various industries throughout the EU. This has become increasingly pressing, as highlighted by the President of the European Commission in her State of the Union Address. To become a more attractive destination for highly and low skilled workers from third countries, the Commission plans to propose measures that will facilitate the recognition of qualifications for third country nationals. The Commission aims to build upon the experience and expertise gained through the implementation of Recommendation (EU) 2022/554.

ANNEX I.

Sources

- Results of the surveys launched to the Group of Coordinators for the recognition of professional qualifications in May 2022, September 2022 and January 2023;
- Information provided by DG REFORM on the projects funded by the Technical Support Instrument within the dedicated call for Ukraine;
- Minutes and presentations of the Taskforce meetings on the implementation of Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 held between March and September 2022
- Country fiches developed by the European Labour Authority with an overview of the legal frameworks adopted to implement the Temporary Protection Directive in the field of employment and social security: <https://www.ela.europa.eu/en/support-people-fleeing-ukraine>
- Data provided by the European Training Foundation on the resource hub;
- Data provided by the Council of Europe on the use of the European Qualifications Passport for refugees;
- Data provided by DG DGT on the use of the eTranslation tool;
- Data provided by the Ukrainian Ministry of Science and Education on the use of Ukrainian qualifications database (EDEBO);
- Recommendation/position paper of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) on the recognition of qualifications of Ukrainian lawyers: https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/INTERNATIONAL_LEGAL_SERVICES/ILS_Position_papers/EN_ILS_20220624_CCBE-recommendation-on-qualifications-of-Ukrainian-lawyers.pdf
- OECD report on 'What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine: <https://www.oecd.org/ukraine-hub/policy-responses/what-we-know-about-the-skills-and-early-labour-market-outcomes-of-refugees-from-ukraine-c7e694aa/>
- Operational Data Portal of UNHCR on the Ukraine refugee situation: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>
- UNHCR 'Refugees from Ukraine in Europe': https://products.hiu.state.gov/Ukraine_RefugeesinEurope_2023Jan11_HIU_U2700.pdf
- Migration Policy Institute Europe, 'Displaced Ukrainians in European Labour Markets: Leveraging innovations for more inclusive integration', May 2023: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpie_ukrainians-europe-labour-markets_final.pdf
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ANNEX II.

National measures on recognition procedures

Belgium	Competent authorities (e.g. NARIC Vlanderen) take into account that a displaced person from Ukraine might not be able to submit all supporting documents and is more flexible. Just one piece of evidence is required to prove completed education in Ukraine. Since 4 March 2022, beneficiaries of temporary protection together with refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are exempted from paying any procedural fees related to recognition.
Czechia	Legal Act No. 66/2022 included an exception that states that individuals fleeing from Ukraine, can document their education by an affidavit within the first six months after obtaining temporary protection. After six months, they need to explain the reason why they cannot properly document their qualifications. The criminal record can be replaced by a declaration of honour if necessary.
Germany	All authorities were asked to efficiently process the requests and only require indispensable documents. Other forms of proof as opposed to original documents are accepted.
Hungary	Applicants enjoying temporary protection are exempted from paying any application fees. On the basis of the findings of previous recognition procedures, when the circumstances are the same and there are no serious doubts about equivalence, in-depths assessment can be dropped. Competent authorities employed additional staff (Ukrainian speaking credential evaluators), to be able to absorb and handle the increased number of applications as quickly as possible and facilitate communication. Alternative means of proof are accepted.
Italy	Applicants requesting a European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (requirement to be able to work on a temporary basis) are not required to pay any fee related to the procedure.
Ireland	A financial bursary available to applicants for registration with Refugee or Temporary Protection Status, to assist them in the acquisition of the required documentation and enable the submission of a complete file
Latvia	The Law on Support to Ukrainian Civilians provides that competent authorities for the recognition of professional qualifications can waive the obligation to request all documents needed for the purposes of recognition. At first, this exemption applied only for certain professions (healthcare staff & teachers). As of May 2022, it is applicable to all professions (Article 133 of the May Amendments to the Law on Support to Ukrainian Civilians).
Lithuania	Competent authorities agreed by consensus to prioritize applications of people fleeing from Ukraine over other third country nationals' applications and shortened the deadline to issue a decision from 90 days to 30 days if possible. Alternative means of proof are accepted. On 16 March 2022 an amendment to the Government Resolution on the Establishment and Application of State Language Proficiency Categories was adopted. It stipulates that foreigners who have been granted temporary protection in Lithuania will be exempted from the requirement to speak the official language for two years if they want to undertake their work for which the knowledge of the Lithuanian language is required. To speed up the recognition of professional qualifications, was agreed with the academic recognition authority that they will provide the competent authorities with a recommendation on the equivalence of diplomas rather than an official letter. This shortens the submission period from 1 month to 10 days. It was also agreed that the application for academic recognition will not be completed by the person himself, but rather by the institution recognizing the professional qualifications.
Poland	Competent authorities original documents whenever possible, however, in the meantime, alternative means of proof are accepted. The established deadline is 6 months after the end of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Until then, incomplete applications are accepted.

Portugal	Portugal adopted Decree Law n. 24 on 11 March 2022 establishing exceptional measures to ensure an effective and swift process. It simplified the procedure for recognition by exempting beneficiaries of temporary protection from legalisation formalities when handling in documents issued by foreign entities and authentication requirements of documents translated into Portuguese. Applicants are also exempted from paying any fees. The Decree-also contains a list of professions where the competent Portuguese authorities have already recognised, in previous procedures, Ukrainian professional qualifications, there being no serious doubts as to the equivalence between these qualifications and Portuguese qualifications.
Romania	Romania adopted Emergency Ordinance no. 20/7 March 2022 regarding the modification and completion of some normative acts, as well as for the establishment of some support measures and humanitarian assistance and Emergency Ordinance no 100 from 29 June 29 2022 regarding the approval and the implementation of the National Plan of measures regarding the protection and inclusion of displaced persons from Ukraine, beneficiaries of temporary protection in Romania, as well as for the modification and completion of some normative acts. Among other facilitation measures, it allows persons enjoying temporary protection to work replacing the required documentation with a declaration of responsibility with temporary validity. Competent authorities (e.g. Romanian ENIC-NARIC) take into account that a displaced person from Ukraine might not be able to submit all supporting documents and is more flexible, asking only for copies of documents and issuing a provisional certificate. Applicants are also exempted from paying any fees.
Slovakia	An 'apostille' for educational documents is no longer required. Instead, authorities can directly contact Ukrainian competent authorities or visit relevant databases to verify the authenticity of qualifications if needed. An affidavit is accepted if the documents cannot be presented and the data is verifiable, i.e. through the relevant databases or by confirmations from responsible bodies in Ukraine.
Spain	Royal Decree-Law 6/2022 adopted on 29 March 2022 introduced urgent measures within the framework of the National Response Plan to the economic and social consequences of the war in Ukraine. It amended Royal Decree 104/1988 of 29 January 1988 to allow persons enjoying temporary protection to exceptionally, and for the purposes of initiating the recognition procedure as soon as possible, replace the required documentation with a declaration of responsibility with temporary validity.

ANNEX III.

Measures to facilitate the exercise of certain professions (healthcare and/or teaching) procedures

Austria introduced certain flexibility to access the profession of teacher. Ukrainian qualified teachers have the possibility to go through an assessment by the ENIC NARIC instead of through a full recognition procedure. On the basis of a positive assessment of ENIC NARIC, a so called “Sondervertrag” (special employment contract) can be concluded, which gives access to work at a public school in Austria for a fixed amount of time.

Belgium (Flanders) adapted the entry requirements to the profession of teaching and other categories of personnel in education in a special Ukraine Urgence Decree 2. As of 1 June 2022, teaching professionals can be appointed and financed by the Flemish government, even if the equivalence declaration of their diploma by NARIC is still pending. Appointments are possible in a few specific posts (post of “childcare worker”, posts of the category of “technical and administrative personnel” and “teaching staff”) under a certificate of competence “other” with the applicable salary scale. Appointments to posts of the category of “support staff” and the “support and policymaking staff” are also possible. The derogation does not apply to those appointed to a post relating to a regulated health profession under the EU 2005/36 guideline.

Czechia has put in place special rules addressed to midwives and nurses responsible for general care. Given most Ukrainian trainings for these professions do not meet the European training standards, Czechia allows them to exercise the profession without prior recognition, but only under direct supervision and for a fixed period. For 5-6 months they gain practical experience, which serves them as a training or upskilling programme. After successfully passing the so called ‘approbation examination’, they can apply for formal recognition. For doctors, in accordance with the Czech Law (§ 36 paragraph 2 letter a) of Act No. 95/2004 Coll. it is possible to apply without prior recognition of qualifications to a so called „Long term internship” to practice as a doctor for the purpose of gaining professional/practical experience for a fixed period (1 year period, 3 years in total) under the direct professional guidance of a doctor. This type of internship takes place at a hospital.

Ukrainian health professionals in **France** can request temporary authorisations to practice in public or private health establishments. The same procedure provided for any practitioner with a non-EU diploma who has refugee status is applicable. To have access to the status of “associate practitioner”, people enjoying temporary protection have to commit to take an exam (“Epreuves de verification de connaissances – EVC”) at the next available session. If they succeed, they have full access to the profession.

In **Finland** it is allowed to temporarily hire persons who don’t meet the statutory qualification requirements. These provisions make it possible for providers of education to hire persons with teacher education from Ukraine. Assistant level positions are not regulated in Finland. According to the instructions published on the website of the Finnish National Agency for Education, municipalities should investigate whether there are any teachers or others with pedagogical training among the Ukrainian guardians. Where possible, these may be recruited as school attendance counsellors or support teachers.

In **Hungary**, healthcare professionals can start working without recognition of their qualifications, but in the meantime, they are obliged to start with the recognition procedure. Government Decree No. 121/2022 entitles those holding a diploma in healthcare (e.g. medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses) issued in Ukraine, to start working at Hungarian medical service providers before the recognition procedure is over. However, they can only work at Hungarian medical service providers (both public and private) under supervision. The service provider must appoint a supervisor to them until the recognition procedure is over.

Italy reported the adoption of a Decree (Decree 21/2022) containing a derogation from the recognition regime for Ukrainian health professionals, who are holders of a European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. This derogation will apply until 4th March 2023 and will allow Ukrainian health professionals who obtained diplomas in Ukraine (or other foreign countries) to pursue their activity on a temporary basis in private and public centres/hospitals.

Austria introduced certain flexibility to access the profession of teacher. Ukrainian qualified teachers have the possibility to go through an assessment by the ENIC NARIC instead of through a full recognition procedure. On the basis of a positive assessment of ENIC NARIC, a so called “Sondervertrag” (special employment contract) can be concluded, which gives access to work at a public school in Austria for a fixed amount of time.

Ireland introduced a tailored registration process for qualified Ukrainian teachers (), developed by the competent authority in Ireland, the 'Teaching Council'. To support the registration of qualified Ukrainian teachers granted temporary protection, the Council has modified the sequencing of processes in the registration process. The vetting and police clearance processes related to this profession have also been adjusted to ensure that standards are maintained while taking account of the unique situation in Ukraine.

Latvia applies the regime of temporary provision of services for professionals fleeing Ukraine. Temporary provision of services is allowed, if the person can prove that his/her qualifications ('specialist certificate') are valid. However, he/she can only practice under supervision of a Latvian professional with professional experience of at least 5 years. If the person cannot provide a valid certificate but is qualified, an aptitude test is applied. If the result is successful, the temporary provision of services under supervision is possible.

In **Lithuania**, Ukrainian citizens who have acquired the professional qualification of teachers in Ukraine can work as teaching assistants in schools. Teaching professionals benefit from an exception introduced by a legislative amendment adopted on 16 March 2022 in the Government Resolution on the Establishment and Application of State Language Proficiency Categories. It stipulates that foreigners who have been granted temporary protection in Lithuania will be exempted from the requirement to speak the official language for two years if they want to undertake the work for which the knowledge of the Lithuanian language is required. Healthcare professionals benefit from an exception introduced by a legislative amendment to the Licensing Rules (). Normally, medical professionals need to speak the Lithuanian language to be allowed to practice. Through this exception, professionals fleeing Ukraine can start working immediately and have one year to learn the language and provide the relevant certificate to that effect.

The **Netherlands** adopted new legislation () to support education for children from Ukraine, which entered into force on 14 July 2022. As part of this legislation, teachers for primary education from Ukraine may apply for a temporary recognition (up to 2 years) to teach children from Ukraine in temporary education facilities.

Poland introduced a simplified procedure for healthcare professions (doctors, dentists, paramedics, nurses, midwives) and teachers. Ukrainian qualified professionals can go through a fast-track procedure and apply for a temporary and conditional right to practice in Poland for a maximum period of 5 years, but this only applies to a specific range of activities (). For teachers, diplomas issued by Ukrainian universities by 20 June 2006 are automatically recognized as equivalent to Polish diplomas under the Prague Convention. Diplomas issued after this date are subject to recognition in accordance with the rules for academic recognition. Regulations have been implemented to enable the employment of teaching assistants. Moreover, it is possible to hire teachers without formal recognition of qualifications – upon the decision of the head of the school after obtaining the consent of the body exercising pedagogical supervision over the school (local education authority).

Portugal accommodated the rules for pharmacists and dentists, but not for other medical professions (e.g. nurses). Ukrainian pharmacists can exercise a specific range of activities, under the supervision of a Portuguese pharmacist. For dentists, the Portuguese Dental Association (OMD) offers a similar solution. Ukrainian qualified dentists benefitting from temporary protection can be admitted on a provisional/temporary basis and under the supervised practice of a host professional.

Romania adopted an Emergency Government Ordinance no 20/2022, which foresees that Ukrainian citizens who have legally entered the territory of Romania and who do not request asylum in accordance with the Law no. 122/2006 can be employed without the working permit. The current legislation of Ministry of Health allows applicants who hold a recognized university degree in medicine to exercise the profession with limited competences, under direct supervision.

Slovakia implemented a special temporary professional internship for healthcare professions that allows the Ukrainian professionals to practice their profession under supervision, provided they can prove their qualification (by documents or through databases). Only the evidence of formal qualifications (diploma) is recognized in a fast-track process based on previous recognition proceedings. The diploma recognition normally would not allow them to practice profession yet. Since 2022, they can enter the internship for up to 18 months. They may use the time to prepare for the supplementary examination which would allow them to have their full professional qualification recognized and practice the profession independently. The internship is available both at hospitals and clinics.

In **Slovenia**, the Medical Chamber offers help to licensed medical doctors or dental practitioners from Ukraine to include them in the Slovene medical system. One of their initiatives is an open call for Ukrainian doctors to help in a pro bono clinic in Ljubljana ().

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