



## PRESS RELEASE

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Flash audit

### RECEPTION AND CARE OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN FRANCE BY THE FRENCH STATE IN 2022

**The flash audit presented today provides an insight into the coordination and conditions for supporting and taking in Ukrainian refugees in the wake of the war that broke out in the country on 24 February 2022. Between the start of the conflict and September 2022, more than 7.1 million Ukrainian nationals had left their country. Four million have been granted temporary protection status or protection under a similar system in Europe. France has received 115,000 refugees, mainly women and children. On 9 March 2022, a government-wide Ukraine crisis task force was created under the authority of the Prime Minister. Headed by the Minister of the Interior, this task force focused on its number one priority of providing shelter for the people fleeing the conflict by coordinating the actions of all the stakeholders concerned. The total expenditure that the State and social security system have committed for offering temporary protection to Ukrainian nationals is expected to amount to approximately €634 million for 2022.**

#### **An immediate response from the public authorities**

The Council of the European Union implemented its decision on 4 March 2022 to introduce temporary protection for Ukrainian refugees for the first time. In France, a crisis task force was set up on 9 March 2022 to ensure a coordinated government-wide response. The various prefectures took immediate on-the-ground action while associations and local authorities engaged with the cause to provide appropriate conditions for receiving the first influx of Ukrainian nationals. During the first three months, arrivals were concentrated in the metropolitan areas and border territories of eastern France, where more than 80,000 people were taken in. In the main cities, reception centres were sometimes set up in the most unexpected formats, such as hubs. These venues were instrumental in delivering a truly concerted response and an initial shelter for the refugees arriving in the country.

#### **Massive and specific solutions for accommodating and housing refugees**

Accommodation has mainly been focused in the metropolitan areas and has represented a major challenge for these tension-fraught areas, since they are already overwhelmed by the need to support and shelter other vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, over 87,000 places have been created, nearly 60,000 of which were still active by the end of 2022. Collective accommodation (emergency reception, hotels or similar) that is directly financed by the State represented one third of the country's response, with a unit cost that is almost double the cost

of the facilities offered to traditional asylum seekers due to the urgent need to provide shelter and the uncertainty surrounding the duration of the conflict. Driven by the unprecedented number of French people rallying to the cause, host families have played an essential role and accounted for over 40% of the accommodation solutions. Finally, although proposals for permanent accommodation have been moving forward since the autumn, putting those proposals into action is still an uphill struggle due to lingering doubts about the duration of the conflict and refugees' own economic situation.

### **Extended access to rights**

Temporary protection status, which implies short-term "asylum" without any desire for long-term settlement, grants additional rights to beneficiaries in comparison to asylum seekers under ordinary law, especially in terms of family benefits, housing, healthcare, education and access to employment. As such, the key to an effective reception system lies in the speed at which residence permits are issued, which are a prerequisite for entitlement to those rights. The initiative of setting up refugee reception centres has met this need. By December 2022, some 86,000 residence permits were active, and 45,000 asylum seeker allowances had been paid. At the same time, some 15,000 households were receiving family or housing benefits, healthcare cover had been granted to 107,000 people, and 19,000 children were still in school.


### **Issues relating to the enduring conflict**


By the end of 2022, the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine to France was still growing at a rate of 2,000 to 4,000 refugees per month. Enabling these people to continue living in France combined with the prospect of seeing a new wave of refugees enter the country raises a number of question marks about the sustainability of the current arrangements for taking in refugees, along with the implication that changes need to be made. In addition, questions hang over the human and financial capacity to provide long-term care and support. The conditions for ending temporary protection status also need to be defined, bearing in mind that this EU measure can last from one to three years. There are currently no guarantees that host family accommodation and the ability to maintain compensation for accommodation providers can be stabilised. Housing constraints in the metropolitan areas call for refugee facilities to be distributed more evenly across the country, which the State is endeavouring to promote for displaced persons. Increased support for employment will be needed to improve access to housing. In terms of the financial cost, the State released a €400 million credit package when the crisis broke out, but according to the Court of Accounts, all the aid schemes are expected to reach approximately €634 million over the whole of 2022. As such, the failure to incorporate appropriations into the 2023 Budget Act will deprive all stakeholders of the visibility that they need to organise their means for action going forward.


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