

**Situation analysis
of early childhood education and care services
in support of Ukrainian refugees across EU
Member States**

Second Synthesis Report | June 2023

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Country Abbreviations

<u>Code</u>	<u>Country</u>
AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czechia
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MD	Moldova
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
UA	Ukraine

Introduction

In May 2022, UNICEF commissioned Ecorys to carry out a Situation Analysis of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in support of Ukrainian refugees across EU member states. The research aims to provide insights to country level responses to the crisis, and to inform ongoing actions regarding ECEC provision for Ukrainian refugee children. The work is being carried out in close cooperation with the European Commission (DG EAC) and the EU Working Group on ECEC, who have provided invaluable support.

Background context

The Russian Federation military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 represents a refugee crisis of a scale unseen in Europe since the second World War. One year on from the start of the conflict, more than 8 million Ukrainian refugees are recorded across Europe¹, representing almost one fifth of the Ukrainian population², while border crossings from Ukraine stand at over 10 million³. Although Europe has experienced previous refugee crises over the past decade, the war in Ukraine has a specific character. Due to the state of Martial Law, the vast majority of refugees entering Europe have been women and children, and young children are over-represented within this demographic. Specifically, of the 2 million Ukrainian refugee children arriving in the EU since the start of the invasion, as many as 20% are estimated to be under the age of 6⁴. This signifies a high number of children requiring care and education to help their early development and provide emotional and psychosocial support, framed by the context of trauma and separation arising from the military conflict.

In responding to the crisis, the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 resulted in new emergency legislation in all countries within the EU27 and Moldova through the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD). This afforded displaced persons from Ukraine with entitlements for residency, access to employment, access to education and social protection, and came into effect on 4 March 2022⁵. The operational guidelines for the Directive encourage Member States to support access to ECEC for Ukrainian refugees

¹ [Refugees Operational Data Portal by UNHCR](#)

² Centre for Research & Analysis of Migration (2023), [Current migration flows from Ukraine](#)

³ UNHCR data. Online: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> [Viewed: 01.08.22]

⁴ ECEC WG - Special meeting for Ukraine –5 April 2022

⁵ 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 introducing temporary protection: EUR-Lex - 32022D0382 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022XC0321%2803%29&qid=1647940863274>

under the same conditions as their nationals⁶. To date, some 4.8 million Ukrainians have registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in host countries⁷.

The Commission's Communication from 23 March 2022: "Welcoming those fleeing war in Ukraine: Readyng Europe to meet the needs" also includes a central focus on education and prioritizing children's needs. This was followed by the publication of policy guidance to support implementation⁸, and a set of key principles and practices⁹. These arrangements are fast evolving and have implications for how host countries in the region enact and implement the provision of ECEC for young Ukrainian children.

Emerging findings from cycle 1

Carried out between June and July 2022, the first cycle of research provided insights to the first steps undertaken by EU Member States and Moldova to mobilise and respond to secure access to high quality ECEC services for Ukrainian refugee children and their families¹⁰. Overall, this report concluded that an impressive range of ECEC programmes, frameworks and tools has been developed across Europe, with strong cross-sectoral collaboration. It noted that the situation has presented opportunities by:

- challenging public authorities and NGOs to collaborate and to 'think outside of the box' in their approach towards planning ECEC provision, initiating new partnerships and delivery models.
- stress-testing national ECEC systems and prompting action on pre-existing capacity issues.
- leveraging additional investments for ECEC, with potential benefits for the wider system.

The cycle 1 research provided insights to factors that have enabled the ECEC response. It showed that:

⁶ Communication from the Commission on Operational guidelines for the implementation of Council implementing Decision 2022/382 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 introducing temporary protection 2022/C 126 I/01. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022XC0321%2803%29&qid=1647940863274>

⁷ [Refugees Operational Data Portal by UNHCR](#)

⁸ Ukraine refugees: Operational guidelines to support Member States in applying the Temporary Protection Directive (europa.eu); and Policy guidance on supporting the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in education: considerations, key principles and practices (schooleducationgateway.eu)

⁹ European Commission (2022) Supporting the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in education: considerations, key principles and practices for the school year 2022-2023.

<https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/publications/practical-manual-on-refugees.htm>

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.ecorys.com/sites/default/files/2023-03/Ecorys%20cycle%201%20synthesis%20report%20-%20ECEC%20situation%20analysis.pdf>

- no one-size-fits-all, and solutions must be tailored to the circumstances in each country, according to refugee numbers and status, system capacity, and the organisation of decision-making between national and sub-national levels and between 0-3 and 3-6 age ranges.
- countries adopting a whole-system approach towards the inclusion of migrant children and families in ECEC provision reported adjusting more rapidly. Similarly, those taking prior systemic actions on access and inclusion (e.g. during the Syrian refugee crisis) were often better prepared.
- hallmarks of effective refugee education are present among the 28 countries. These include multiagency and cross-sectoral solutions to meet refugee families' housing, health and education needs in tandem; intercultural education and language learning, and workforce development measures alongside the primary focus on access and enrolments in ECEC.

Despite best efforts, however, the scale of the ongoing challenge is clear:

- the situation remains in a state of flux, and the degree of permanency is not known. Many families are still holding out to return to Ukraine, and this has already been possible in some cases.
- despite a strong legislative response at EU level, driven by the Temporary Protection Directive, gaps exist between policy and practice in many countries. This is due to a lack of available ECEC services, proof of status requirements, and timescales for implementing emergency legislation.
- reflecting these issues, the inclusion of Ukrainian children in ECEC systems is currently uneven across Europe.

A central message was that long-term preparedness must be the end goal. Recognising and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of refugee children and their families and the skills and expertise they contribute is essential to prevent stigmatization and to look beyond the emergency context.

About this report

This report contains the interim findings following the second cycle of data collection and analysis from the 27 EU member states and Moldova between November 2022 and January 2023. This work was guided by an Analytical Framework examining ECEC in the context of the Ukraine crisis response (see Appendix 1¹⁷). Research was carried out by native language speakers in each country, involving a combination of desk research and

¹⁷ The framework was updated following the cycle 1 research to reflect priority topics for cycle 2.

key stakeholder consultations, before undergoing a thematic synthesis by the core study team. The findings provide a snapshot of the situation in January 2023 and should be interpreted in that context.

The cycle 2 data collection aimed to build upon and update the evidence gathered in cycle 1, with a focus on new and emerging developments not covered during the previous fieldwork period. A full account of the cycle 1 mapping and findings can be found in the corresponding report and summary. All outputs from the study are available on a web page hosted by Ecorys at the following address:

<https://www.ecorys.com/moldova/our-work/monitoring-provision-early-childhood-and-care-ecec-services-ukrainian-refugee>

Report structure

This report is thematic in nature and is divided into four main sections: an overview of key developments regarding the Ukrainian migration context, followed by two key findings chapters, grouped under responses that expand access to quality ECEC and responses that support integration through ECEC in host communities. These two main chapters are also in harmony with UNICEF's policy briefs on "[What is needed to expand early childhood education and care for Ukraine's refugee children](#)"¹² and "[How to integrate Ukraine's refugee children through early childhood education and care](#)"¹³. The final section of the report is a conclusion with a set of reflections and key policy messages.

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2.0 Part A: Expanding Access to Quality ECEC	3.0 Part B: Support for Integration through ECEC
2.1 'Back to School': ECEC enrolment	3.1 Refugee integration and community cohesion
2.2 Non-formal ECEC solutions	3.2 Support for teachers
2.3 Digital solutions	3.3 Mobilizing specialist support
4.0 Conclusions and recommendations	

¹² Please see: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1691-building-bright-futures-what-is-needed-to-expand-early-childhood-education-and-care-for-ukraines-refugee-children.html>

¹³ Ibid. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1693-building-bright-futures-how-to-integrate-ukraines-refugee-children-through-early-childhood-education-and-care.html>

1.0

Update on the Ukrainian refugee situation



1.0 Update on the Ukrainian refugee situation

In February 2023, more than 8 million Ukrainian refugees were recorded across Europe (UNHCR, 2023)¹⁴, which is about 19% of the total Ukrainian population (IOM, 2023)¹⁵. Out of the 8 million, 4.8 million have registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in host countries (UNHCR, 2023). The countries with the largest number of Ukrainian refugees are Poland (1.5 million), Germany (800 thousand) and Czech Republic (485 thousand). Moldova has the highest number of refugees per capita, having received 100 thousand refugees. The situation at the Ukrainian border crossing remains intense, albeit less so than at the outbreak of the crisis. Around 10 million people have crossed the border from April to December 2022, with families returning and crossing back again (IOM, 2023). In February 2023, the number of registered crossings had reduced to half of what this number was at the beginning of the outbreak in March 2022 (IOM, 2023).

It was estimated that factors such as the winter period, cold weather, a lack of electricity and water, as well as the destruction of critical infrastructure would impulse a new wave of refugees in the pre-winter period of 2022, which happened, but to a lesser extent than forecasted. In November and December 2022, there was a slight increase in refugee movements from Ukraine, but the figures have been lower than estimated and are decreasing (CRAM; 2023)¹⁶.

Country reports have revealed that there is still movement among refugees inside the EU and from Moldova towards the EU. Neighboring countries are used mostly as a temporary platform to migrate further away or as a short-term stay before returning home. It is still unclear what the critical factors are that propel refugees to move from one country into another, but country reports show that Ukrainian families often prefer to leave their countries of initial stay. A situation analysis¹⁷ concerning refugees in 6 EU Member States (Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Czechia, Belgium and Spain) and Moldova shows that accommodation and income are the main concerns of Ukrainian refugees. The same study also revealed that about 60% of refugees decided to remain in their host countries for an undecided period, while 20% anticipate returning to Ukraine and 10% wish to move on to another country¹⁸.

It is still unclear what the critical factors are that propel refugees to move from one country into another, but country reports show that Ukrainian families often prefer to leave their countries of initial stay.

¹⁴ [Refugees Operational Data Portal by UNHCR](#)

¹⁵ Centre for Research & Analysis of Migration (2023), [Current migration flows from Ukraine](#)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ [UNHCR, op. cit.](#)

¹⁸ Ibid.

The intensity of the Ukrainian refugee influx (during the period covered from November 2022 and January 2023) differs from country to country. As per the data collected in the country reports, the following trends provide an overview of dynamics and refugee movements inside the EU:

- **Poland, Moldova, Romania**, which are the countries with direct borders to Ukraine, remain the countries receiving the highest number of refugees. However, it appears that refugees do not necessarily intend to stay there and that there are high fluctuations in the number of refugees. Romania, for example, has been mostly used as a transition country since the start of the war, with about 3 million Ukrainians crossing the border and only about 100 thousand deciding to stay in the country.
- On the other hand, there are some countries that refugees are entering in large numbers with intentions to stay, coming either directly from Ukraine or relocating from other countries. These countries include **Germany** (constantly high numbers of arrivals) and **Italy** (with a more intense influx in the last months of 2022). In both cases, almost all refugees apply for temporary protection status. **Czechia** is one of the countries still receiving a significant influx of refugees, while also serving as a transition country, but there is no data on how many refugees intend to stay for a longer period and how many plan to go back or move on further. Some countries registered a positive influx in the winter months, with more people coming in during the period of cycle 2 compared to cycle 1 – **Austria** (with an increase of 18 thousand people), **Sweden**¹⁹, and **France**²⁰.
- Other countries received fewer refugees than in cycle 1, and fewer than expected – **Denmark, Estonia, Latvia**²¹, **Spain**²². Even lower rates were registered for **Belgium, Portugal, Croatia, Greece** and **Cyprus**. **Finland** and **Ireland** registered internal country movements, rather than increases in the overall number of refugees. **Malta** and **Slovakia** registered a negative influx of refugees.

There are no existing publications providing an overview of the situation of Ukrainian refugees across all EU countries and Moldova. In October 2022, the OECD published a study on *Forced displacement from and within Ukraine: Profiles, experiences, and*

¹⁹ In Sweden, the number of refugees increased, at the same time, the country adopted stricter migration policies, which might result in refugees preferring to return to Ukraine or move to other countries.

²⁰ About 5,000 new refugees entered France, and the country plans to renew the temporary protection order for 6 more months.

²¹ In Latvia, there is a slight increase, while the overall number remain low and temporary protection requests are limited.

²² In Spain, with slow increase in the last months (total 125 thousand).

*aspirations of affected population*²³. It was based on the results of a survey²⁴ that took place from April to August 2022 on a sample size of 3,932 respondents, where more than 80% of respondents were women aged between 18 and 44. The UNHCR conducted an “at crossing” Protection Profiling and Monitoring exercise in several countries (Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Poland and Moldova) during the period October 2022 to March 2023, to identify the key characteristics of Ukrainian refugees. The study was conducted on a sample of 4,800 refugees and found that of the 50 thousand interviewed households²⁵ about 86% of household members are women and children²⁶.

According to the OECD study, the top three preferred destination countries for refugees are **Germany, Czechia** and the **United Kingdom**. Around 68% of the interviewed refugees applied for temporary protection status at the place where the survey was taken, while others expressed that they would do so when reaching their destination country. When asked about sources of income, only 24% reported income from employment. The UNHCR study reports a similar share (28%) of employed refugees. In the OECD study, when asked about satisfaction with child education services, the vast majority of respondents (60%) were satisfied. The UNHCR report showed that about 70% of refugees intended to send their children to school. **A lack of knowledge of the local language and uncertainty about the future were stated as the main barriers to school attendance;** as will be explored in depth in the chapters that follow, our research arrived at similar findings regarding ECEC attendance.

²³ European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine: Profiles, experiences, and aspirations of affected populations](#)

²⁴ The EUAA and OECD's Survey of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine (SAM-UKR), the IOM General Population Survey Ukraine, the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Needs and Intention Surveys, and Google Trends.

²⁵ One member of each household was interviewed, representing 53 thousand households.

²⁶ [UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, UNHCR Operational Portal for the Ukraine Emergency](#)



2.0

Part A: Expanding Access to Quality ECEC

2.0 Part A: Expanding Access to Quality ECEC

2.1 'Back to school': ECEC enrolment

2.1.1 Forecast patterns in ECEC demand and enrolment

Throughout the spring and summer of 2022, the initial influx of Ukrainian refugees across the EU27 and Moldova was characterized by a distinctive demographic profile. As explained in the first synthesis report for this study²⁷, Ukrainian martial law meant that during the first cycle of research in the summer of 2022, the majority of Ukrainian refugees were women and children (for example in Estonia, where refugees were 76.9% female;²⁸ in Poland, where 90% of refugees were women and children;²⁹ and in Moldova, where 53% of refugees were documented to be children³⁰).

The sudden arrival of large populations of women and children posed a significant challenge for the education systems of host countries overall. Furthermore, early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems are viewed to be at an especially high risk of strain, both due to the high proportion of lone mothers with young children among Ukrainian refugees (many of whom would be reliant on ECEC services to join the labor market), and due to the chronic pre-existing shortages in places that tend to affect ECEC services disproportionately in comparison to primary and secondary education.³¹

Indeed, by the time of the first research cycle in June and July of 2022, the integration of young Ukrainian refugee children into host country ECEC systems was still not systematic, restricted by a range of factors. For example, bureaucratic red tape and bottlenecks in the official processes to apply for temporary protection status and residency in several host countries lengthened the time for Ukrainian refugees to be granted the right to stay and access social services. Additionally, many Ukrainian families maintained hopes of returning home soon due to early uncertainties about the longevity of the war, and subsequently delayed applying for residency and settling their children into mainstream ECEC services.³²

Given host countries' subsequent efforts to accelerate the registration processes for Ukrainian refugees, the persistence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the start of

²⁷ See Cycle 1 synthesis report, pg. 15

²⁸ Dziennik Gazeta Prawna. Demograficzny Portret Uchodźców. (2022). <https://edgp.gazetaprawna.pl/e-wydanie/58450,19-maja-2022/74537,Dziennik-Gazeta-Prawna.html/781811,Demograficzny-portret-uchodzcow.html>

²⁹ <https://sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/et/uudised/sotsiaalkindlustusamet-hakkas-avaldama-eesisse-saabunud-ukraina-sojapogenike-statistikat>

³⁰ Government of Moldova (2022), Comisia pentru Situatii Exceptionale a Republicii Moldova DISPOZITII lunare, available at: https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/dispozitia_cse_15_20.04.2022.pdf

³¹ See Cycle 1 synthesis report, pg. 31

³² See Cycle 1 synthesis report, pg. 15

the new school year in September 2022/23, it was widely expected that Ukrainian parents would adopt an increasingly longer-term perspective on their stays in host countries. This was understood to possibly strengthen their interest in joining the labor market and therefore prompt higher demand for ECEC services. There were also anticipations of a potential 'second wave' of Ukrainian refugees in November and December due to the nascent risks of remaining in Ukrainian conflict zones over the winter. As a result, stakeholders across several Member States had stressed the need for ECEC systems to prepare in advance for a post-summer surge in demand for places.³³

Yet in contrast to these expectations, **research conducted from November 2022 to January 2023 for the second cycle of this study has demonstrated that trends in Ukrainian refugee numbers and ECEC enrolments are not as homogeneous and predictable across the EU 27 and Moldova as envisioned over the summer.** The availability of data on the numbers of Ukrainian refugee children and their ECEC enrolments has fluctuated across countries, leading to improved insights on the ECEC-related needs of Ukrainian refugees in some cases, and to new information gaps in others. Furthermore, available data suggests that most countries have experienced slowdowns in the number of new Ukrainian arrivals crossing their borders and have not experienced a sudden surge in demand for ECEC services (see also Chapter 1 for details).

The second cycle of this study has demonstrated that trends in Ukrainian refugee numbers and ECEC enrolments are not as homogeneous and predictable across the EU 27 and Moldova as envisioned over the summer.

2.1.2 Availability of data on ECEC-aged Ukrainian children and their enrolment in ECEC

As demonstrated in Table 1 below, **the availability of age-disaggregated data on the number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children and their enrolment in ECEC continues to vary significantly across the EU27 and Moldova**, despite being essential for planning a well-informed refugee response.³⁴ Consistent data on children aged 0-6 continues to be available in Sweden, Portugal and Lithuania, and further disaggregated data on the numbers of Ukrainian children aged 0-3 and 3-6 continues to be available in Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia and Greece. Several countries also publish data on the numbers of Ukrainian children within proximal age ranges, including Estonia (ages 0-5), Spain (ages 0-4 and 5-9), and Ireland (ages 0-4 and 5-9). Notably, while disaggregated data on Ukrainian children in Finland could not be sourced during the first cycle of research in June and July, data on the number of Ukrainian children aged 1-6 was

³³ See Cycle 1 synthesis report, 'Conclusions and Recommendations'.

³⁴ See Cycle 1 report, pg. 29

available in September 2022. In contrast, some countries only provide data on the total number of Ukrainian refugees under 18 (DE, MD, RO, SK) and age-disaggregated data on the number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian refugees is still unavailable in multiple countries (AT, DE, DK, FR, HR, HU, IT, LV, MD, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK).

The availability of data on ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian children is similarly variable across countries. Estonia stands out as the only country for whom data on ECEC enrolment could be sourced for both the age groups 0-3 and 3-6, whereas data on enrolment for ages 0-6 is available in Spain and data on enrolment for ages 0-3 is available in France. Data on ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian children aged 3-6 was more commonly available (BG, CY, CZ, DE, MD, PL, RO, SK), and was newly-available compared to the previous cycle in both Cyprus and Germany. Furthermore, only a minority of countries provide enrolment data for proximal age ranges (Finland, ages 1-6; Lithuania, ages 2-6), with Latvia providing particularly granularized data on ECEC enrolment for children aged 1.5-2, 3-4 and 5-6. Notably, some countries with an earlier starting age for primary education have data on the number of ECEC-aged children attending primary schools (Ireland, ages 3-6; Luxembourg, ages 4-5; and the Netherlands, ages 4-12). Data on ECEC enrolment is still unavailable in several countries (AT, DK, HU, IT, MT, SE, SI).

Overall, while newly-available data for this research cycle was identified on Ukrainian child refugee numbers in Finland and on Ukrainian children's ECEC enrolment in Germany and Cyprus, there were also several cases where previously-available data could no longer be sourced. Due to a lack of engagement from informants in the previous cycle of research, for example, data on numbers of Ukrainian child refugees could not be sourced for Luxembourg and data on Ukrainian children's ECEC enrolment could not be sourced for Belgium, Greece, or Croatia. Additionally, there were several cases in which data that was available from press and government reports in the previous cycle could not be identified through similar sources in the current cycle (enrolment data for Belgium,³⁵ Hungary,³⁶ and France,³⁷ and data on numbers of Ukrainian children for Malta³⁸

³⁵ Enrolment data from last cycle sourced from King Baudouin Foundation (2022), 'Focus on Ukraine – in exile and going to school' (*Focus sur l'Ukraine - En exil et à l'école – au travers du regard des enfants*), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cs_0-pmxtjA

³⁶ In previous cycle, data came from an article: Huszti, I. and Halasz, N. (2022, April 25). *Az Ukrajnából menekült gyerekek hazai oktatása egyszerre mutatja a civilek összefogását és az állam tehetetlenségét*. [The education of the Ukrainian refugee children show the joint force of NGOs and the impotency of the government] Telex. <https://telex.hu/belfold/2022/04/25/ukrajna-menekultek-gyerekek-iskola-tankotelezettseg-onkentess-felzarkoztataskepzes-tanoda-orosz-ukran-haboru-oktatas>.

³⁷ Published data from previous cycle was from a press release on 27 May: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/accueil-des-enfants-ukrainiens-l-ecole-point-de-situation-au-27-mai-2022-341378>

³⁸ Previous data on % of Ukrainian refugees under 14 was not from publicly-available data, but from the press: Malta Today (20 June 2022), War crisis: 1,000 Ukrainians receive temporary protection in Malta, available at https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/117406/war_crisis_1000_ukrainians_receive_temporary_protection_in_malta#.Yr1VaHZBw2w

and Italy³⁹). Finally, both France and Italy opted to cease the regular publication of data on numbers of Ukrainian refugees in May 2022. Such developments may potentially signal a de-prioritization of efforts to monitor the country-wide situation for Ukrainian refugees and a loss of momentum following the initial refugee influx.

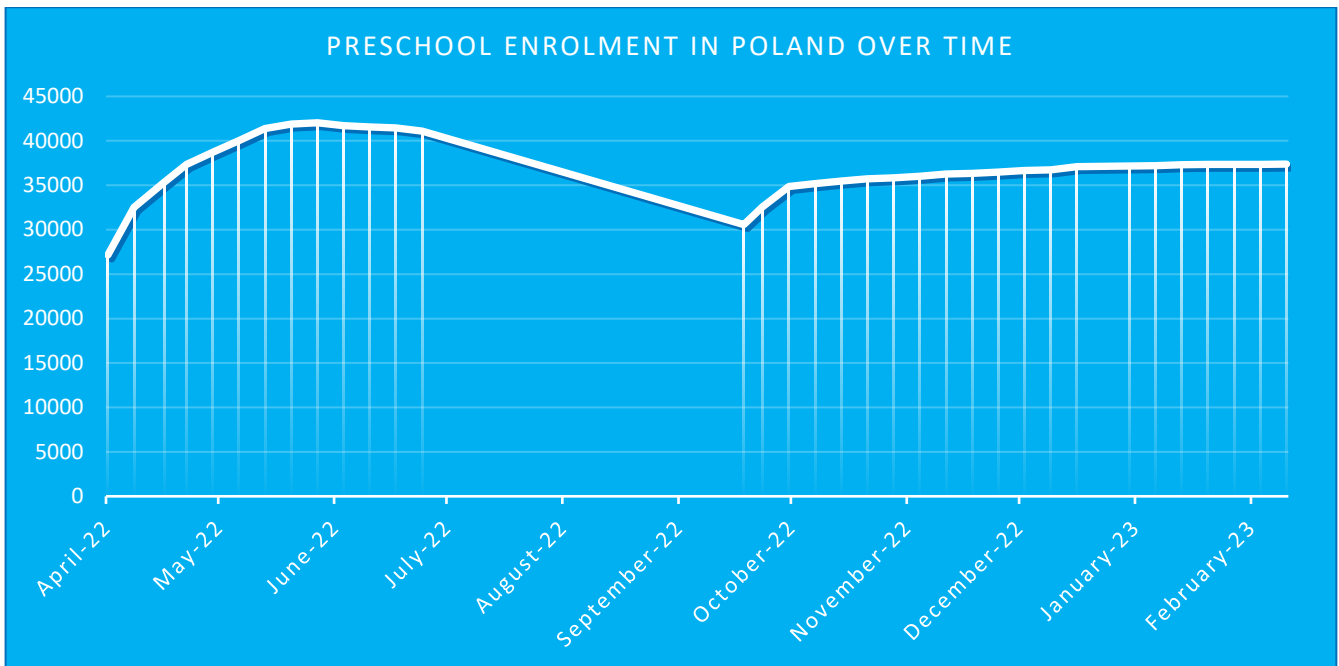
Case example: fluctuations in ECEC enrolment in Poland

Poland has collected data on Ukrainian refugees' ECEC enrolment on a weekly basis starting end of March 2022. The data concerns three types of preschool education facilities – kindergartens (pl. *przedszkola*), kindergarten points (pl. *punkty przedszkolne*) and preschool education teams (pl. *zespoły wychowania przedszkolnego*). All of these ECEC services are formal provisions for children aged 3-6, regulated by law, although they differ in form. For example, kindergarten is a space that children attend full-time, while kindergarten points usually operate part-time, with children coming for few hours a day, every day. A preschool education unit is similarly part-time, but it usually operates only on selected days of the week (for example, every Monday and Wednesday)⁴⁰. An overwhelming majority of Ukrainian refugee children enrolled in Polish ECEC attend kindergartens; a few hundred attend kindergarten points and very few participate in preschool education teams.

The data in Polish ECEC enrolment shows a rapid increase in the number of children enrolled in ECEC until mid-May 2022, which is when the increasing trend slowed down to eventually reach 42,032 enrolled children at its peak. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below. In June 2022, the number of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC started slowly decreasing, which was expected considering the summer holiday period. The data for the new school year showed a decreased enrolment with 30,577 children recorded on 21 September 2022. A sharper increase in numbers was again observed until early-October (with an addition of over 2,000 children each week). But, from then on, the increase has been gradual with the numbers stabilizing around December 2022 and plateauing mid-January-early February at around 37,300 children enrolled. It is difficult to speculate the reasons for this: a prediction could be related to seasonal fluctuations, i.e. the winter season. Some Ukrainians may have feared difficulties with heating in Ukraine (as a result of energy deficits) and fled Ukraine across intervals in autumn, with the intention to stay in Poland for the winter season and come back to Ukraine once winter is over.

³⁹ Published data from previous cycle was from a published gov't report: https://www.mior.gov.it/documents/20182/6740601/m_pi.AOODPIT.REGISTRO+UFFICIALE%28U%29.0000381.04-03-2022.pdf/7e8cc387-b753-1ca7-f466-2d3f15ede33b?version=1.0&t=1646642414348

⁴⁰ It should be noted that ECEC in Poland is optional for 3–5-year-olds, and is obligatory only for 6-year-olds. Since 2017-2018, children aged 3-5 are legally entitled to preschool education, i.e. each child is entitled to have a place in a pre-primary setting in his/her community. While the State is obliged to secure access for each child aged 3–5-year-old, attendance is not obligatory.

Figure 1 **Preschool⁴⁷ enrolment in Poland over time**

Source: Data compiled from Ministry of Education and Science, available [here](#) and elaborated by Ecorys

⁴⁷ Data for “preschool enrolment” is presented cumulatively for all ECEC forms, encompassing kindergartens, kindergartens points and preschool education teams.

Table 1: Number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian refugees in host countries and enrolled in ECEC, and trends between Cycle 1 (June – August 2022) and Cycle 2 (November 2022-January 2023)

Country	Number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children in MS	Demographic trends in refugee influx in C2 vs C1	Number of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC	ECEC enrolment trends of Ukrainian children in C2 vs C1
AT – Austria	No national-level data	-	No data	-
BE – Belgium	<u>12/01/2023</u> : 6,477 children aged 0-6 (2,990 aged 0-2; 3,457 aged 3-6)	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	No official data since last cycle	-
BG – Bulgaria	<u>14/12/2022</u> : 17,195 children aged 0-6 (7,612 aged 0-3; 9,583 aged 4-6)	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Kindergarten admissions (ages 4-6): 84 in 2021/22 school year; 220 at start of 2022/23 school year; 512 by <u>12/2022</u> .	Increasing, but low – estimated enrolment rate of 2%
CY – Cyprus	<u>18/12/2022</u> : 1,887 aged 0-6 (881 aged 0-3; 1,006 aged 3-6)	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	ECEC enrolments (ages 3-6): 178 as of <u>07/11/2022</u>	No evidence due to lack of enrolment data from previous cycle.
CZ – Czechia	<u>07/12/2022</u> : 35,041 aged 0-6 (14,603 aged 0-3; 20,438 aged 3-6). ⁴²	-	Enrolments in preschool ages 3-6: 7,262 children as of <u>10/12/2022</u> .	Increase in enrolment rate of Ukrainian children from 19.1% in the 2021/22 school year to 34% in 2022/23.

⁴² Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic - Statistika v souvislosti s válkou na Ukrajině – archiv - Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky (<https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/statistika-v-souvislosti-s-vaalkou-na-ukrajine-archiv.aspx?q=Y2hudW09MQ%3d%3d>)

Country	Number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children in MS	Demographic trends in refugee influx in C2 vs C1	Number of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC	ECEC enrolment trends of Ukrainian children in C2 vs C1
DE – Germany	Estimated 95,000 children aged 0-6 as of December 2022	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Estimated rate of enrolment in <i>Krippe</i> ⁴³ or <i>KITA</i> (day-care centres): 22% aged 0-3; 49% aged 3-6	No precise rate, but anecdotal evidence that the enrolment rate is comparatively high vs other EU countries.
DK – Denmark	No national-level data	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	No data (only available from primary school onwards)	Downward trend in some municipalities (anecdotal), and increased demand in others.
EE – Estonia	<u>16/12/2022</u> : 5,951 aged 0-5	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Enrolments in preschool: 762 aged 0-3; 1,224 aged 4-6 as of <u>19/12/2022</u>	Increase in enrolments
EL – Greece	<u>30/01/2023</u> : 2,383 aged 0-6 (879 aged 0-3; 1,504 aged 3-6) ⁴⁴	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	No data	-
ES – Spain	<u>11/30/2022</u> : 11,976 aged 0-4; 16,603 aged 5-9.	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Enrolments in ECEC for 2022/23, ages 0-6: 5,612 as of <u>27/12/2022</u>	Slight increase in enrolments.
FI – Finland	<u>05/09/2023</u> : 3,675 aged 1-6.	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Enrolments in pre-primary education (aged 1-6): 299 as of 12/09/2022.	Increase in enrolments (overall slow).

⁴³ In Germany, *Krippe* are for children under 3 years of age and *Kindertageseinrichtungen/Kindergarten (kurz: Kita)* are mainly for kids between 3-6

⁴⁴ These numbers combine those under Temporary Protection (2,673 aged 0-6) and those registered as asylum seekers (10 aged 0-6)

Country	Number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children in MS	Demographic trends in refugee influx in C2 vs C1	Number of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC	ECEC enrolment trends of Ukrainian children in C2 vs C1
FR – France	No data – last official statistics published in May	-	Enrolment in ECEC ages 0-3: 490 as of <u>09/2022</u> .	Not known due to lack of systematically published comparable data dating back to summer 2022.
HR – Croatia	No data	-	No data (anecdotal evidence only)	No significant increase in enrolment.
HU – Hungary	No data		No official data –anecdotal evidence only	Increase in enrolments (anecdotal)
IE – Ireland	<u>11/12/2022</u> : 4,367 aged 0-4; 6,689 aged 5-9. ⁴⁵	Steady increase in absolute numbers compared to summer.	Primary school enrolments aged 3-6: 2,180 as of <u>12/2022</u> ⁴⁶	Increase in enrolments
IT – Italy	No data – last official statistics on Ukrainian refugees published May 2022	-	No data	-
LT – Lithuania	<u>31/01/2023</u> : 6,173 aged 0-6 ⁴⁷	Slight decrease in absolute numbers compared to summer 2022.	Enrolments in preschool and pre-primary (ages 2-6): 2,692 as of <u>01/12/2022</u>	Stagnation; decrease from 2,731 enrolments aged 2-6 in previous cycle.

⁴⁵ Number of Ukrainian children allocated a Personal Public Service Number. Source: <https://data.cso.ie/>

⁴⁶ In Ireland, children begin primary school from age 4; preschool level education therefore falls under the primary school system.

⁴⁷ Source: Official Statistics Portal of Lithuania

Country	Number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children in MS	Demographic trends in refugee influx in C2 vs C1	Number of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC	ECEC enrolment trends of Ukrainian children in C2 vs C1
LU – Luxembourg	No data	-	Primary school enrolments aged 4-5: 116 as of <u>29/11/2022</u>	High enrolment rate (anecdotal) due to compulsory formal education for all Ukrainian arrivals.
LV – Latvia	No data		Enrolments in ECEC: 204 aged 1.5-2 years; 606 aged 3-4; 700 aged 5-6 as of <u>01/2023</u> . ⁴⁸	Increase in enrolments (anecdotal)
MD – Moldova	No official data: estimated 42,300 children aged 0-18	Slight increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Enrolments in preschool education: estimated 600 as of <u>10/2022</u>	Persistently low enrolment
MT – Malta	No age-disaggregated data.	Decrease in absolute numbers.	No official data; anecdotal evidence only.	Persistently low enrolment
NL – Netherlands	No age-disaggregated data		No age-disaggregated data. Primary school enrolments age 4-12: 11,000 as of <u>28/11/2022</u> .	Increase in enrolments (anecdotal)

48 Combines Ukrainian enrolments in private and municipal ECEC. Data is also available on the number of Ukrainian children in Latvian vs minority-language programmes, and children in special education programmes. Source: State Education Information System (VIIS)

Country	Number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children in MS	Demographic trends in refugee influx in C2 vs C1	Number of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC	ECEC enrolment trends of Ukrainian children in C2 vs C1
PL – Poland	No data	Fluctuations due to cross-border movement; overall stable numbers.	Enrolment in preschool education: 37,356 as of 13/02/2023 ⁴⁹	Estimated enrolment rate of 50% among Ukrainian children (anecdotal)
PT – Portugal	<u>12/2022</u> : 15,000 aged 0-6	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Enrolments in Jardins de Infância (aged 4-6): 707 as of <u>12/2022</u>	No increase in ECEC enrolment; estimated enrolment rate below 1/3
RO – Romania	No recent disaggregated data ; estimated 37,000 children under 18 as of <u>08/2022</u> .	Increase in absolute numbers; new 'wave' from 11/2022-12/2022.	Enrolments in preschool: estimated 1,000 as of <u>01/2023</u>	Minimal increase from 969 children reportedly enrolled in May 2022. ⁵⁰
SE – Sweden	<u>21/12/2022</u> : 5,585 aged 0-6 ⁵¹	Lower than expected increase in numbers.	No data	Lower enrolment than expected and prepared for.
SI – Slovenia	No data		No data (anecdotal evidence only)	No increase in enrolment.
SK - Slovakia	No disaggregated data. <u>09/02/2023</u> : 33,982 aged 0-17	Increase in absolute numbers; descending rate of increase.	Enrolments in kindergartens aged 3-6: 1,687 as of <u>11/2022</u> (decrease compared to 1,884 enrolments in <u>05/2022</u>). No public data on ages 0-3.	Decreasing enrolment.

⁴⁹ Ministry of Education and Science, <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/2711,uczniowie-uchodzcy-z-ukrainy>. Combined number for kindergartens (pl. *przedszkola*), kindergarten points (pl. *punkty przedszkolne*) and kindergarten education teams (pl. *zespoły wychowania przedszkolnego*).

⁵⁰ According to a survey of school inspectorates; data available in the Romanian National Statistical Office database (Tempo).

⁵¹ Source: Swedish Migration Agency, <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Statistik/Sokande-fran-Ukraina.html>

2.1.3 ECEC services for Ukrainian Children: trends in demand and enrolment

Although absolute numbers of Ukrainian refugees continued to increase in the majority of host countries across the EU27 and Moldova, Table 1 demonstrates that most countries for which data was available experienced a significant slowdown in the rate of newly-arriving Ukrainian refugees following the initial influx in the spring and summer (AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, PT, SK). In Sweden, for example, stakeholders shared that the numbers of newly-arriving Ukrainian refugees increased at a significantly lower rate than expected, leading to good preparedness and availability of spare ECEC places for Ukrainian children in the new school year. Indeed, a survey of municipalities by the national education agency in September 2022 found that only 3% of the 258 municipalities that responded to the survey lacked capacity to receive children from Ukraine.⁵² Two countries with an exceptionally sustained increase in the number of Ukrainian refugees are Romania, in which stakeholders reported experiencing a new wave of arrivals from Ukraine in November and December,⁵³ and Ireland, where data on the numbers of Ukrainian children allocated a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) suggests a sustained rate of increase in new arrivals from June to December.⁵⁴ In contrast, Poland reported that Ukrainian refugee numbers have largely plateaued as a result of continued cross-border movement (i.e. 'coming and going') among Ukrainians.⁵⁵

Most countries for which data was available experienced a significant slowdown in the rate of newly-arriving Ukrainian refugees.

A small number of countries reported a decrease in the number of Ukrainian refugees. In Lithuania, for example, monitoring data suggests that the number of Ukrainian children aged 0-6 dropped from 7,034 in June 2022⁵⁶ to 6,173 in January 2023.⁵⁷ In Malta, furthermore, data suggests that while 1,360 Ukrainian refugees were granted temporary protection between March and September 2022,⁵⁸ a third had left the Island by the end of the summer.⁵⁹ These statistics provide indications of which countries Ukrainian refugees

⁵² 'Barn från Ukraina i svensk grund- och gymnasieskola – Skolverket,' available at: <https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/ovrigt-material/2022/barn-fran-ukraina-i-svensk-grund--och-gymnasieskola>

⁵³ According to a key informant consulted for this study

⁵⁴ Source: <https://data.cso.ie/>. See Table 3 in Cycle 1 Synthesis report for comparison with data from June.

⁵⁵ Source: Interview with representative of UNICEF Poland, held on 8/12/2022

⁵⁶ See table 3, Cycle 1 Synthesis Report. Source: Data of the Department of Education Quality and Regional Policy of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (27-06-2022)

⁵⁷ According to the Official Statistics Portal of Lithuania.

⁵⁸ Eurostat, Ukrainians granted temporary protection in September 2022 (November 2022), available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20221110-2>.

⁵⁹ Times of Malta, One third of Ukrainians who fled to Malta have left the island (August 2022), available at <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/one-third-ukrainians-fled-malta-left-island.976352>.

might be choosing to leave after their initial arrival, and which countries they might be moving towards.

Moreover, while Denmark lacks publicly available disaggregated data on the number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian refugees in the country, anecdotal evidence from some municipalities suggests a drop in the number of refugees and a subsequent discontinuation of ECEC initiatives targeting them. In the Struer Municipality, for example, a new reception class for Ukrainian children was planned for 2022/23 and eventually cancelled as one-third of the expected pupils were no longer there at the beginning of the school year.⁶⁰ Similarly, a daycare facility in Randers Municipality which was established exclusively for Ukrainian children aged 0-6 (named 'Børnenes Hus - Institution for ukrainske børn' (the Children's House – Institute for Ukrainian children)) will now be discontinued after the number of affiliated children dropped to only eight in the fall of 2022.⁶¹ Curiously, this evidence has coincided with reports suggesting a surge in ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian children from June 2022 onwards, which has been attributed both to Ukrainian refugees' decisions to settle in Denmark, and to the cumulative success of integration activities for Ukrainian children in the summer of 2022. It has been suggested that this discrepancy likely signals a shift in preferences away from initiatives targeting Ukrainian children exclusively, and instead towards mainstream Danish ECEC services.⁶²

Similarly to the variation in Ukrainian refugee numbers, **numbers of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC vary widely across the EU27 and Moldova**, and do not always correspond to trends in numbers of registered Ukrainian children in the country. Increases in ECEC enrolment were reported in several countries (BG, DK, EE, ES, FI, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, RO). Persistently low rates of enrolment were reported in Malta, Moldova, and Sweden (based on anecdotal evidence only), whereas Portugal, Poland, Slovenia and Croatia reported no increase in ECEC enrolment. Notably, slight decreases in ECEC enrolment numbers of Ukrainian children were observed in Lithuania, where the number of children overall has also been observed to decrease, and in Slovakia, despite the overall number of Ukrainian child refugees in the country having been documented to increase over the same period.

A small number of countries were able to report on the rate of ECEC attendance overall but it is unclear as to what proportion of these represent Ukrainian children of ECEC age in the country. Bulgaria and Romania reported increases in ECEC enrolment but noted that the rates of enrolment are persistently low in the context of the total number of ECEC-aged children officially registered in the country. In contrast, Poland reported that an estimated 50% of Ukrainian **children** aged 0-6 are engaged in some form of ECEC,⁶³

⁶⁰ <https://skolemonitor.dk/nyheder/art8852676/Folkeskolers-planI%C3%A6gning-af-modtageklasser-er-udfordret>

⁶¹ <https://jyllands-posten.dk/jplokaj/jpranders/ECE14675106/kommunen-dropper-institution-til-ukrainske-boern/>

⁶² <https://bupl.dk/boern-unge/nyheder/langt-flere-ukrainske-flygtninge-i-daginstitution-stor-ros-til-paedagogerne>

⁶³ According to a key informant at an NGO, interviewed in Poland.

despite enrolment numbers themselves being stagnant. Good rates of enrolment were also reported in the Czech Republic, where the percentage of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC had increased from 19.1% in the school year 2021/22⁶⁴ to 34% in the school year 2022/23.⁶⁵ Furthermore, a government-backed study of Ukrainian refugees in Germany (n=11,225), which was published in December 2022, estimated enrolment rates in *Krippe* and *KITA* facilities to be 22% for Ukrainian children aged 0-3, and 49% for Ukrainian children aged 3-6.⁶⁶

Stakeholder interviews and documentary evidence suggests that **in the majority of countries, demand for ECEC services from Ukrainian families was not expected to change significantly over the winter months.** In a small number of countries, however, stakeholders were still accounting for the possibility of a new ‘seasonal wave’ of Ukrainian refugees in the early months of 2023 due to the damage caused to infrastructure and the particularly difficult circumstances this created in the winter (FI, HU, MD). Stakeholders in several countries have also emphasized that **as the war continues without resolution, Ukrainian refugees already in host countries may consider their new residence to be ‘semi-permanent’ and seek to build more permanent lives outside of Ukraine** (DK, HR, HU, PT). As an implication of this shift, parents may decide to join the labor force and seek in-person childcare solutions, while also opting to discontinue Ukrainian distance learning in order to integrate their children into the host country’s mainstream educational system. Both Latvia and Denmark have already noted increases in the share of Ukrainian children who are shifting from Ukrainian-language ECEC solutions to host-language ECEC services.

As the war continues without resolution, Ukrainian refugees already in host countries may consider their new residence to be ‘semi-permanent’ and seek to build more permanent lives outside of Ukraine.

2.1.4 Supply-side challenges of providing ECEC

The above-explored patterns of a broadly moderate increased enrolment in ECEC across the EU27 and Moldova (in BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, RO) are a testament to the resourcefulness of host countries’ emergency responses, as well as the success of their ECEC systems in absorbing significant numbers of new arrivals (despite a range of pre-existing pressures). Indeed, research from cycle 1 highlighted that many host

⁶⁴ Voice of Ukrainians: Experiences and needs of children and parents in Czech education. 15. 8.

<https://www.paqresearch.cz/research-blog/categories/hlas-ukrajinc%C5%AF>

⁶⁵ See Czech Republic 2nd Cycle country report.

⁶⁶ ⁶⁶ Refugees from Ukraine in Germany, December 2022. FEDERAL OFFICE FOR MIGRATION AND REFUGEES, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/kurzstudie-ukr-gefluechtete.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=14#page=9 (accessed on 24 January 2023)

countries were welcoming Ukrainian children into ECEC systems that were already over-subscribed and facing shortages of qualified ECEC staff and places. These challenges were compounded by shortages of specialist staff (including school psychologists and doctors) with capacity to adequately address the needs of Ukrainian ECEC-aged children and their families, as well as the lack of adequate Ukrainian language skills among ECEC staff and professionals.⁶⁷

ECEC systems across the EU27 and Moldova have successfully integrated Ukrainian children into their services at varying levels since their arrival in the spring of 2022. However, research from November to January has confirmed that these **aforementioned systemic or 'supplier-side' challenges with ECEC provision have continued and may contribute to the persistently low enrolment rates reported in some countries**. A pre-existing shortage in available ECEC places was the most commonly-cited obstacle reported by host countries (BG, CZ, DK, FI, HR, IT, LV, MD, PT, RO, SK), as well as longstanding shortages in ECEC staff (DK, FI, PT). A lack of adequate psychosocial experts to support the integration of Ukrainian children into ECEC settings was also explicitly cited as an ongoing challenge in the Netherlands and Czechia. Limited capacity among medical doctors was cited to be an issue by Slovakia, where all children are required to undergo mandatory health checks with a licensed health professional prior to their admission in an ECEC setting.

The persistent language barrier and ongoing shortage of Ukrainian language skills amongst ECEC staff was also highlighted as a continuing problem for several countries, including Bulgaria, Czechia, the Netherlands, Romania, and Sweden. In Romania, legal restrictions were reported to prevent Ukrainian teachers from being employed or utilized in public ECEC settings, even in positions of reduced responsibility, such as 'caretakers' or 'assistants'. It was noted that ECEC services provided by non-governmental organizations are not subject to the same restrictions and have thus been able to involve Ukrainian teachers in supporting Ukrainian children and families without encountering similar bureaucratic obstacles. This finding suggests that **non-formal ECEC provision can allow for flexibilities that the formal system cannot, particularly in the case of staff recruitment**. In Sweden, it was reported that while the challenge of hiring ECEC staff with Ukrainian language knowledge is still an issue, some progress has been made; almost half of the municipalities surveyed in September 2022 reported that their schools have access to teachers or other staff who speak Ukrainian and/or Russian.⁶⁸ Some municipalities reported that their shortage in Ukrainian-speaking staff could be

⁶⁷ See 'Conclusions and Recommendations', Cycle 1 Synthesis Report, pg. 50.

⁶⁸ 'Barn från Ukraina i svensk grund- och gymnasieskola – Skolverket,' [available at: https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/ovrigt-material/2022/barn-fran-ukraina-i-svensk-grund--och-gymnasieskola](https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/ovrigt-material/2022/barn-fran-ukraina-i-svensk-grund--och-gymnasieskola)

addressed through a more even distribution of skilled Ukrainian refugees across Swedish municipalities.⁶⁹

Key supply-side challenges of providing ECEC to refugees:

- Pre-existing shortages in available ECEC places
- Pre-existing shortages in ECEC staff
- Lack of adequate psychosocial experts
- Language barriers and shortages of Ukrainian language skills among ECEC staff
- Legal restrictions preventing the hiring of Ukrainian teachers/staff

2.1.5 Demand-side barriers to ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian children

In addition to the obstacles on the side of the ECEC provider which may limit the ability of ECEC systems to welcome Ukrainian children, there is also a range of demand obstacles. Research in cycle 1 of the study from June to July 2022 identified a range of barriers, including **separation anxiety between parents and children, distrust of foreign ECEC services, reluctance to leave children unattended, delays caused by mandatory requirements for documentation, immunizations or medical checks, and the housing of Ukrainian families in suboptimal locations, far from educational infrastructure.**⁷⁰

Some countries have made progress in addressing these barriers (see section on efforts to improve ECEC enrolment below). However, research for this cycle has indicated that **for many countries in the EU27 and Moldova, these previously identified barriers persist.** Separation anxiety between parents and children was explicitly mentioned as a barrier to ECEC enrolment in several countries (BE, FR, PL, HR), as well as lack of trust in 'foreign' ECEC services (HU, PL). Other barriers included uncertainties about whether or not it will be possible to return to Ukraine, thus dissuading some Ukrainian arrivals from applying for temporary protection (HR, MD, PL). Residency requirements have also continued to be an obstacle to ECEC enrolment in Finland and Malta, where parents are only offered funded access to ECEC services if they are judged to need it due to participation in employment or training. As discussed in the previous cycle of research, such requirements risk trapping parents in a 'catch 22' in which they cannot access employment, education or training without first securing childcare, and yet cannot access ECEC services without first securing employment, education or training. Where possible,

⁶⁹ As mentioned in the 1st synthesis report, Sweden is distinctive in its decision to allocate Ukrainian refugees to municipalities in a centralised way to ensure that they are evenly distributed across the country. However, it has been suggested that the distribution approach should take the skill levels of Ukrainian refugees into account in order to create more of a balance between low- and high-skilled refugees in each municipality.

⁷⁰ See 'Conclusions and Recommendations', Cycle 1 Synthesis Report, pg. 31-32.

such bureaucratic obstacles should be removed to support parents' integration into the labour force as well as children's integration into their local peer groups.

The lack of housing close to education infrastructure has also continued to limit ECEC participation for Ukrainian children in some countries (BG, HR, IE, LU). In Bulgaria, for example, many Ukrainian refugees remain housed in vacated hotels and resorts which are generally in sub-optimal locations, far from ECEC institutions and other essential infrastructure.⁷¹ Both Croatia and Ireland⁷² face similar ongoing difficulties in securing accommodation for Ukrainian families that is close to ECEC facilities.

Finally, local mandatory vaccine requirements were also identified as a persisting barrier to ECEC enrolment (BG, HR, MD, SK). In Bulgaria, the immunization schedule is not aligned with the Ukrainian one and requires Ukrainian children to 'catch up' with three additional vaccines before they can be admitted to ECEC. As these vaccines require a 3-month time period to be administered appropriately, the requirement imposed substantial delays on a child's integration into mainstream ECEC.⁷³ Meanwhile in Moldova, a consulted stakeholder highlighted that pre-war Ukraine had some of the lowest vaccination rates in Europe, and emphasized that parents' reluctance and vaccine skepticism appears to persist in host countries, thus rendering some free-of-charge immunization campaigns ineffective.⁷⁴

In addition to re-confirming the above-mentioned previously-identified barriers to ECEC enrolment, the current cycle of research also yielded several **newly-identified barriers to ECEC enrolment. The preference for Ukrainian distance learning** as a method to provide early childhood education at home⁷⁵ was cited by several countries as a reason for the low uptake of in-person services within mainstream ECEC systems (BG, BE, EL, MD, PL, SE). Another barrier was the **lack of accessible and understandable information for Ukrainian parents on how to navigate the host countries' ECEC systems and complete the process of enrolment** (CZ; HU; MT; PL). In Hungary, for example, an interviewed stakeholder observed that publicly available information on the enrolment procedures for ECEC did not clearly specify the formal requirements to be fulfilled by parents, including the types of paperwork and vaccinations needed.⁷⁶ Similarly in Malta, it was observed that the instructions for ECEC registration and eligibility are available online, but these materials are not centralized and are instead published across a variety of different state and government websites.

⁷¹ <https://government.bg/bg/prestsentar/novini/srokat-na-deystvie-na-programata-za-humanitarno-podpomagane-na-razseleni-litsa-ot-ukrayna-s-predostavena-vremenna-zakrila-v-republika-balgariya-se-udalzhava-do-24-fevruari-2023-g>

⁷² Source: consultation with National Coordinator for the Ukraine Civil Society Emergency Response, which represents 68 Irish NGOs active in supporting Ireland's emergency response to refugees from Ukraine

⁷³ <https://fakti.bg/bulgaria/713371-samo-1-ot-ukrainskite-deca-u-nas-sa-zapisani-v-uchilishte>

⁷⁴ Source: Key informant for this study

⁷⁵ In these cases, distance learning starts as early as age 5 and therefore falls within the scope of ECEC

⁷⁶ Source: Key informant for this study

Cultural differences in the perception of ECEC among Ukrainians were also mentioned as potential barriers to ECEC enrolment. In Portugal, a stakeholder observed anecdotally that Ukrainian mothers often believe that the typical ECEC-age in Portugal is ‘too early’ for their children to be separated from them. In Poland, Ukrainian parents’ concerns that their children may lose their Ukrainian identity following integration into the host country’s ECEC system were highlighted as a barrier to enrolment. Furthermore, a stakeholder noted that ECEC is not perceived with the same positive connotations by Ukrainian parents as it is by Polish or European ones, and that it is often associated with strict rules and ‘hard discipline’. **Changing Ukrainian parents’ perceptions of ECEC in the EU27 and Moldova was highlighted as an essential step for improving Ukrainian children’s integration** into the ECEC systems of host countries. This finding echoes the observations made in Estonia, that Ukrainian mothers did not see a strong enough reason to enroll their children in ECEC as long as their financial needs could be met through state-provided benefits, and they could remain unemployed.

Furthermore, **housing instability emerged as a significant inhibitor of ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian children**, specifically in host countries such as Bulgaria and Ireland where many Ukrainian refugees are housed for prolonged periods in temporary accommodation. Bulgaria’s accommodation programme for Ukrainian refugees in coastal resorts, for example, was due to expire on 21 August 2022. Although the programme was extended to the end of October, the government then proceeded to uproot the residents and move them to state-owned facilities in other locations, thus forcing the children who had been enrolled in ECEC to move to different institutions.⁷⁷ The lack of medium- to long-term accommodation for Ukrainian refugees in Ireland is also seen as an obstacle which prevents Ukrainian parents from ‘settling down’ and enrolling their children in education. Such unpredictability in living circumstances has been observed to dissuade parents from ‘putting down roots’ in a particular location, out of concern that their children’s lives may face undue disruptions.

⁷⁷ <https://news.bg/society/ukraintsite-ostavat-v-hotelite-novite-bezhantsi-otivat-v-darzhavni-bazi.html>

Demand-side barriers to ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian refugees:

- Separation anxiety between parents and children
- Lack of trust in “foreign” ECEC services
- Uncertainties about whether or not it will be possible to return to Ukraine
- Residency, bureaucratic, and vaccination requirements to enrol in ECEC
- Lack of accommodation close to ECEC services, and accommodation instability
- Preference for Ukrainian distance learning
- Lack of accessible and understandable information on how ECEC works in host country
- Cultural differences in the perception of ECEC (fears of losing Ukrainian identity, negative associations with ECEC)

2.1.6 Efforts to improve ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian children

In response to the continued barriers that Ukrainian children face when accessing ECEC, and in light of the way in which these barriers contradict Ukrainian children’s right to early education in their new place of residence, host countries have undertaken a range of initiatives to improve ECEC enrolment. The Cycle 1 synthesis report summarized a range of legislative, organizational, programmatic and financial responses that had been launched by host countries to provide young Ukrainian refugees with a positive start in their new countries of residence.⁷⁸ Research in the current cycle has demonstrated that host countries persist in finding new ways to directly improve the enrolment rates of Ukrainian children in ECEC, primarily through targeted financial and logistic initiatives, as well as alternative care arrangements.

Financial initiatives

A key step taken recently by multiple host countries has been to improve Ukrainian children’s access to ECEC by **using funding to address shortages in ECEC places**. In Austria, for example, a new legal agreement on preschool and nursery education secured 1 billion EUR of funding for the academic years 2022/23-2026/27, marking a 40% increase in annual funding compared to the previous period (2018/19-2021/22). The agreement, which is partly funded through NextGenerationEU, places an explicit focus on facilitating Ukrainian children’s access to ECEC and the provision of places for children aged 0-3. Similarly, the Ministry of Education in the Netherlands is organizing a grant to support Dutch municipalities in providing preschool education for Ukrainian children aged 2.5-4

⁷⁸ See cycle 1 synthesis report

throughout 2023, with the aim of ensuring that Ukrainian children do not enter primary school at a disadvantage to their peers.⁷⁹

Centralized funding mechanisms to support ECEC have also been developed at the national level in France⁸⁰ and Ireland⁸¹. In Italy, an ordinance from the Civil Protection Department has allocated a 40 million EUR contribution to all municipalities judged to host a ‘significant’ number of Ukrainian refugees. Although these funds are not earmarked specifically for ECEC, their purpose is to improve municipalities’ social service offerings and may include ECEC services in some cases.⁸² Slovakia and Finland have also developed funds that are payable directly to ECEC settings. As of the 2022/23 school year, Slovakian ECEC centers receive 200 EUR per enrolled Ukrainian child.⁸³ Meanwhile, Finland has organized automatic funding for all ECEC centers that provide services to children from ‘unsafe’ circumstances (such as the war in Ukraine), thus incentivizing ECEC settings to offer places to vulnerable children and increasing the amount of ECEC places that are truly accessible to them.⁸⁴

Several countries have also opted to increase the accessibility of ECEC for Ukrainian children by **allocating funding and resources directly to Ukrainian families themselves**. In Cyprus, for example, the Ministry of Education recently waived the 42 EUR monthly tuition fees for Ukrainian parents who want to enroll their children in public preschool settings. ECEC is also free of charge for Ukrainian parents in France (ages 0-3) and in Luxembourg, where all ECEC-attending children aged 0-4 are eligible for 20 free-of-charge hours per week. Additionally, some countries have confirmed the eligibility of Ukrainian parents for **special family maintenance benefits** to help them meet the costs associated with raising children. In France, for example, a derogation from Article D. 512-2 of the Social Security Code has entitled Ukrainian refugees to family maintenance benefits, with the aim to help families cover the expenses incurred by childcare and the costs related to the start of the school year.⁸⁵ Similarly in the Netherlands, the government recently clarified that Ukrainian refugee parents are eligible for the same subsidy (named *Kinderopvangtoeslag* in Dutch) that all Dutch parents of children aged 0-3 receive to

⁷⁹ Rijksoverheid (n.d.). Rol van gemeenten: leerlingenvervoer en onderwijshuisvesting.

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraine/informatie-voor-scholen/rol-van-gemeenten-leerlingenvervoer-en-onderwijshuisvesting#anker-3-specifieke-uitkering-voorschoolse-educatie>

⁸⁰ According to a stakeholder interviewed for this study.

⁸¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/d422b-minister-ogorman-secures-1bn-investment-in-early-learning-and-childcare/#ukraine-crisis>

⁸² Civile, D. d. (2022, October 3). *Ocdpc n. 927 del 3 ottobre 2022 - Ulteriori disposizioni urgenti di protezione civile per assicurare, sul territorio nazionale, l'accoglienza, il soccorso e l'assistenza alla popolazione in conseguenza degli accadimenti in atto nel territorio dell'Ucraina*. Pabrano z lokalizaciji Dipartimento della Protezione Civile: <https://www.protezionecivile.gov.it/it/normativa/ocdpc-n-927-del-3-ottobre-2022-0>

⁸³ According to a key informant interviewed for this study.

⁸⁴ MINEDU (2022a). Yli seitsemän miljoonaa turvatomista oloista tulleiden lasten varhaiskasvatukseen (Over seven million to early education and care for children coming from unsafe circumstances). Ministry of Education and Culture, Information, 23.11.2022. Retrieved 4.12.2022 at <https://okm.fi/-/yli-seitseman-miljoonaa-turvatomista-oloista-tulleiden-lasten-varhaiskasvatukseen>

⁸⁵ <https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2022/qSEQ220902651.html>

fund childcare, regardless of whether they have received a residence permit yet or not.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Ukrainian children are entitled to hot meals in ECEC settings in Hungary and Moldova.

Initiatives to increase ECEC availability for Ukrainian children

In addition to the many financial efforts described above, host countries have also opted to increase ECEC enrolment through *logistical* initiatives aimed at 1) producing more ECEC capacity through the creation of new places and the recruitment of new staff, and 2) helping Ukrainian children find and access ECEC places that already exist. For example, Latvia has promoted the **construction of new municipal kindergartens**, including one in Riga which has recently opened 300 new ECEC places for children.⁸⁷ Furthermore, nine municipalities have signed Public-Private Partnership agreements and committed to building new kindergartens in subsequent years. Lithuania has also opted to promote the construction of new kindergartens, but has achieved this instead by extending government funding to private ECEC providers (whereas previously they had been limited only to public providers). This has facilitated the rapid creation of new ECEC places in the private sector. In contrast, as of the 2022/23 school year, the Czech Republic has obligated kindergartens to accept Ukrainian children under the same conditions as they would for Czech children, making existing ECEC places more readily accessible for them. Furthermore, Luxembourg opted to increase capacity through the recruitment of new staff and relaxed the mandatory conditions for becoming qualified as a teacher to address rampant staff shortages. They successfully recruited 289 additional elementary school level⁸⁸ teachers to increase capacity for the 2022/23 school year.⁸⁹

A range of additional initiatives were mobilized to address the many, varying barriers to ECEC enrolment among Ukrainian refugees. Among these are **transport solutions** to support Ukrainian children and families who have been allocated ECEC places that are geographically far from their residence (BG⁹⁰, HR). Other initiatives were **adjustments to immunization requirements** in order to minimize delays to Ukrainian children's attendance in ECEC (BG⁹¹; HR). Furthermore, **efforts to address persistent language barriers** in ECEC were addressed by countries such as Estonia, where Ukrainian children are now given the option between three language groups (Estonian-speaking groups,

⁸⁶ Ministerie van Financiën (n.d.). Bent u vluchteling uit Oekraïne? Dan kunt u toeslag aanvragen.

<https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/nl/toeslagen/content/toeslagen-voor-vluchtelingen-oekraïne>

⁸⁷ <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/vai-rindas-uz-rigas-pasvaldibas-bernudarziem-izzudis.a479102/>

⁸⁸ Elementary school in Luxembourg is intended for children aged 3 years and older:

<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/luxembourg/primary-education>

⁸⁹ ⁸⁹ Le Quotidien (2022), 'Luxembourg: 289 new teachers recruited at the start of the school year' (*Luxembourg : 289 nouveaux enseignants recrutés à la rentrée*, available at: <https://lequotidien.lu/a-la-une/luxembourg-289-nouveaux-enseignants-recrutes-a-la-rentree/>)

⁹⁰ https://19min.bg/news/novini_8/650-ukrainski-detca-sa-prieti-v-detski-gradini-i-uchilishta-v-burgaska-171168.html

⁹¹ Interim guidelines for immunisations and re-immunisations of children arriving from Ukraine available at <https://ukraine.gov.bg/health-information/>

groups where language immersion methodology⁹² is applied, and Russian-speaking groups) which increasingly employ Ukrainian teachers and assistants to support their integration. Additionally, several countries have developed streamlined digital solutions to address the issue of gaps and fragmentation in information for Ukrainian parents on how to enroll in their host country's ECEC system (please see the section below on Digital Solutions for more information).

Notably, some countries have opted to improve Ukrainian children's involvement in ECEC by **enabling and prioritizing flexibility of choice among families' preferences for ECEC services**. This has been offered in contrast to requiring them to integrate their children into mainstream ECEC services alongside local children. In the Flemish community of Belgium, for example, Ukrainian children are allowed to attempt participation in mainstream ECEC and opt for home education at any time, thus removing the pressure for children and parents to commit to a specific approach at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, the Flemish government does not specify the subjects, books, or curricula that should be used by parents during home-schooling.⁹³ This approach is in stark contrast to the approach of Luxembourg, where ECEC enrolment rates are high because online distance learning is generally not accepted and Ukrainian children are obliged to attend mainstream ECEC from the point at which it becomes compulsory, at age 4. Slovenia has demonstrated flexibility in supporting parents and children overcome separation anxiety; parents are allowed to remain in an ECEC setting with their child for as long as both need, thus promoting feelings of trust and safety in the ECEC setting. This approach is conceptually similar to the 'Open daycare centers' in Finland, where children are given the opportunity to experience ECEC in the company of their parents, as well as the parents of their peers.

Alternative ECEC models

Finally, many host countries have opted to support Ukrainian children's participation in ECEC by offering alternative models that are outside of the mainstream ECEC system, while still being part of the country's formal state-organized provision. In several cases, **institutions have been established exclusively for Ukrainian children**, including a Ukrainian-only daycare center in Plovdiv, Bulgaria;⁹⁴ adaptation groups⁹⁵ for Ukrainian children in the Czech Republic; the "Børnenes Hus - Institution for ukrainske børn" (the

⁹² These groups consist of three- to four-year-old children whose home language is Russian. Learning and educational activities take place in the group in both Russian and Estonian; the group has bilingual teachers as teachers. The knowledge-skills acquired in one half of the day with an Estonian-speaking teacher are applied in the second half of the day in activities led by a Russian-speaking teacher.

⁹³ Flemish government website, <https://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/ouders/leerplicht/huisonderwijs-en-de-examencommissie/huisonderwijs/huisonderwijs-voor-kinderen-uit-oekraïne#afwijkingen>

⁹⁴ <https://shortly.bg/PLhbv>

⁹⁵ Adaptation groups are designed exclusively for Ukrainian children and do not contribute to the integration of Ukrainian children into the Czech education system. They allow Ukrainian parents to send their children to an ECEC facility so that they themselves can be active on the labour market.

Children's House – Institute for Ukrainian children) established in the Randers Municipality of Denmark;⁹⁶ the Maison Relais in Luxembourg, which was established in September 2022 for refugees aged 3-12 in order to facilitate a future transition into mainstream Luxembourgish education;⁹⁷ and a fully-Ukrainian school opened in Poland in November 2022 which includes a kindergarten for children aged 5-6.⁹⁸

Some countries also opted to organize **summer schools** following the end of the 2021/22 school year, with the aim of helping Ukrainian refugee children 'catch up', settle and integrate ahead of the 2022/23 school year. In France, for example, 'Learning camps' (*Les colos apprenantes*) were opened for children aged 3 and above from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds (including refugees), with an emphasis on building knowledge, skills and cohesion in a fun setting. The state covered between 80% and 100% of the costs of enrolment.⁹⁹ Similarly in Italy, the 'Plan Summer School' (*Piano Scuola Estate 2022*) was delivered to provide a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere to children arriving from Ukraine and provide intensive Italian language learning ahead of the new school year.¹⁰⁰

2.2 Non-formal ECEC solutions

2.2.1 Different types of non-formal ECEC responses

In the current context, the non-formal ECEC services are services provided outside of the national educational system via independent actors (e.g., NGOs/charities) or ECEC solutions organized at community level on an ad-hoc basis by volunteers, parents, and in some cases churches. These have limited interaction with the formal system, although sometimes the services are provided within the premises of the formal system, using professionals from the system or following some formal curricula.

The non-formal ECEC services have various names, so we have classified them into 5 main types depending on the nature of provided support: child groups/houses, day care centers, adaptation services, play and learning hubs, and other services. Table 3 below presents details of what is being provided and countries that offer the service. It should be noted that **the intensity and dosage of services is subject to variation, which has**

⁹⁶ <https://jyllands-posten.dk/jplokaj/jpranders/ECE14675106/kommunen-dropper-institution-til-ukrainske-boern/> ; please note that as mentioned above in section 2.0, the Children's house is now being phased out due to lack of engagement from Ukrainian children and families.

⁹⁷ Virgule (2022), 'The former EIB nursery will serve as a school for refugees' (*L'ancienne crèche de la BEI servira d'école à des réfugiés*), available at : <https://www.wort.lu/fr/luxembourg/l-ancienne-creche-de-la-bei-servira-d-ecole-a-des-refugies-6332ba0dde135b923616510a>

⁹⁸ Ukrainianinpoland.pl, October 2022, [Pierwsza ukraińska szkoła w Polsce zaprasza przyszłych pierwszoklasistów](https://www.ukrainianinpoland.pl)

⁹⁹ <https://www.education.gouv.fr/les-colos-apprenantes-304050>

¹⁰⁰ dell'istruzione, M. (2022, May 30). Accoglienza scolastica per gli studenti ucraini. Indicazioni operative. Pabrano z lokalizacji Ministero dell'istruzione: <https://www.miur.gov.it/-/accoglienza-scolastica-per-gli-studenti-ucraini-indicazioni-operative>

equity and quality implications around who receives which kinds of service. Some types of services offer care and education to a very small number of children (4 to 10), while some provide services to a large number of children. These larger initiatives include the play and learning hubs, community hubs, and education centers.

Table 2 The types of the non-formal education services

Type of service	Description	Countries
Children's Groups/ Children House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided and organized by parent associations in cooperation with municipal authorities, usually for mixed age groups of 10 to 15 children. 	AT, DK, FI, SK
Day care center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided by both parents and professionals in cooperation with local level authorities. The services are designed more as care services, with some elements of learning, also preparing children for schools and kindergartens. 	BG, HR, MD
Adaptation groups/ language clubs/ integration classes/ reception classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care and education services with a focus on language skills, cultural integration, citizenship classes, classes for national minorities, and adaptation groups with a focus on stress coping, offered only to Ukrainian children. 	CZ, DK, DE, IT, LT, LU, PL,
Play and learning Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play and learning hubs, premises where children interact, play, and learn, including about their new environment 	PL, RO, MD, SK
Other services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication clubs, playgrounds, outdoor activities, learning camps, at home services (services provided at the home of a qualified carer for a small group of children), art classes, music classes, play dates, etc. 	FI, DE, HU, MT, PL, RO, MD

Our findings show a **continuing trend towards private and civil society responses** offering ECEC provision. In Moldova and Romania, UNICEF together with their partners have established multiple play and learning hubs, where around four thousand children have received some kind of service, including supervised spaces offering day care and education services for preschoolers.¹⁰¹ In partnership with the Lego Foundation, there will be 35 play and learning hubs established, and equipped with toys and learning materials.

¹⁰¹ Key stakeholder evidence

In an attempt to make this investment more sustainable, the aim is to transform the hubs into more permanent community hubs where all children in need of services will be offered support.

These non-formal ECEC services are funded by both local authorities or by non-governmental and international organizations. The spaces to provide these services are usually offered by local authorities. The non-formal education services cover the care and education needs of children from 3-6, although there are some examples where services (child small groups) are offered to children aged 0-3. Most of the time services are offered in mixed age groups.

In most non-formal ECEC types of services, Ukrainian parents are involved in service provision, with support from educators, social workers, cultural mediators, social pedagogues, and volunteers. In many countries, Ukrainian educators are hired to help with providing non-formal care and education. In most cases, Ukrainian speaking personnel is hired with no requirement to speak the local language.

2.2.2 The roles of non-formal ECEC solutions

These non-formal ECEC services emerged to cover needs that the formal services could not provide for various reasons. In some countries, access to the formal sector is restricted to children and their families lacking refugee or temporary protection status, while the non-formal options do not foresee such strict requirements. In some countries, the non-formal services cover the demand that cannot be covered by the formal sector due to the lack of places in ECEC systems, which is usually the case in large cities. In other instances, the non-formal provision aims at facilitating integration into the formal sector, by offering language and other cultural integration classes, interaction with local educators, and better understanding of the local system for parents. For all types of non-formal service, provision is seen as a temporary solution, a transition to the national system, or even temporary support before returning to the Ukrainian education system.

The breadth of coverage of non-formal ECEC services is not clear. The number of children attending one type or another of non-formal ECEC is not available in any of the researched countries. The offer of the non-formal services could be uneven across one country, as per the individual initiatives of a municipality, or non-governmental organization or donor. For instance, in some countries these initiatives are more widespread in the capital city, or in cities/areas with more refugees. In certain countries, non-formal services are provided in a more systemic manner, similar to national level initiatives (i.e., Romania, Germany, Moldova, Poland, etc.). For example, in Moldova around 15 play and learning hubs are available across the country and have been visited by thousands of Ukrainian children. Similarly, the PrimoHubs in Romania are a nationwide center for alternative/ complementary ECEC services, functioning in seven major cities in the country. In Hungary, due to a passive approach by authorities to integrate

Ukrainian children into the formal sector, the NGO community across the country has unified and has had a strong role in providing care and education outside of the formal system.

2.3 Digital solutions

The use of digital solutions to support Ukrainian refugee children and families featured as a recurring theme in cycle 2 of our research. In the following section, we describe and explain the four main ways in which digital technology has been deployed:

1. Accessing online distance or blended learning;
2. The provision of online information, advice and guidance;
3. Remote access to training and professional development;
4. Needs assessment, monitoring and reporting.

2.3.1 Accessing online distance or blended learning

The main official platform for distance learning following the Ukrainian curriculum is the All-Ukrainian Online School. Funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the platform offers lessons in all subjects for pupils in grades 5-11¹⁰². There is also an online kindergarten for Ukrainian children aged 3-6, the [NUMO preschool project](#)¹⁰³, developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and UNICEF.

Case example: NUMO online Ukrainian preschool

NUMO is a user-friendly, accessible online website and platform providing activities for Ukrainian preschool children, their parents and guardians, and their teachers. The online preschool is divided into different sections addressing these different target groups;

- One section provides games, exercises, and activities directly targeting small children, and focusing on skill-development (through daily 5-minute bite-size animated videos).
- Another section provides parents and guardians of preschoolers with an interactive test that allows them to develop pedagogic approaches when playing with their children, and understand whether they behave appropriately in typical interactions with children.

¹⁰² Accessible at: <https://lms.e-school.net.ua/> [accessed on 26 March 2023]

¹⁰³ Accessible at: <https://numo.mon.gov.ua/>

- There are also interactive tests about what criteria should be used when choosing a kindergarten, and an educational brochure about child development written by psychologists.
- Finally, there is a section devoted to educators: they are provided with an interactive test through which they can find out what they are doing well in their work and what they might need to pay attention to.

There is also a classified library of useful materials, including webinars, links and advice from international organizations. NUMO videos are also accessible on YouTube¹⁰⁴, MEGOGO, and other platforms – some of the latest episodes have received over 450,000 views¹⁰⁵.

For preschool children, measures to support distance learning continue to reflect the status of the Ukrainian curriculum vis-à-vis formal education within host countries. In Luxembourg, compulsory preschool enrolment for newly arrived Ukrainian children without the option of following the Ukrainian curriculum has resulted in low levels of participation in distance learning.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, participation in online learning remains much higher by default in countries and regions where Ukrainian children are educated in separate classes following the Ukrainian curriculum. In Romania, for example, cycle 2 of this research found widespread use of reception classes for newly arrived Ukrainian children, supported by NGOs or local authorities, where most children continue to learn online.

Regarding coordination, arrangements have ranged from direct liaison with Ukrainian authorities to support enrolments in distance education (e.g. Cyprus), to countries where arrangements have been devolved to municipalities (e.g. Sweden). Some Ministries have introduced new guidance ahead of the 2022/23 school year to promote greater consistency, although not always with specific provisions relating to ECEC.

It is important to note that **distance learning extends beyond the context of Ukrainian virtual schooling**. Cycle 2 of research has seen a greater number of **online educational resources** developed or adapted to the context of the refugee crisis, alongside digital tools that pre-date the conflict but have been made available in this context, some of which target the early years. This includes the **development or repurposing of apps, games and language resources**, including within ECEC settings. In Lithuania, for example, piloting is currently underway for an open access web-based activity with interactive Lithuanian language learning exercises for Ukrainian preschool children.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Accessible at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFVSJgZgf7h-wyorZ6MoAJrAEC5H2reCk>

¹⁰⁵ Please see: <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/stories/education-during-war-in-ukraine>

¹⁰⁶ Chronicle.lu (2022), 'Clarification given re Employment and Education for Ukrainian Arrivals'

¹⁰⁷ Key stakeholder evidence

Digital offerings have also provided a **means of widening access to psycho-social support** for Ukrainian families, including those with young children. Additional examples were found during cycle 2, involving both public authority and NGO provision. These offers ranged from the use of apps or video calling to provide counselling (see box example below) to digitalized learning resources. In Ireland, the NGO Sesame Street in Communities provides free materials such as videos, interactive games, and articles for parents and educators of children aged 0-6 in Ukrainian. In addition to their educational purpose, the materials also offer psycho-social support to children and adults, helping to deal with emotions related to displacement in a non-stigmatizing way. The activities and modules include topics such as “how to deal with big changes”, “a home away from home feeling”, and “how to overcome the trauma of a big crisis.”¹⁰⁸

Using digital tools to provide remote access to psycho-social support (Latvia)

In Latvia, a range of options have been provided to offer psycho-social support for Ukrainian refugee children and their parents, including digital, telephone and in-person services. These can be obtained free of charge by contacting the service provider, with a Ukrainian translator organized upon prior notification of the need. With regards to free provision, the State Inspectorate for the Protection of Children's Rights runs a psychological support counselling service, which is available via a free "Helpline" app as well as a free 24-hour telephone service. Individual counselling for children and families is also available via Children and Teenager Resource Centres, of which there are two in each region as well as in nine cities, offering individual counselling for children and families. These include the option of remote sessions by telephone or video calling.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/subtopics/resources-in-ukrainian/>

¹⁰⁹ Key stakeholder evidence

2.3.2 Provision of online information, advice and guidance

Overall, there was evidence that host countries are seeking to continuously improve and update online sources of information available to Ukrainian families, including ECEC-specific content. This has often been facilitated by cross-sectoral collaboration between ministries, NGOs and private organizations or donors. At the same time, new or improved websites or apps available to families of young children have also benefited Ukrainian families.

Online informational offers have included the following:

- **Updated educational guidelines and regulations ahead of the 2022/23 academic year**, with online information about enrolments and entitlements. In Belgium (Flanders), existing web resources have been supplemented with a public database to search for crèche capacity, although this is not solely directed towards Ukrainian refugees.
- **Additional online learning materials and educational resources**: in both Denmark and Greece, the Ministry has established a portal to host teaching materials and activities, including the early years. In Germany, a new website was launched at the Federal level in August 2022. The initiative 'KEBIK' provides online guidance for parents of a migrant background, including in Ukrainian, to support child learning and development.¹¹⁰
- **Informational 'one-stop-shops', connecting refugee families to services**: examples include a web-based resource to match Ukrainian refugees seeking help with volunteers offering support (Cyprus);¹¹¹ and a hub to locate Ukrainian language and cultural specialists (e.g. Assistance Center for Ukrainian Refugees, Portugal, coordinated by a team of Ukrainian and Portuguese-speaking professionals).¹¹² UNICEF has also utilized the network of Blue Dot Hubs¹¹³ or other non-formal ECEC settings like play and learning hubs, to engage refugee families with the Bebbio parenting app¹¹⁴ (please see case study below)^[OBJ]. This is a free mobile application developed by UNICEF for parents of young children (0-6 years old) available in Ukrainian language, connecting them with tools and expert advice on health, development, nutrition, parenting, safety, play and other services.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.bundeselternnetzwerk.de/projekte/kebik>

¹¹¹ The cy4ua website is a one-stop-shop provided by the Embassy of Ukraine in Cyprus, in partnership with the Hope for Children Policy Center <https://cy4ua.com/language/el/>

¹¹² <https://www.ucranianosemportugal.com/>

¹¹³ Coordinated jointly by UNHCR and UNICEF, the Blue Dots are safe spaces providing shelter, protection and access to services for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. They are located at border crossings in priority countries and in cities with a large number of refugees. At the time of writing, there are 41 Blue Dots located in Eastern and Central Europe: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/what-are-blue-dots-hubs>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-releases/unicef-launches-bebbio-mobile-app-help-parents-care-children-during-war>

Case study: **Bebbo app**

UNICEF ECARO has launched a cutting-edge mobile parenting application called **Bebbo**. This app supports parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 6 years old by providing them with evidence-based advice and interactive tools to promote children's development and well-being. Through fun and engaging games and activities, the app encourages parents to engage in daily practices that support early learning, including cognitive, motor, socio-emotional, and language skills.

Bebbo is available in 14 countries across ECA in 14 different languages (with 23 language variations). Since its launch 1.5 years ago (as of May 2023), the app has already been downloaded by over 715,000 users. More than 63,200 users have accessed the Ukrainian version of **Bebbo**. Out of these, 81% are in Ukraine, 6.3% - in Poland, 2.9% - in Germany, 1.6% - in Czechia, about 0.4 % in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova each. Majority of these users (95%) are mothers and they have registered more than 40,500 children on the app.

Cycle 2 of this research indicated that social media has been a source of information on formal and informal ECEC support. In Cyprus, for example, private kindergartens have advertised ECEC openings for children on Telegram channels for Ukrainian refugees, increasing their visibility to Ukrainian refugee families.¹¹⁵

The provision of online information, advice and guidance was often mirrored at a municipal level, albeit in a fragmented way. As with cycle 1, municipal variations seem to have reflected not only the numbers of Ukrainian refugees with young children, but also differences in local resources and infrastructure. In Denmark, municipalities have created online one-stop shops of relevant resources for newly arrived families from Ukraine to familiarize themselves with day-care offers and admission procedures, developed around local needs.¹¹⁶ Similarly in Spain, many Autonomous Communities have compiled a list of resources, or developed their own guidance materials and made them available online to support access to ECEC. This includes a tailored approach for 0–3-year-olds and 3–6-year-olds.¹¹⁷ These efforts have been assisted by regional coordination in some countries. In Belgium, for example, the regional government of Wallonia has updated its webpage, giving comprehensive guidance for Ukrainian refugees and local stakeholders, and providing local authorities with a dedicated guidance document, updated in September 2022, explaining how they should handle accommodation and schooling for refugees.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Key stakeholder evidence

¹¹⁶ e.g. locally defined offers in Aarborg municipality, Vejle municipality, Copenhagen, and so forth.

¹¹⁷ Ministerio de Inclusion, Seguridad Social y Migraciones (2022). Trámites para escolarizar a los niños desplazados de Ucrania. Available at: <https://ucraniaurgente.inclusion.gob.es/w/escolarizar-desplazados-ucrania>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24986>

The data collected across countries points towards a number of challenges and areas for improvement:

- According to interviews with key stakeholders during the 2nd cycle of research, a common challenge exists where online information and guidance services raise awareness of services that are already over capacity to meet additional demand. In Romania, for example, it was noted that there is still a lack of early childhood intervention services for Ukrainian refugee children with disabilities, especially among the 0-6 age group. Most referrals have directed families towards the existing Romanian services, which are already heavily subscribed, and requiring translation services to match.¹¹⁹
- The effectiveness of online information, advice and brokerage services is not always clear. There was generally limited information available to country researchers on the reach and engagement achieved by online services, ECEC websites, and apps in particular. This is therefore an area that merits further research.

2.3.3 Remote training and professional development

Digital channels have provided a means of engaging and informing professionals working in local authorities, ECEC institutions and specialist organizations. Since the previous cycle of research, it emerged that there are new or additional examples of organizations delivering webinars or online tutorials with guidance for early years educators to support children from Ukraine. Much of this activity has originated with the NGO and private sectors, or as Public-Private Partnerships. In Ireland, for example, the NGO Barnardo's has webinars and support for early years educators from a trauma-informed care perspective, with training that covers how to recognize behaviors that may indicate additional needs for a child¹²⁰. In Italy, UNICEF was preparing to roll out a programme of online events to support local authorities in hosting and integrating refugee children. UNICEF has also partnered with the International Step by Step Association, who in collaboration with Amna and War Child Holland, have trained 137 master trainers from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine to provide ECEC educators with foundational knowledge and skills on psychological first aid and trauma-informed practices in ECEC settings. The aim of these trainings was to better support practitioners working with young children impacted by conflict and displacement due to the war.

¹¹⁹ Key stakeholder evidence

¹²⁰ Key stakeholder evidence

2.3.4 Needs assessment, monitoring and reporting

A final aspect of ECEC responses with a digital dimension relates to the use of online tools and platforms for needs assessment, monitoring and reporting. There is some evidence of countries (and organizations) developing more sophisticated tools to establish the needs and aspirations of refugee families, including those with young children. These approaches have been assisted by the use of apps and / or online surveys as a means of capturing information.

The Bebbio parenting app (see case study above) is one example of a multi-functioning tool that not only connects Ukrainian refugee families with information, but also includes the functionality to gather feedback. The PRIMERO app in Romania is a further example (see case study below).¹²¹ As illustrated throughout this section, the use of digital tools in conjunction with steps to reach and engage families upon their arrival, and the subsequent use of data to facilitate ongoing monitoring and adjustment of support and services has been key.

Case study: PRIMERO in Romania

The Romanian Authority for Child Rights Protection and Adoption (under the Ministry) with UNICEF support, developed and launched a new app to assist with the registration and assessment of Ukrainian refugee families. Launched in August 2022, the app included over 14,000 Ukrainian children by December 2022. The PRIMERO app includes data on the age of children, their situation (if they are accompanied by their parents or not), their accommodation place, their participation in education, and other needs, including special educational needs.

As most of the Social and Child Protection Departments are connected to the app, it has the ability to support central and local authorities to better understand the needs of Ukrainian children, and to intervene accordingly. This is a promising practice because the lack of information about the presence and needs of children is the first and often the main challenge to providing them with relevant services, including ECEC services that they may need. Moreover, it equips authorities to offer support proactively, rather than placing the onus on Ukrainian families to register for services and support.

Beyond the use of apps, there were also examples found of more traditional online surveys and research to gather information to inform local responses. One example is the collaboration between UNICEF and Eurocities, which was highlighted by country research in Italy. As part of a systematic approach to help cities develop the necessary tools to address humanitarian crises, the partners have developed a survey to establish

¹²¹ <https://copii.gov.ro/1/primero-aplicatie-lansata-pentru-monitorizarea-copiiilor-veniti-din-ucraina/>

the capacity and capability of local authorities to provide services for Ukrainian refugees (including ECEC provision). At the time of writing, the survey was intended to directly feed into three webinars jointly organized by UNICEF and Eurocities, aimed at driving the exchange of good practices and inspiring policy change in cities on this issue.¹²²

¹²² Sociali, M. D. (2022, September 9). *Eurocities–Unicef insieme a sostegno dei bambini ucraini*. Pabrano z lokalizacji Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali: <https://integrazionemigranti.gov.it/it-it/Ricerca-news/Dettaglio-news/id/2763/EurocitiesUnicef-insieme-a-sostegno-dei-bambini-ucraini>



3.0

Part B: Support for Integration through ECEC

3.0 Part B: Support for Integration through ECEC

3.1 Integration & community cohesion

Refugee integration and community cohesion are fundamental to the proper functioning of societies in general. In this respect, a somewhat **positive picture emerges as most countries have adopted an ‘integration package’ of measures that encompasses integration interventions.** These address both adults who find themselves in a completely new environment and reality, as well as children who need to enroll in new educational facilities and integrate to avoid interruption to their early learning journey.

3.1.1 Integration measures regarding children

With regards to the integration of Ukrainian children into educational facilities, overall **the response has been fast-paced as most countries have welcomed Ukrainian children into their educational institutions** wherever reception capacities of these institutions have allowed for it. **Few countries (LU, NL, DE, FR) have made education mandatory for Ukrainian children** at ECEC level. At first glance, mandating compulsory ECEC attendance can be interpreted as a radical stance because it poses a challenging adaptation period for Ukrainian children, since they may be confused by their sudden change of educational environment and unable to understand the language of the host country. However, mandating enrolment also ensures that children’s education remains uninterrupted.

Some countries have designed classes and courses solely for Ukrainian children. While this can be interpreted as a positive approach, it can turn into a counter-productive one: instead of reinforcing the integration of Ukrainian children it can have the reverse effect and lead to their isolation. For example, in Belgium, even though the opening of a Ukrainian school in Brussels and the settlement of emergency villages with educational offers for Ukrainian refugees were referred to as good practices, there were concerns about how these initiatives may contribute to an isolating effect on the community in general.¹²³ In order to be effective, integration measures put in place in countries need to find a middle ground between ensuring a smooth integration process whilst simultaneously avoiding the segregation of the Ukrainian community.

Apart from the reception of Ukrainian children into formal education facilities, **some countries have organized extra-curricular activities, recognized for their integrating quality,** to enhance Ukrainian children’s integration and interaction with their peers. For instance, summer schools / camps initiatives have been organized in Latvia and Poland,

¹²³ [Vesna. Bilingual Centre for Ukrainian families](#)

among others. In the city of Katowice, Poland, summer schools to learn Polish were organized for Ukrainian refugees.¹²⁴ As for Latvia, in summer 2022, the National Centre for Education, in cooperation with local authorities, organized summer camps for Ukrainian children where they had the opportunity to learn Latvian, engage in other forms of inclusive activities, and form new friendships with local children. In Slovakia as well, Ukrainian children were invited to take part in summer school activities alongside other Slovak children. This initiative was developed and supervised by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

To both improve the quality and the quantity of integration services (e.g., by increasing the number of teaching staff), several countries have decided to **allocate special funds** for this purpose. Austria decided to support 67 projects across all federal states intended to resolve current challenges in the integration of refugees and migrants through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.¹²⁵ As for Ireland, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCYA) announced 9 million EUR for programmes promoting refugee and migrant integration.¹²⁶ The budget will provide funding to local authorities to coordinate local integration support, including the establishment of a permanent network of Integration Support Workers. Moreover, in respect to costs associated with Ukrainian refugees, the Minister stated a commitment to dealing with these costs as part of the Revised Estimates process later in the year.¹²⁷ At the beginning of the migrant crisis, Italy also allocated 1 million EUR as a matter of urgency to provide support to educational institutions directly involved in reception and integration activities for incoming refugees.

Non-financial (at least not directly) **integration programmes have also been deployed across some countries.** In Romania, for example, the NGO Step by Step has been strengthening Ukrainian refugees' integration processes and setting educational standards, especially for ECEC, through the *"Supporting local authorities in integrating refugees and ensuring the well-being of all children in the community"* programme. The programme is supported by UNICEF, and a select number of 11 local authorities from seven communities with high numbers of Ukrainian refugees will be able to develop centers of alternative / complementary ECEC called PrimoHUBs.¹²⁸

However, integration initiatives have encountered their own obstacles. **One of the most cited factors that hinders the integration process is a language barrier, particularly in countries with non-Slavic languages.** Countries that reported acute challenges in communication and comprehension are France, Spain, Portugal and Germany. On the

¹²⁴ University of Silesia in Katowice (2022), [Summer schools of Polish language for Ukrainians](#)

¹²⁵ Vindobona (2022), ['Multiple Integration Projects Will Be Promoted in Austria'](#)

¹²⁶ Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2022), [Minister O'Gorman secures €1 billion investment in early learning and childcare](#)

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Step by Step website: <https://www.stepbystep.ro/stire/evenimente/inscriere-in-selectia-de-comunitati-locale-apel-6-2022/>

other hand, communication has been easier in countries in which the spoken language is a Slavic language, and thus with a certain degree of resemblance to Ukrainian. Previous history of Russian-teaching in some of the countries and pre-existing Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking minorities have also supported integration efforts.

Another challenge for integration (and increased ECEC enrolment) is **the reluctance of some Ukrainian parents to enroll their children in educational facilities within the host country** (BE, BG, CH, CZ, EE, ES, PL, PT, RO). This is often justified by the fact that children will be attending Ukrainian online courses remotely and that their current situation is temporary, due to their planned return to Ukraine in the coming weeks or months.

One of the most cited factors that hinders the integration process is a language barrier, in particular in countries with non-Slavic languages.

3.1.2 Reported tensions

Despite a myriad of initiatives, programmes, and goodwill, **several countries have registered tensions** between Ukrainian refugees and other groups of refugees (Belgium, France), between Ukrainian refugees and existing populations in host countries (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Netherlands, and Portugal), as well as between groups of Ukrainian refugees themselves (Ireland). One of the leading causes of these tensions is the supposedly preferential and priority treatment granted to Ukrainian refugees, to the detriment of other groups of refugees and the general population. These confrontations are mostly two-fold: they have a direct nature, which materializes in incidents of real physical violence, and an indirect character that passes by the denunciation of preferential treatment by different parties.

In this respect, a unique situation was noted in Ireland where frictions have been observed between Ukrainian refugees themselves, the source of the dispute being the division between Eastern vs Western Ukrainians, and Pro vs Anti-Zelensky Ukrainians. The National Coordinator for Ukraine Civil Society Emergency Response in Ireland has also mentioned cases of violence among young people; inter-Ukrainian bullying in education. Similar violent incidents amongst the young refugee population were reported in Portugal. It is not known whether these cases extend to the ECEC aged Ukrainian refugee population.

In France and Belgium, media outlets and NGOs have been denouncing the differential treatment given to Ukrainian refugees versus other refugees. In France, a considerable amount of comparison has been made with previous migration crises, i.e., the 2015 European migrant crisis, also known as the Syrian refugee crisis, where an unprecedented number of refugees, mostly from Arabic countries, arrived in Europe. InfoMigrants, an information website for refugees and immigrants, found that in areas

ranging from accommodation, access to healthcare, and access to employment, Ukrainian refugees received different and preferential treatment compared with other refugees¹²⁹. InfoMigrants came to a similar conclusion in Belgium, where they highlighted the unfavorable treatment faced by other refugee populations compared to Ukrainians.¹³⁰

Furthermore, a news report observed that the French media almost unanimously describes Ukrainians as “refugees” in their reporting, while referring to those fleeing the Syrian and Taliban conflict as “migrants”, which has a more negative connotation in France than “refugee”.¹³¹ This linguistic conundrum took a political turn with far-right wing political candidates stating that it is acceptable to have different rules for asylum seekers from Europe and those from Arab Muslim nations.¹³² A choice of linguistic terminology has also been a source of problems in Finland, albeit for different reasons. Indeed, some voices of concern brought up the reluctance of the Finnish population to originally welcome Russian-speaking Ukrainians because of their use of the Russian language. Finland also noted a slight increase in public harassment by some part of the Finnish population towards immigrants from Russia.

Tensions between refugee and local populations have been discussed in the Estonian media, where dissatisfaction has grown among parents, as apparently refugee families were given benefits, including free museum, cinemas, hobby clubs, and learning tools, that local children have not been privy to. In Austria, at the end of 2022, grave allegations of sexual abuse in day care centers were reported, with one such suspected case in the Vienna-Penzing kindergarten.¹³³

Moreover, the Hungarian-speaking Roma minority community continues to face hardships in several spheres of daily life. Research among 160 Hungarian-speaking Roma families fleeing Ukraine carried out by the Romaversitas Foundation¹³⁴ has confirmed that immigrant Roma families endure discrimination in access to education, housing and employment in Hungary. Furthermore, Roma children often lack socialization for formal education, as a large proportion have never attended educational institutions. To remedy these gaps, Romaversitas, jointly with other CSOs in Hungary, seeks to assist Roma children and youth by providing a platform to facilitate the flow of information, arranging knowledge sharing sessions through thematic trainings.

Despite these various reports of frictions between different groups of refugees and the local host population, governments of affected countries have taken little or no action to effectively redress reported situations. In fact, in Belgium, the stakeholder at the federal

¹²⁹ InfoMigrants (2022), [‘Does France welcome Ukrainians and Afghans in the same way, as Macron claims?’ \(‘La France accueille-t-elle de la même manière les Ukrainiens et les Afghans, comme l’affirme Macron ?’\)](#)

¹³⁰ InfoMigrants (2022), [‘They feel abandoned’: Non-Ukrainian asylum seekers in Belgium left out in the cold’](#)

¹³¹ France 24 (2022), [‘French far-right candidate Zemmour says Ukrainians welcome, but not Arab refugees’](#)

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Today Times Live (2022), [‘No information to parents – kindergarten abuse hidden for a year’](#)

¹³⁴ [Romaversitas](#)

level responsible for asylum matters did not comment on the tensions between Ukrainian refugees and refugees from other countries. French authorities also do not seem to acknowledge this problem, since based on the information available in the public domain, no actions have been taken to resolve these afore-mentioned tensions.

3.2 Support for teachers

Support for teachers differs from country to country, with some countries being actively involved in offering support and others encountering challenges. Three major axes of assistance are emerging and have been described below as good practices, alongside several challenges identified.

3.2.1 Good practices relating to support for teachers

The first line of support could be seen as the most direct way to support teachers and the educational system as a whole. **It consists of increasing the supply of educational services, including the recruitment of additional teaching and support staff.** Several countries have opted for this approach (CY, FR, IE, IT, LU, PL, PT). For example, Luxembourg eased requirements for teaching professionals for the 2022-2023 school year. As a result, 289 additional staff were recruited.¹³⁵ To support teachers in their duties and facilitate Ukrainian children's integration into the educational system, 54 **'intercultural mediators'** were hired as well.¹³⁶ These mediators aid newly arrived families and children by providing translation services, helping in classes, and facilitating communication between families, students and education institutions.¹³⁷

A similar initiative was introduced in Italy, where linguistic cultural mediators from foreign backgrounds were hired to help ECEC providers with Ukrainian children's integration. France has also put effort into hiring additional Ukrainian teachers, by inserting a special recruitment announcement on the websites of some regional 'Ukraine crisis units' for Ukrainian teachers who wish to work in French schools. The Irish government have stated that they will be allocating additional special education teachers (SET) and special needs assistants (SNA) where required.¹³⁸ However, there is no evidence to support the fulfilment of these commitments yet. One of the countries hosting the largest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita, Poland, has recently passed new legislation with the aim of increasing the number of support staff in kindergartens

¹³⁵ Le Quotidien (2022), '[Luxembourg: 289 new teachers recruited at the start of the school year](#)' (*Luxembourg : 289 nouveaux enseignants recrutés à la rentrée*)

¹³⁶ Virgule (2022), '[More than 1,100 Ukrainian refugees will go back to school](#)' (*Plus de 1.100 réfugiés ukrainiens vont faire leur rentrée*)

¹³⁷ Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth (2022), '[Intercultural mediators](#)' (*Médiateurs interculturels*)

¹³⁸ Department of Education (2022), '[Supporting Ukrainian students with special educational needs \(SEN\) – guidance for schools](#)

and schools. The total number of these specialists is therefore supposed to increase from 22,000 in September 2022 to 51,000 in September 2024.^{139, 140}

The second type of assistance for teachers consists of the organization of special training and professional development courses. These courses are for the vast majority centered on soft competencies, with the objective of helping teaching staff, including ECEC providers, to better understand the needs of Ukrainian children in education. As an example, Danish municipalities have provided around 400 ECEC workers with an opportunity to attend skills development courses, focused on how to best receive, engage, and instruct Ukrainian refugee children in day care.¹⁴¹ Training and courses for teachers on intercultural education and on best practices for working with Ukrainian special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) children were also proposed in Greece. In Greece, the initiative has also gone a step further by offering a 9-month training course to preschool teachers, in collaboration with UNICEF.¹⁴² A training space was established in France, where the General Directorate for Education and the General Inspection of Education, Sport and Research designed training modules and videos materials freely available for educational staff.¹⁴³ The modules focus on understanding how to welcome children arriving from conflict zones, how to integrate children from conflict zones into classrooms, and how to look out for signs and symptoms that might be a cause for concern in terms of PTSD or unsuccessful integration.¹⁴⁴ Luxembourg has also proven to be proactive by organizing training for teachers well before the arrival of new Ukrainian refugees.¹⁴⁵

The last type of identified support is the provision of information through various means and formats. Indeed, a wide range of countries have prepared extensive materials in different formats (e.g., booklets, webinars etc.) to support teaching staff on how to work with and respond to the needs of children affected by the Ukrainian conflict. The table below provides some illustrative examples (see also 'Digital Solutions' in Chapter 4).

¹³⁹ European Commission (2022), [Education and Training Monitor 2022: Poland](#)

¹⁴⁰ [Act of 12 May 2022 on Amending the Act on the educational system and certain other acts \(Ustawa z dnia 12 maja 2022 o zmianie ustawy o systemie oświaty oraz niektórych innych ustaw\)](#)

¹⁴¹ KL - Local Government Denmark (2022), [Staff in day care centres can now attend a skills training course for the reception of Ukrainian children \(Nu kan merdarbejdere I dagtilbud komme pa kompetenceløftskursus til modtagelsen af ukrainske børn\)](#)

¹⁴² Based on stakeholder consultation

¹⁴³ Materials are available on the [M@gistère website](#)

¹⁴⁴ Ministry of education and Youth, Éduscol: [Welcoming children arriving from Ukraine and other war zones \(Accueillir des enfants arrivant d'Ukraine ou d'autres zones de guerre\)](#)

¹⁴⁵ Virgule (2022), ['More than 1,100 Ukrainian refugees will go back to school' \(Plus de 1.100 réfugiés ukrainiens vont faire leur rentrée\)](#)

Table 32 Country examples

Country examples – provision of information to teaching staff supporting Ukrainian refugees

- In **Sweden**, the National Agency for Education has issued guidance on how to speak with children about the war in Ukraine.¹⁴⁶ Recommendations emphasize that teachers should be especially careful when interacting with children and young people who have personally experienced the war and suffered physically or mentally. Educational establishments were also provided with guidelines on how to assess the communicative capability of pupils with another mother tongue.
- In **Ireland**, the children’s charity Barnardos holds webinars with guidance for early years educators to support children from Ukraine, and provides resources for early years educators.¹⁴⁷ Webinars are organized around themes such as trauma-informed care perspectives.¹⁴⁸
- In **Spain**, several Autonomous communities have compiled a list of resources, or developed their own guidance materials, to help integrate Ukrainian children into classrooms. These materials are centered on supporting teachers with the integration of refugee children; language and communication tools; and educational tools from the UNHCR. On a more centralized level, the Spanish Commission for Refugees has developed “A Guide of educational resources for teachers”. However, the document lacks information for ECEC staff.¹⁴⁹
- **Finland** offers a rich array of materials to ECEC personnel to support their work with both Ukrainian and other refugee children.
- In **Luxembourg**, the SECAM (Department for the Education of Foreign Children) has provided teaching staff with sheets and booklets about pupils’ reactions to the crisis, or common situations that might arise.

3.2.2 Challenges

Despite the many positive initiatives, **some countries have encountered challenges when putting in place effective support for teachers.** Moreover, several countries have proven to be less proactive, and have developed fewer initiatives related to support for teachers. In some countries, none or very little information is available on the available support for teachers. Additional research on this subject could be useful, if not necessary, to fill in

¹⁴⁶ The Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), [Talking to children and young people about war and crisis \(Att prata med barn och unga om krig och kriser\)](#)

¹⁴⁷ Barnardos, [Resources to support the well-being of families from Ukraine](#)

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ CEAR (2022), [Guía didáctica de asilo y refugio: Guía de recursos educativos para el profesorado.](#)

information gaps. Belgium and the Netherlands are two examples of countries in which there is hardly any information regarding support provided to teachers.

In other countries, very few initiatives have been identified towards supporting or preparing teachers to welcome and integrate refugees into their classrooms. In Malta for instance, no support for teachers has been identified at all. This could, however, be explained by the small number of refugees arriving in Malta, and also by the fact that around a third of Ukrainian refugees who have obtained temporary protection in Malta have already left the country. Indeed, Malta is often seen as a transit country for Ukrainian refugees.

Across the countries researched, the most persistent problem remains to be the lack of capacity in educational facilities, including ECEC, and the lack of personnel. As mentioned earlier in the report, this was identified as a structural issue existing long before the arrival of child refugees, but is now aggravated by the current situation due to war and migration. These shortages have led to overcrowded classes, putting a strain on teachers' capacity to meet the needs of families and children. In parallel, children are receiving less personalized support. Problems of this nature were reported in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Finland, Latvia, Romania, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Ireland. The most acute shortage of personnel (in terms of numbers) was reported in Germany, Austria and Latvia. In fact, according to the Bertelsmann Foundation, in 2023, Germany will lack around 384,000 day-care places and 98,600 personnel.^{150,151} In Austria, currently, 1,800 employees are already lacking, including a shortage of 350 kindergarten teachers in the country's capital.¹⁵² Understaffing problems have also been recognized in Latvia by the Ministry of Education and Science, who pointed at the lack of 600 preschool teachers, without any long-term plans on how to resolve the issue.¹⁵³

Staff shortages are uneven and more prevalent in small and remote locations. For instance, in Sweden, the availability of staff with relevant language skills is not evenly distributed between educational establishments. Indeed, major schools operating in city centers are often better equipped from a personnel and logistical point of view than

Across the countries researched, the most persistent problem remains to be the lack of capacity in educational facilities, including ECEC, and the lack of personnel.

¹⁵⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2022), '[In 2023, there will be a shortage of around 384,000 day care places in Germany' \(2023 fehlen in Deutschland rund 384.000 Kita-Plätze\)](#)

¹⁵¹ According to estimations presented by the Federal Government for a longer time frame, by 2025 a staff shortage of about 191,000 educators is expected (see [BMSFJ](#))

¹⁵² Löffler, R., Michitsch, V., Bauer, V., Geppert, C., Esterl, A., Mayerl, M., A., Pirstnig, Marina (2022). [Educational and professional careers of graduates of educational institutions and colleges for elementary education](#). Final project report of the Austrian Institute for Vocational Training Research (öibf)

¹⁵³ LSM News (2022), '[Ministry of Education: shortage of at least 600 pre-school teachers in Latvia' \(Izglitibas ministrija: Latvija trukst vismaz 600 pirmsskolas pedagogu\)](#)

schools located in remote areas. Another example of unequal distribution comes from Ireland, where one report highlighted gaps in special education provision across regions. This unevenness is also reflected in the skills and knowledge of teaching-staff, with teachers in urban areas being generally more knowledgeable in how to take care of children that have experienced war than teachers in rural areas. In fact, in Czechia, some evidence suggested that teachers in some (small rural) kindergartens and schools do not know how to interact with Ukrainian children.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, institutions located in larger cities have greater financial, material and educational resources and consequently, are better-equipped to interact with war-affected children, with teachers having facilitated access to courses and trainings on specialized themes. The report from Czechia indicated that this unexpected situation has had a negative impact on teachers' well-being and motivation, also highlighting that teachers have been through a complex and long period of remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The succession of these situations may have made it difficult for Czech teachers to cope with the influx of Ukrainian children.

3.3 Mobilizing specialist support

3.3.1 The importance of specialist expertise in ECEC

Specialist support here refers to any specific support for children that goes beyond conventional ECEC – for example those working with children who have SEND (e.g. speech pathologists, special education teachers, school nurses and others) or children facing psychological difficulties (e.g. psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, medical social workers and others).

An adequate supply of qualified ECEC teaching staff is a necessary precondition for any ECEC system to deliver high-quality services. **To be fully inclusive and welcoming to all children, however, strong ECEC services also rely on more specialized and targeted expertise.** Teachers and professionals who are trained in supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are essential not only for granting such children access to a particular setting, but also for improving their chances of successfully integrating and actively engaging in the daily activities of an ECEC center.

Similarly, professionals who are **qualified to provide psychological assessment and support to children** are essential for facilitating the integration of those who experience behavioral difficulties, 'high risk' circumstances, or trauma. Indeed, the availability of expertise at this level enhances the chances that all attending children in a setting are receptive to the social and pedagogical benefits of participation in ECEC.

¹⁵⁴ Czech School Inspectorate (2022), [Interim report on the integration and education of Ukrainian children and pupils \(Průběžná zpráva o integraci a vzdělávání ukrajinských dětí a žáků. Tematická zpráva\)](#)

The previous cycle of research highlighted that prior to the war, most host countries were already contending with high demand for specialist expertise and correspondingly limited supply, which was exacerbated by the abrupt arrival of high numbers of Ukrainian children. Furthermore, **the challenges of scaling up such expertise in ECEC systems at short-notice were compounded by shortages of such experts with Ukrainian language proficiency**, both to meet the needs of newly-arrived children with SEND¹⁵⁵ and to help those requiring psychosocial support.¹⁵⁶ Research from the summer of 2022 highlighted that responses across many host countries had been innovative and resourceful, focusing in particular on granting Ukrainian children with SEND the same rights and access to support mechanisms that are in place for local children with SEND¹⁵⁷ and mobilizing programmatic support, both at state level and from non-governmental and civil society organizations, to provide crisis intervention and psychosocial programmes to young Ukrainian children and their parents.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, capacity and resource constraints on the ground have meant that while resources to address these critical needs were accessible to Ukrainian migrants and refugees in theory, they had not yet been fully actualized in practice.

3.3.2 Scaling up specialist support

Given the profound vulnerability of newly-arrived children from Ukraine and the potentially significant inhibitory effect this may have on their ability to successfully integrate into host countries, the urgency of securing specialist support was well-recognized by consulted stakeholders at the end of the last cycle. There were also widespread calls to scale-up resources for children with SEND and psychosocial support.¹⁵⁹

Some countries have made systemic efforts to address these shortages. In Estonia, financing to promote training and careers in teaching and specialized support (speech therapists, special education teachers and school psychologists) has been extended to early education, with the aim of eventually expanding the pool of experts available to ECEC settings. However, it should be noted that the benefits of this approach are likely to be distant in nature due to the time required to train professionals. Poland, in contrast, plans to dramatically increase the number of specialists based in preschools from 22,000 to approximately 51,000 overall for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. Their aims in doing so are also to empower ECEC settings with increased psychological knowledge and expertise on how to assist both Ukrainian children and their Polish peers in adjusting

¹⁵⁵ See Cycle 1 Synthesis report, pg. 39.

¹⁵⁶ See Cycle 1 Synthesis report, pg. 60.

¹⁵⁷ See Cycle 1 Synthesis report, pg. 37-8

¹⁵⁸ See Cycle 1 Synthesis report, pg 62-63.

¹⁵⁹ See Cycle 1 Synthesis report, 'Conclusions and Recommendations'.

to the changes brought about by the war.^{160, 161} In general, however, responses to shortages in expertise have differed significantly depending on whether the target beneficiaries are children with SEND or children and parents in need of psychosocial support.

3.3.3 Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities

In the current cycle of research, stakeholders from both governmental and non-governmental organizations across several countries have stressed that the **integration of Ukrainian children with SEND into mainstream ECEC systems has continued to be a major challenge** (MD, PL, RO), despite equal access to ECEC being largely assured for those children by law. In Poland, for example, an interviewed stakeholder emphasized that priority was first given to securing housing and food for newly-arrived families, and that such issues as inclusive education could not be prioritized until basic needs were met.¹⁶²

As solutions to the logistical challenges of finding housing, subsistence, and ECEC places for Ukrainian children and families were found in the immediate aftermath of the refugee influx over the summer, **attention and resources have since been freed to focus more on inclusion efforts**. Ireland, for example, has taken a multidimensional approach to supporting Ukrainian children with SEND: a formalized process was established for allocating additional resources from special education teachers and special needs assistants to Ukrainian refugee children with SEND. Additionally, local Special Educational Needs officers have been made available to provide coordinative support to parents of children with SEND, and in particular to help parents find suitable placements for their children in cases where appropriate support would not be available in mainstream settings.

Some governments have also opted to focus on **equipping their existing teachers with new skills and guidance to address the needs of Ukrainian children with SEND**, through guidance materials as well as continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities. In Greece, for example, the Ministry of Education has offered training specifically for teachers who work directly with Ukrainian SEND children,¹⁶³ and is also offering a 9-month, 400-hour training course specifically to preschool teachers in collaboration with UNICEF.¹⁶⁴ In Sweden, the Special Education School Authority (SPSM) has compiled guiding resources for teachers on how to include Ukrainian children with physical and mental disabilities in their classrooms, including those with visual impairments, hearing

¹⁶⁰ European Commission (2022), [Education and Training Monitor 2022: Poland](#)

¹⁶¹ [Act of 12 May 2022 on Amending the Act on the educational system and certain other acts \(Ustawa z dnia 12 maja 2022 o zmianie ustawy o systemie oświaty oraz niektórych innych ustaw\)](#)

¹⁶² Source: Key informant interviewed for this study.

¹⁶³ <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/news/51622-18-03-22-i-xora-mas-anoigei-mia-megali-agkalia-gia-tous-mathites-apo-tin-oukrania>

¹⁶⁴ Source: Key informant interviewed for this study.

disorders, and language disorders. The guidance also includes instructions on how to carry out a background check for planning individually-tailored support.¹⁶⁵ Similarly in Ireland, a guidance note for schools was issued by the government in August 2022 in time for the 2022/23 school year, focused on how to support Ukrainian students with special educational needs.¹⁶⁶

In some countries, non-governmental and civil society organizations have also stepped in to address gaps in support for SEND children. The Blue Dot centers in Romania, for example, offer social services and referrals in a range of areas for Ukrainian children, including those with disabilities and special educational needs.¹⁶⁷ In Hungary, the civil society organization Menedék recently implemented a programme focused on the integration of Ukrainian refugee children, and assigned volunteer special education teachers to children who are identified as having learning difficulties.¹⁶⁸

3.3.4 Resources for children and parents in need of psychosocial support

Early childhood is recognized as an important period for brain development and is therefore often regarded as a ‘critical time’ for recognizing, diagnosing and mobilizing early interventions for psychological disorders, behavior problems, and mental health difficulties more generally.¹⁶⁹ Psychological expertise subsequently has an important and enduring role to play in ensuring high-quality and inclusive ECEC. The arrival of young children from Ukraine, sometimes following exposure to war and violence, and invariably following the stresses of displacement, has therefore presented a profound upsurge in need for psychosocial services.¹⁷⁰

Exposure to war during childhood has been linked to a range of long-term adverse mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and behavioral disorders that may persist into adulthood.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, experiences of involuntary displacement and migration can also negatively impact mental health,¹⁷² meaning that the need for psychological support is likely pronounced even for those children who left Ukraine before witnessing active conflict and therefore successfully

¹⁶⁵ *Ukraine: How to meet newly arrived children and students*. Available at: <https://www.spsm.se/stod/kriget-i-ukraina/ukraina-sa-moter-du-nyanlanda-barn-och-elever/>

¹⁶⁶ Supporting Ukrainian students with special educational needs (SEN) – guidance for schools: <https://assets.gov.ie/233032/27caf7e2-0e00-4a42-8e9f-ed6ba58b364f.pdf>

¹⁶⁷ <https://bluedothub.org/country-hubs/romania-hub/>

¹⁶⁸ Source: Key informant interviewed for this study.

¹⁶⁹ Izett, E., Rooney, R., Prescott, S.L., De Palma, M. and M. McDevitt (2021). Prevention of Mental Health Difficulties for Children Aged 0–3 Years: A Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11:500361. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.500361

¹⁷⁰ Bouchard, J.P., Stiegler, N., Padmanabhanunni, A., & T. B. Pretorius. (2023). Psychotraumatology, of the war in Ukraine: The question of the psychological care of victims who are refugees or who remain in Ukraine. *Annales Médico-Psychologique, Revue Psychiatrique*. 181:1, pp. 12-15.

¹⁷¹ Murthy, S.S. & R. Lakshminarayana. (2006). Mental health consequences of war: a brief overview of research findings. *World Psychiatry* 5(1), pp. 25-30

¹⁷² World Health Organisation (2021). ‘Mental Health and Forced Displacement’. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-and-forced-displacement>

avoided incurring war-related trauma. Indeed, experiences of family separation, sub-optimal and potentially unsafe conditions of travel, housing insecurity, homesickness, culture shock, and difficulties with assimilation are likely to be shared by the majority of Ukrainian migrants and refugees who settle abroad throughout the EU27 and Moldova. Additionally, there is a well-established relationship between parenting stress and children’s mental health and wellbeing,¹⁷³ meaning that young Ukrainian children are vulnerable both to the consequences of their own first-hand experiences with displacement, and to the consequences of second-hand adversity experienced through their parents. To minimize negative long-term outcomes in this population, **it is therefore critically important to provide psychosocial support both to ECEC-aged Ukrainian children and to their parents.**

There is a well-established relationship between parenting stress and children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Research during the first cycle of this study demonstrated that while the high need for psychosocial support among this group was well-recognized, most host countries did not yet have comprehensive solutions in place for ECEC-aged children or their parents.¹⁷⁴ Research throughout November to January, however, has demonstrated a **growth in psychological support mechanisms both for children and for parents**, both within ECEC settings and beyond them. While some of these solutions have been provided through governmental structures, examples from across host countries suggest that non-governmental (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) are particularly active in ‘filling the gaps’ left behind by state-provided support.

With regard to solutions aimed exclusively at children, the Ministry of Education in Cyprus mobilized its Educational Psychology Service to help with integrating and screening young Ukrainian children in educational settings (including preschoolers), as well as organizing follow-up support from clinical psychologists at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Services in cases where a need has been identified.¹⁷⁵ In contrast, supplementary psychological support for children in Hungary tends to be organized in the voluntary/non-profit sector, with the aforementioned civil society organization Menedék organizing weekly visits with a child psychologist through their programme for the integration of Ukrainian refugee children.¹⁷⁶ Additionally, psychologists have also been documented to provide pro-bono art and drama therapies as treatments for children

¹⁷³ Jones JH, Call TA, Wolford SN, McWey LM. (2021). Parental Stress and Child Outcomes: The Mediating Role of Family Conflict. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 30(3), pp.746–756. doi: 10.1007/s10826-021-01904-8.

¹⁷⁴ See Cycle 1 Synthesis report, pg. 64.

¹⁷⁵ The Educational Psychology Service answers to the Director General of the MoE. Its purpose is to protect and promote the mental health and all-around development of every person participating in the educational system, as well as to facilitate the learning of children and adolescents. Currently, the Service includes 48 psychologists who staff the three regional offices of the Service in Nicosia, Limassol, and Larnaca. For more information, visit:

http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu_psychology/en/index.html

¹⁷⁶ Source: Key informant for this study

with PTSD in facilities for Ukrainian refugees.¹⁷⁷ Similarly in Portugal, although it has been acknowledged that psychological support services are lacking at the government level, the Union of Ukrainians in Portugal secured a psychologist with Ukrainian language fluency and coordinated to have support organized for Ukrainian children in school (and preschool) settings. **These non-governmental solutions, while highly targeted and promising, are largely acknowledged to be small-scale and thus insufficient to meeting the vast needs of Ukrainian migrant children in host countries.**

In terms of support targeting parents, Latvia's State Agency for Social Integration stands out in its offer of a comprehensive social rehabilitation course which is geared specifically towards reducing post-traumatic stress for refugee parents. The facility includes on-site accommodation and meals, is available for parents of children aged 2 and older, and includes specialist counselling, social worker support, creative activities and medical supervision. Stays can last up to 30 days. Although the services are mainly available in Russian and English, a Ukrainian mentor has been made available on-site to support Ukrainian parents. Non-governmental solutions in Latvia include those provided in two support centers: the "Skalbes" Crisis and Counselling Centre, which offers crisis interventions and counselling from licensed clinical psychologists and psychotherapists, and the "Centre MARTA" association, which offers remote psychological counselling for adults and in-person support groups.

In general, most of the psychosocial support mechanisms identified in this 2nd cycle of research are available both for Ukrainian children and their parents, and do not target one group over another. The Children and Teenager Resource Centres in Latvia (present across 9 cities), for example, offer both remote and in-person counselling for children as well as for parents. In Greece, the Ministry of Education in Greece makes social workers and psychologists available at reception centers for Ukrainian refugees and offers services for beneficiaries of all ages. Meanwhile, a range of psychological support initiatives are being delivered by CSOs and NGOs based in Greece, including UNICEF, SOS Children's Villages, Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and other local organizations.

¹⁷⁷ Qubit (20.11.2022). Az alkotás kulcsfontosságú az Ukrajnából Magyarországra menekült gyerekek poszttraumás tüneteinek enyhítésében (Art is key to alleviating the post-traumatic symptoms of children who fled from Ukraine to Hungary). Qbit, Podcast. Available at: <https://qubit.hu/2022/11/20/az-alkotas-kulcsfontossagu-az-ukrajnabol-magyarorszagra-menekult-gyerekek-poszttraumas-tuneteinek-enyhiteseben>. Accessed: 06.12.2026

NGOs and CSOs are also active contributors to psychosocial responses in a range of other host countries. Several have established community centers for Ukrainian refugees where in-person counselling for children and parents are listed among the many service offerings; these include the Ukrainian Community Centre in Rathmines, Dublin, which was opened in December by the Irish Red Cross and Ukrainian Action Ireland;¹⁷⁸ the aforementioned Blue Dot centers in Romania, which offer psychological services to children and parents;¹⁷⁹ and the Centre for Psychophysical Development TUTU in Poland, which was opened by the Podkarpackie Association for Active Families and has already offered psychological help to over 4,000 Ukrainians.¹⁸⁰ In Bulgaria, Blue Dot centers run by the UNHCR and UNICEF also provide psychological services to children and parents from Ukraine.¹⁸¹ In some cases, support is voluntarily provided rather than being coordinated through organizations; in Portugal, for example, a group of seven psychologists organized amongst themselves to provide pro-bono therapy to newly-arrived refugees from Ukraine.

Notably, a range of miscellaneous **'remote' psychological support solutions** were also identified. In Belgium, the 'Awel Chat' was established to allow Ukrainian children and adolescents a chance to speak to someone anonymously in their mother tongue.¹⁸² In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Education collaborated with the Bulgarian National Mobile Group for Psychological Support and established six regional hotlines to provide on-call psychological help to Ukrainian children and parents.¹⁸³ Similarly in Latvia, the State Inspectorate for the Protection of Children's Rights set up remote psychological support counselling (see chapter 4, Digital Solutions).

Finally, some countries opted to address the shortage of psychosocial support for Ukrainian child refugees and their parents by **equipping existing teachers with supplementary skills** in psychological first-aid and trauma-informed practice. In Sweden, the National Agency for Education issued guidance to teachers on how to speak with children about the war in Ukraine, including not only those children who have directly experienced the war but also those who are concerned about it.¹⁸⁴

In Denmark, the National Association of Danish Communes collaborated with Danish Vocational Colleges and the AP Møller Foundation (which also funded the effort) to develop a range of continuous professional development courses for preschool and primary school staff, focused specifically on how to best receive, engage and instruct

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/dublin/new-ukrainian-community-centre-opened-in-dublin-will-provide-range-of-supports-42192155.html>

¹⁷⁹ <https://bluedothub.org/country-hubs/romania-hub/>

¹⁸⁰ Project HOPE, 'In Poland, Ukrainians Find A Safe Place'. Available at: <https://www.projecthope.org/in-poland-ukrainians-find-safe-space/10/2022/>

¹⁸¹ <https://caritas-ruse.bg/ekipite-na-caritas-i-brc-obsadiha/>

¹⁸² <https://awel.be/oekra%C3%AFne>

¹⁸³ <https://web.mon.bg/bg/100809>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/inspiration-och-stod-i-arbetet/stod-i-arbetet/att-prata-med-barn-och-unga-om-krig-och-kriser>

Ukrainian refugee children in ECEC settings. One of the major themes covered is how best to support parents and children as they process and discuss experiences of loss from the war.¹⁸⁵ In Ireland, the family support charity Barnados holds webinars with early years staff aimed at supporting children from Ukraine, with a specific focus on trauma-informed care and how to recognize additional psychosocial support needs in children.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, UNICEF is currently launching a programme in Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic to train teachers in 'psychosocial first aid', for which over 1,600 teachers in Moldova have already enrolled. Through such approaches, ECEC staff are recognized as potential multipliers of 'first line' psychosocial screening and intervention, thus providing short- and medium-term solutions to urgent psychological needs until direct contact with psychological professionals can be secured.

As solutions to the logistical challenges of finding housing, subsistence, and ECEC places for Ukrainian children and families were found in the immediate aftermath of the refugee influx, attention and resources have since been freed to focus more on inclusion and psychosocial care.

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.kl.dk/nyheder/boern-og-folkeskole/2022/nu-kan-medarbejdere-i-dagtilbud-komme-paa-kompetenceloefnskursus-til-modtagelsen-af-ukrainske-boern/>

¹⁸⁶ https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_education_further_and_higher_education_research_innovation_and_science/2022-06-14/3/?highlight%5B0%5D=mental&highlight%5B1%5D=health&highlight%5B2%5D=youth&highlight%5B3%5D=project&highlight%5B4%5D=project

4.0

Conclusions and recommendations



4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

EU countries and Moldova continue to host a large number of Ukrainian refugees, an overwhelming majority of whom are women and children. **Among over 8 million Ukrainian refugees are recorded across Europe, and over half are registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes. This leaves many unaccounted for in national databases** of EU Member States and Moldova, posing a challenge for resource planning and crafting appropriate responses, including on ECEC. A lack of precise age disaggregated statistical data continues to be a fundamental challenge to plan, design and adapt ECEC programmes serving Ukrainian families.

4.1 The overall landscape in Europe at cycle 2 stage

Cycle 2 of data collection shows that the availability of data on the numbers of Ukrainian refugee children and their ECEC enrolments has fluctuated across countries, leading to improved oversight on the ECEC-related needs of Ukrainian refugees in some cases and to new information gaps in others. Some newly-available data for this research cycle was identified in three EU Member States, but there were also several cases where previously-available data could no longer be sourced, while two countries opted to cease the regular publication of data on numbers of Ukrainian refugees. The availability of age-disaggregated data on the number of ECEC-aged Ukrainian children and their enrolment in ECEC continues to vary significantly across the EU27 and Moldova.

While masking a complex picture, cycle 2 corresponds with an overall plateauing of migration rates associated with the war in Ukraine. While there has been a net increase in the numbers of Ukrainian young children across European countries, the rate of this increase has slowed down in most countries. Moreover, the migration wave that had been anticipated in winter 2022 proved milder than initial expectations. Coupled with the time elapsed for public authorities and NGOs to respond, the gaps in the provision or supply of ECEC programmes seem to have reduced in some countries compared with the situation that was found at cycle 1 stage, as evidenced by improved financial mechanisms and better integrated ECEC offers and entitlements.

The picture at a country level remains challenging for ECEC services nonetheless, and especially so where Ukrainian populations are in flux. While the dynamics have lessened over time, **the continued movement of Ukrainian refugees exacerbates the difficulties in addressing their ECEC needs.** Cycle 2 research has shown varied trends across EU Member States and Moldova, with some countries seeing decreases in refugee numbers, but others still experiencing significant incoming movement of refugees. Indeed, in this regard **it is perhaps unhelpful to describe a single migration phenomenon**, as the status of Ukrainian children and families ranges from those in a more settled state enrolled with ECEC, employment and housing services, to families who have returned to Ukraine,

those who have continued to move between Ukraine and proximal countries, and those who are seemingly in transit to other European countries. The varying motivations and decision-making processes for these families and their young children are as yet not fully understood or documented.

4.2 Evolving challenges and solutions

Similar to the variation in Ukrainian refugee numbers, numbers of Ukrainian children enrolled in ECEC vary widely. Increases in ECEC enrolment were reported in several countries, while some other countries experienced persistently low rates of enrolment. **Evidence from Cycle 2 suggests that in the majority of countries, demand for ECEC services from Ukrainian families is not expected to change significantly over the coming months.** This creates an opportunity for thinking about longer-lasting and systemic solutions, especially in view of more systemic deficiencies in ECEC systems across the analyzed countries pre-war.

Research from November 2022 to January 2023 has confirmed that the ‘supplier-side’ challenges with ECEC provision reported in Cycle 1 continue to be relevant and may contribute to the persistently low enrolment rates reported in some countries. **Those challenges reported most often related to pre-existing shortages in available ECEC places, shortages in ECEC staff, and lack of psychosocial experts, revealing broader issues in ECEC systems.** Despite many initiatives, programmes and goodwill, there have been tensions observed in some countries between Ukrainian refugees and other groups of refugees, between Ukrainian refugees and the existing population in host countries, as well as amongst Ukrainian refugees themselves. While such tensions may be natural with any mass migration situations, further research could benefit from understanding the prevalence, extent, and continued persistence of these tensions, and any initiatives aimed at alleviating them.

Cycle 2 data also confirms ‘demand-side’ challenges identified in the previous cycle, such as **separation anxiety between parents and children, distrust of foreign ECEC services and reluctance to leave children unattended there, administrative delays caused by mandatory requirements for documentation, immunizations or medical checks, and the housing of Ukrainian families in suboptimal locations, far from educational infrastructure.** Some countries have made progress in addressing these barriers. However, research for this cycle has indicated that for many countries in the EU27 and Moldova, these previously-identified barriers persist.

To address these challenges, states have been mobilizing resources, using a combination of EU-funds, state budgets and other funding streams. Logistical initiatives which aimed at producing more ECEC capacity and helping Ukrainian children access existing ECEC places have also been identified. This includes, for example, the provision of transport options, but also the construction of new kindergartens. The latter may signal the

acceptance by public authorities of a longer-term perspective in addressing the ECEC needs of Ukrainian children, but also **a willingness to use this crisis as an opportunity to respond to the pre-existing shortcomings in ECEC systems**. Alternative models that are outside of the mainstream ECEC system, while still being part of the country's formal state-organized provision, have also been proposed as a solution to challenges. In this respect, institutions have been established exclusively for Ukrainian children and summer schools organized, among various options.

A variety of non-formal ECEC initiatives have also been identified in this data collection cycle, including child groups/houses, day care centers, adaptation services, and other services. **For these non-formal ECEC opportunities, the partnerships between local authorities and non-governmental/civil society actors appear key to the scale-up, long-term sustainability and continuity of ECEC services that can be flexible and responsive to families' needs**. They are often characterized by involvement of multidisciplinary staff and Ukrainian parents. The non-formal services fill a key gap in service provision, in part due to more relaxed requirements. However, the extent of coverage with non-formal ECEC services is not clear. The statistics on children attending one type or another non-formal ECEC service, or a combination of different kinds of ECEC services, are not available in any of the researched countries.

The use of digital solutions to support Ukrainian refugee children and families featured as a recurring theme in the cycle 2 research. Access to online tools for learning extends beyond the specific context of Ukrainian distance learning, and cycle 2 research has seen a greater number of online educational resources developed or adapted for ECEC aged children. This includes the development or repurposing of apps, games and language resources within ECEC settings.

The cycle 2 research has shown a continuing trend towards private and civil society responses offering ECEC provision, which has often included a digital component. **Digital offerings have also provided a means of widening access to psycho-social support for Ukrainian families, including those with young children**. Host countries are seeking to continuously improve and update online sources of information available to Ukrainian families, including ECEC-specific content. This has often been facilitated by cross-sectoral collaboration between ministries, NGOs and private organizations or donors. Digital channels have also provided a means of engaging and informing professionals working within local authorities, ECEC and specialist organizations. Furthermore, there is some evidence of countries (and organizations) developing more sophisticated tools to establish the needs and aspirations of arriving refugee families, including those with young children, and a more dynamic approach to use this information to inform service design and delivery.

Cycle 2 has identified new initiatives to foster the integration of Ukrainian refugees within ECEC systems. However, few countries have made education, at all levels,

mandatory for Ukrainian children. Some, as reported already in Cycle 1, designed classes and courses for Ukrainian children solely. Apart from the reception of Ukrainian children in formal ECEC, some countries have organized extra-curricular activities, commonly recognized for their integration quality, to enhance Ukrainian children's integration and interaction with their peers. A variety of those are directed both at Ukrainian and host country pupils: examples include summer schools and camps. To both improve the quality and the quantity of integration services, several countries have decided to allocate special funds for this purpose. **As this research suggests, the language barrier appears to be the most significant in view of integration.**

Various initiatives have also been identified which support ECEC staff in responding to the influx of Ukrainian refugees. Some countries have introduced solutions which increase recruitment of staff, including through easing requirements. Others have opted for employing support staff such as cultural mediators, and involving parents. Assistance for teachers has also consisted of special training and professional development, as well as provisions of information.

4.3 Changing configurations of specialist support

Cycle 1 recognized the need to scale-up resources for children with SEND. The integration of Ukrainian children with SEND into mainstream ECEC systems has remained a major challenge. However, Cycle 2 research shows that some countries have made systemic efforts to address shortages in this respect. Some governments have opted to focus on equipping their existing teachers with new skills and guidance to address the needs of Ukrainian children with SEND.

The arrival of young children from Ukraine has presented a profound upsurge in need for psychosocial services. Cycle 1 demonstrated that while the high need for psychosocial support was well-recognized, most host countries did not have comprehensive solutions in place for ECEC-aged children or their parents. **Research throughout November 2022 to January 2023, however, has showed a growth in psychological support mechanisms both for children and for parents, and both within ECEC settings and beyond them.** A range of miscellaneous 'remote' psychological support solutions were identified. Finally, as in the case of children with SEND, some countries opted to address the shortage of psychosocial support by equipping existing teachers with supplementary skills. NGOs and CSOs are particularly active in 'filling the gaps' left behind by state-provided support both for children with SEND and in relation to psychosocial support.

4.4 Concluding thoughts

Overall, with the refugee influx stabilising, there seems to be a degree of corresponding stability in the ECEC responses. In various aspects analysed at the time of Cycle 1, for example legal developments or coordination mechanisms, no significant changes or updates have been identified. However, countries continue to seek and find solutions to secure the right to ECEC of Ukrainian children. Cycle 2 research has identified these in relation to wider themes, such as non-formal ECEC, digital solutions, integration, support for teachers and specialized support. Some types of interventions had already been reported previously in Cycle 1, so in this respect Cycle 2 offers 'more of the same'. **But there are also examples of new interventions, suggesting willingness to implement interventions which go beyond urgent, basic needs.** Moreover, ECEC system-strengthening remains an ongoing priority across host countries.

With commendable efforts and successes identified, some old challenges persist. **Finding solutions to those challenges would improve the ECEC services for children from host countries, but also increase the resilience of ECEC systems and their preparedness for any developments that may be observed in the future,** be they in relation to the current refugee influx or future crises. As these are bound to repeat, they will strongly affect EU Member States, as primary destinations of various migratory flows. Instead of reactive policy-making, a system-strengthening perspective needs to be applied. Lessons can be drawn from this research.

4.5 Priorities for action

The research identifies a number of key actions that should assume priority status. Here, we have explicitly built on the findings from cycle 1, indicating ways in which the cycle 2 data supports, extends, or requires a reformulation of the original, and identifying priorities that are new to the updated data collection.

Furthermore, as of December 2022, EU MS have committed themselves to the updated Barcelona targets¹⁸⁷ adopted by the European Council to expand access to and strengthen the quality of ECEC services for children from 0-6 years of age. Some of the promising practices and initiatives MS have implemented lend insights into how national and municipal governments can make their ECEC systems agile and responsive to families' needs. When systematized and integrated within the formal ECEC system, these practices can enable the strengthening of ECEC systems, eventually supporting MS in achieving the revised Barcelona targets by 2030. The priorities for action that follow

¹⁸⁷ The updated Barcelona Targets adopted by the Council in December 2022, require that by 2030: At least 45% of children below the age of three participate in ECEC with specific targets for Member States that have not reached the 2002 goals; and at least 96% of children between the age of three and the starting age of compulsory primary education should participate in ECEC.

provide key recommendations for individual MS at a national level as well as collectively, at a regional, and European level.

At a national level:

- a. **Continue to deepen the understanding of ECEC needs and priorities among displaced Ukrainian young children and their families, by improving monitoring & evaluation tools and approaches .**

As highlighted at the cycle 2 data collection stage, the use of apps to gather feedback and testimonials in the Ukrainian language offers a means of reaching and engaging families beyond individual localities and ECEC settings. Further evidence is required to understand the needs of all displaced children aged 0-6 years inclusively. At cycle 2 stage, the data collection underlined how important it is to gather and share assessment data in a 'dynamic' way, by continuously reviewing and responding to changes and new developments in real time, rather than viewing data gathering as a static monitoring process. Examples have included where data is gathered and shared systematically between national and municipal levels, to cross-match supply and demand and to inform ECEC (and other) service and workforce planning. Information can also be used proactively to meet a range of needs: psychosocial support, parenting programmes, and services for children with disabilities, developmental delays/difficulties and other special needs.

- b. **Develop a cross-sectoral and whole systems approach for implementing ECEC provision in response to the crisis, ensuring that arrangements for 0-3- and 3-6-year-olds are synchronised.**

At cycle 2 stage, the data collection showed that the clarity of integrated packages of support to families and young children, including entitlements to ECEC, parenting support, welfare, housing and finance is important to articulate to Ukrainian families. This includes sustainable packages of support and service pathways for children with SEND, such as those of early identification and early intervention for children with developmental delays, or those at risk of developing them. Synchronization requires cooperation between different ministries and municipalities to support with continuity, transitions, and transparent financing. This is particularly relevant in countries where there are split systems of ECEC with different ministries providing ECEC services for children of different ages.

- c. **Identify, scale and mainstream promising practices, and build system capacity, so that the learning from special projects and locally-designed responses is accessible for the collective good.**

The cycle 2 research found that there have been coordinated efforts to boost workforce development and resources. Examples include delivering webinars and rapid, in-person professional development for professionals working with Ukrainian children and families, sometimes coordinated between municipalities to achieve a consistent approach. The development of MOOCs is a further possibility for boosting reach and take up of professional development programmes relating to Ukrainian families among the ECEC workforce in this regard. Importantly, these approaches have provided a means of realising economies of scale, and avoiding duplicated effort to develop training programmes.

- d. **Recognise and value non-formal networks of ECEC support as a viable option for connecting Ukrainian children and families with peer-led networks and services.**

The cycle 2 data collection illustrated a greater range and sophistication in models of non-formal support, from children's groups/houses to day care centres, adaptation services, to play and learning hubs, communication clubs, learning camps, and at home services. The creation of paid volunteering roles for Ukrainian refugee parents and carers in ECEC provision and access to training and qualifications also showed potential as a means of boosting ECEC capacity alongside labour market entry for adults. These measures have helped to demonstrate the value of non-formal provision in meeting the needs of Ukrainian families with young children, beyond offering a stop-gap for formal services. At the same time, there is a priority to ensure that non-formal provision is connected with quality frameworks and standards including for ECEC workers, safeguarding and child protection standards expected for working with 0-3- and 3-6-year-olds and their families.

- e. **Adopt multi-channel and integrated routes to information guidance and support, ensuring that there is 'no wrong door' to locate information, resources, and professional help.**

In particular, the cycle 2 evidence supports the need for ministries (and municipalities) to work closely with NGOs and civil society partners to continuously update and refresh web-based repositories of information and resources for Ukrainian children and families, as well as securing access to telephone, video or in-person professional or volunteer support, removing bottlenecks that inhibit the uptake of ECEC services. Countries were often successfully combining physical access points (e.g. Play and learning hubs or community centres and play facilities) with digital tools such as apps and websites. This

includes the mobilisation of specialist support, such as counselling, psycho-social support and parenting advice, using digital channels and access points.

- f. **Initiate a long-term strategic planning approach looking beyond emergency arrangements, and strengthening national ECEC systems with an emphasis on access, quality, and inclusion.**

At cycle 2, examples included where provision originally funded on a crisis basis with Ukrainian refugee children in mind was transitioning into a wider community resource, and where additional capacity (including new kindergarten provision) and multi-lingual resources stand to benefit all young children and their families. This also extends to include the systemic inclusion of SEND and psychosocial support training in ECEC teacher curricula, to benefit all children, and to strengthen multicultural and intercultural education beyond the immediate crisis context of servicing a specific integration need for Ukrainian children. Systematizing support to ensure ECEC systems are flexible, responsive, affordable, and inclusive is central to strengthening ECEC systems with an eye to making them more resilient to future shocks. Leveraging these responses to strengthen ECEC systems is critical in the immediate and long-runs to meeting the revised Barcelona Targets that seek to expand the coverage and uptake of quality ECEC services targeting young children by 2030.

At a regional and European level:

- a. **Identify, collate and disseminate promising policies and practices from across Europe.**

There is a continuing need to improve access to research, data, programmatic guidance, tools and frameworks, and facilitate peer learning between countries and organisations. This includes maintaining synergies between transnational networks and forums for ECEC, including those that are currently managed by the European Commission, the OECD, and the Council of Europe. The ongoing collaboration between UNICEF and these strategic partners is reflective of this approach. Facilitating cross-country learning and sharing of good practices is critical to Member States identifying suitable approaches and strategies to strengthen their ECEC systems with the goal of meeting the updated Barcelona targets.

- b. **Gather further evidence and enable data sharing among Member States to understand the trajectories of Ukrainian refugee children and families, and their engagement with and experiences of ECEC services while on the move**

The data collection at cycle 2 showed that, while arrangements for registration and monitoring have improved in some countries, much remains unknown about the factors

that influence the decisions of Ukrainian refugee families to settle or to continue in transit between European countries. Beyond a purely statistical phenomenon, further research and timely data sharing between Member States is needed to understand the lived experiences of displacement, the agency exercised by Ukrainian families, host-state responses and data sharing arrangements to target families and young children on the move. This also includes research on the social, educational and psychological impacts of being in flux, from the perspectives of both children and their families.

Improved data collection and sharing will also be required to monitor and assess progress against the updated Barcelona Targets for participation in ECEC by children below the age of three, and by children between the ages of three and the starting age of compulsory primary education, with specific targets for Member States¹⁸⁸.

c. Map the diverse portfolios of learning completed by displaced young Ukrainian children within host countries, and prepare for future re-integration to Ukrainian education systems

As the refugee crisis persists, it is apparent that young Ukrainian child refugees have experienced varying levels of education provision, ranging from full-time enrolment in host countries to parallel arrangements following the Ukrainian curriculum via distance learning, and sometimes a combination of these different modalities while being on the move within and across different host country contexts. In other instances, educational provision has been largely informal.

When missed periods of education are also factored in, it will be important to ensure that ECEC settings and professionals are equipped with the tools to document the education that has taken place and to facilitate the transfer of learning and child development records. Moreover, ECEC professionals must be able to facilitate opportunities for learning and development to ensure young children can develop to their full potential, during and after a crisis. This will require a longer-term planning and coordination approach in anticipation of the likely large-scale return of children and families to Ukraine beyond the immediate conflict and accompanying displacement.

¹⁸⁸ Barcelona European Council of 15 and 16 March 2002 (2002), SN 100/1/02 REV1. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14785-2022-INIT/en/pdf> [Viewed 27.04.23]

Appendix One

Situation analysis of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in support of Ukrainian refugees across EU member states

Analytical Framework for Cycle 2

SUBJECT AREA	INFORMATION	METHODS/SOURCE
Country context	<p>Ukrainian refugees in numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> per country, with a break-down by age; eligible for ECEC, with a breakdown by age and ECEC type; enrolled in ECEC, with a break-down by age and ECEC type. <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the geographic spread of the refugees and children eligible and enrolled in ECEC, noting which national actors/regions have been particularly affected (mobilised to respond). <p>UPDATES: back to school – enrolment and retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> total number of ECEC enrolled new education year 2022/23 (as per last available data, not later than 15.09.2022); number of children enrolled in ECEC by age group (2 groups); number of children enrolled in ECEC by type (kindergarten, preschool, crèches, day centres, etc.) insights to factors at multiple levels (family, community) affecting enrolment and retention and how countries are responding <p>ECEC challenges related to Ukrainian refugee reflux, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of funds or constraining rules around funds allocation; lack of expertise in Ukrainian language, inclusive education, working with children who have experienced trauma; administrative bottlenecks, e.g. lack of human resources to process recruitment of Ukrainian professionals; legal challenges (e.g. data sharing) 	<p>Desk review: national or local policy and legal documents; academic and grey literature; statistical data; websites of central and local authorities, agencies and NGOs involved in ECEC response</p> <p>Consultation with the WG</p> <p>Stakeholder consultations</p> <p>Statistical data request to relevant authorities, online statistics, follow up discussion with stakeholders.</p>

SUBJECT AREA	INFORMATION	METHODS/SOURCE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisational challenges, e.g. separation of Ukrainian ECEC participants from others. <p>UPDATES: new challenges (and opportunities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any additional challenges (or opportunities) since stage 1 ,and how countries are responding steps taken to ensure equitable treatment of refugee and migrant populations, to support community cohesion and to manage misinformation. 	
ECEC-related responses	<p>Regulatory measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> types of legislative and policy initiatives related to ECEC and implemented to address the needs of young refugees; <p>Programmatic responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> types of programming responses not necessarily connected to any specific laws and policies. evolution of partnerships supporting the crisis response in ECEC (cross-sectoral, incl. involvement of e.g. libraries). evolution of ECEC services available to Ukrainian children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0-3 years of age - 3-6 years of age; <p>UPDATES: major legal, policy, political or social changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major policy and legislative measures or concessions / adaptations that will affect in any way access, quality and sustainability to ECEC services for Ukrainian refugees. have any major responses been discontinued and, if so, why? emergency funds mobilised to respond to the Ukrainian refugee influx. (EU versus national budget, national versus regional budget, long term funding versus short term) duration of emergency funding – school year/calendar year/multi-year; modalities and 	<p>Desk review: national or local policy and legal documents; academic and grey literature</p> <p>Consultation with the WG</p> <p>Stakeholder consultations</p>

SUBJECT AREA	INFORMATION	METHODS/SOURCE
	<p>responsibility-sharing arrangements between national and sub-national levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broader political economy within which ECEC is situated and how countries are managing the division of responsibilities for 0-3 and 3-6 to ensure effective coordination (e.g. MoE for pre-K and kindergartens vs. MoFSA for nurseries) 	
Future prospects	<p>Emerging ECEC-related plans and responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expectations as to the number of Ukrainian refugees eligible for ECEC; information on the planned (but not yet adopted and implemented) ECEC responses; comment on the ongoing national debates in relation to ECEC responses to the Ukrainian refugee crisis; promising practices and positive solutions to challenges and opportunities for the effective ECEC response. <p>UPDATES: brief analysis of existing resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis on the political, social, policy and other changes in the country that might impact the ECEC response. assessment of the available resources allocated/needed for coverage, quality and ECEC relevance services for Ukrainian children (human resources, financial resources, logistics and availability of facilities, volunteer workforce, etc). volume, source and targeting of funds. longer-term planning, beyond an emergency context – arrangements to nurture resilient ECEC systems. 	<p>Desk review: academic and grey literature</p> <p>Consultation with the WG</p> <p>Stakeholder consultations</p>
Revised promising practices (additional practices, old practices)	<p>UPDATES: new or emerging solutions and promising practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of (new) solutions / promising practices developed to support ECEC and integration of Ukrainian refugee children in ECEC systems, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> language barrier solutions 	<p>Desk review, follow-up with stakeholders, expert opinion.</p>

SUBJECT AREA	INFORMATION	METHODS/SOURCE
<p>better documented)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ professional development for staff ○ assessment of needs / tools used ● how or whether such practices are being systematised. ● Promising or innovative examples of support for vulnerable young refugee children and their families, especially promising steps taken for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assessing & meeting psychosocial needs ○ provision for young children with special educational needs or disabilities ○ refugee children from Ukrainian orphanages. ○ parenting programmes. <p>UPDATES: monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL) activity within countries to test or validate policies and practices;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● how, when and by whom MEL arrangements were organised, what evidence was gathered, and results achieved. ● measures to assess access, quality and equity of ECEC provision mobilised during the crisis (and results achieved). ● how or whether mechanisms are provided for Ukrainian refugee children and families to be heard and their views taken into account in decisions made about ECEC provision. 	

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