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# Governance and policy changes during times of high influxes of protection seekers

A comparative governance and policy analysis in eight European countries, 2015-June 2023

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Abstract: This comparative analysis maps and compares how eight European countries' governance structures and policies for asylum, immigration and integration have developed from 2015 to June 2023, with a particular focus on the periods of high influxes of protection seekers in 2015/16 and 2022/23. The countries analysed are Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Poland, Germany and the United Kingdom.

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# Preface

This report has been written on assignment from the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), between April-November 2023. We want to thank IMDi, and particularly IMDi's contact person for the project, Konstantinos Skenteris, for a constructive cooperation throughout the project period.

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- UCL (University College London)
- German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM)
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Vienna

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# Summary

## Introduction

During the last decade of the 21st century, European countries have experienced significant fluctuations in the influxes of persons seeking protection. In 2015/16, most European countries experienced a substantial increase in the number of arrivals of people seeking protection (to a large degree driven by wars in Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea). However, stricter national border policies, the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement and Action Plan and the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to a reduction of persons who were able to pass Schengen borders, resulting in lower arrival numbers the following years. In February 2022, the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine led to the displacement of millions of persons from Ukraine – both internally in Ukraine and across the borders to other European countries. Simultaneously, the number of asylum seekers from other countries also rose in many countries (Syrian and Afghanistan continued to be the most import countries of origin). Once again, European countries were faced with record-high flows of people seeking protection.

How have the European countries' governance and policies for asylum, immigration and integration developed over the last decade, and how did European governments react during particularly these two periods of high influxes of protection seekers? What characterises the governance and policy development in such situations, and has there been differences across countries and over time? Are European integration policies for protection seekers becoming more 1) liberal/generous or restrictive, 2) selective or universal, and 3) temporary or permanent?

This report is part of a larger research project, the GOVREIN-project, which was commissioned by The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) in April 2023 and finalised in November 2023. The study has an extensive scope, including mapping and comparisons along four dimensions:

- 1) across eleven policy fields/topics,
- 2) across eight European countries that vary on relevant contextual factors, such as migration inflows, welfare state systems and EU relations (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Poland, Germany and the UK),
- 3) development over time from 2015 to June 2023, with a particular focus on 2015/16 and 2022/23, when most European countries experienced high numbers of protection seeker arrivals, and
- 4) between subgroups of protection seekers and beneficiaries of international and national protection.

The extensive scope and complexity of comparing different policies, countries, legal statuses of people in need of protection and development over time – combined with the project's short project period of only seven months – naturally implies that we had to make some decisions to limit the scope. We only compare policies for protection seekers (during the application process) and protection beneficiaries (who have been granted a residence permit /a positive decision on their application for protection). This study does *not* cover analysis of rights and restrictions for persons who have had their application for protection rejected (or the situation during an appeal process), nor for irregular migrants or migrants on “non-protection” residence permits (e.g., work/student permits). The main aim of this project has been to *descriptively* document and compare governance and policy developments. It has

not been within the scope of this study to systematically analyse 1) the *mechanism/drivers* of policy developments, 2) the *implementation* of policies, or 3) the *effects* of policies.

## **Comparative analysis of flows of protection seekers and those granted protection**

*How have the migration flows of protection seekers to European countries varied cross-nationally over the last decade? What differences were there related to the composition of protection seekers, such as country of origin, gender, and age – both across countries and over time?*

The analyses show that asylum inflows to European countries have varied significantly over the past ten years, with 2015/16 and 2022/23 being the absolute peak years. Many of the countries included in this GOVREIN-project, such as Germany, Sweden, Austria, and Norway, were among the countries that received the highest number of asylum seekers arriving in 2015/16 to Europe, both in absolute numbers and relative to their populations.

For persons granted protection in Europe throughout 2015 to June 2023, the main sending countries are Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, and since 2022, Ukraine. Displaced persons receive different permits for residence in different countries. Before 2022, refugee status (granted based on the Geneva Convention) was the most common type of permission granted to people seeking protection, followed by subsidiary protection. In 2022 and 2023, temporary collective protection for displaced persons from Ukraine constituted the majority of granted permits, but there was also an increase in protection seekers from other parts of the world, and the granting of other types of permits in 2022/23. There are also great disparities in recognition rates for protection seekers from different countries of origin.

Overall, until 2022, there has been a significantly higher share of male than female asylum seekers in all eight countries. This changed abruptly in 2022 with the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine, where the large majority were women. However, the numbers for 2023 (until July) show a more even gender balance compared with 2022.

The age composition has varied over the last decade. From 2012 to 2016, about two-thirds of those granted protection were of working age, while nearly one-third were minors. From 2017, although the absolute number of persons granted protection was relatively low, the percentage of children increased and constituted about half of those granted protection. In 2022, the share of minors decreased to 36%, and dropped further to 27% in 2023 (as of June). However, as the total numbers of persons granted protection rose significantly in 2022/23, the countries experienced a significant increase in the absolute numbers of minors. When comparing absolute numbers, the eight countries received just above 200,000 minors in 2015 (not including family reunification), but in 2022, they received over one million. In the period from 2012 to 2021, the share of elderly people (over 65 years) was very low, constituting less than 2%. Although the share of elderly persons was still at modest levels compared to the other two age groups, it rose to 5% in 2022 and 2023, comprising 160,000 persons, mainly from Ukraine.

## **Governance and multilevel responsibilities**

*What governance structures did the countries have for the immigration and integration fields? How were responsibilities for policy development and implementation distributed across*

*levels of government, and what formal role did non-public actors play, if any? Have these governance structures changed during the period of analysis?*

At the national level, the four Nordic countries and the UK had one main responsible ministry for *immigration* – either the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Interior, while the other countries split the responsibilities between two or more ministries. However, the *integration* field has undergone more ministerial changes than the immigration field. The location of the integration portfolio in the ministerial structure varied considerably both across countries and over time, ranging from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (Poland), the Home Office (UK), the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Finland), to the Ministry of Justice and Border Control (Norway), or by having a specialised Ministry (or Minister) for Immigration and Integration (Denmark). In Germany, Finland and Sweden, the national responsibilities for integration remained stable, while the other countries made changes. Meanwhile, the UK abandoned its short-lived national integration strategy altogether in 2011 after a change in government. Concerning agencification at the national level, half of the countries had specialised integration agencies (Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Austria). The UK and Poland did not have national agencies responsible for integration issues. In Germany, the agency responsible for immigration also covered the integration portfolio, and in Sweden, the national employment agency held the responsibility for integration.

The analysis of the multilevel distribution of responsibilities shows that in most countries, regional authorities had some form of responsibilities for either the immigration (half of the countries) and/or integration field (seven of eight countries). The responsibilities were mostly related to implementing national policies, but in the federal states (Germany and Austria) and the UK, the states (or the constitutive nations in the UK) also had some formal authority for policy development of immigration and integration policies. Concerning local level responsibilities, in all eight countries, the local level was responsible for either implementing national integration policies and/or developing local integration policies (supplementary to national policies or in the absence of nationally regulated integration policies). Contrarily, in most countries, local governments did not have formal responsibilities for immigration policies, but in 2022, Poland, Sweden and Denmark involved local authorities in the initial reception to a larger degree.

Civil society, private actors and NGOs played a crucial role in aiding protection seekers – and the governments – in tackling the situations with increased influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23. Concerning their formal roles, NGOs were in many countries used as service providers of reception centres and services, language courses and other integration activities. Some countries had formally delegated the responsibility for legal counselling and advice to NGOs. Many countries also outsourced immigration and integration services, where private actors could compete to be service providers. During the high influxes, many countries increased the use of private service providers for upscaling the reception services and accommodation.

The help from private persons and civil society during these periods of high influxes was essential in all countries. However, some countries formalised the role of private hosts by introducing possibilities of public funding (not fully, but minor grants) for private households who accommodated displaced persons from Ukraine (the UK, Poland and Denmark). In the UK, private households can also sponsor displaced persons from other countries.

During high influxes, the need for coordination between responsible actors at different levels of government – and between public and non-public actors – increases. The analysis presents examples of different formal coordination activities that were put in place during the situations in 2015/16 and 2022/23. Several countries established new coordinating (often

temporary) structures such as a crisis management group, a dedicated political appointee or regular cross-sectorial meetings. Such structures were set up to ensure horizontal coordination between different national agencies and/or responsible ministries, and/or to ensure vertical coordination with subnational governmental levels and non-public actors. Sweden did not establish new structures but used established crisis management structures to develop, coordinate and follow up crisis management between different ministries and for reporting. Denmark also had examples of more formal coordinating mechanisms, through formal agreements of cooperation between the national government and local government organisations, and tripartite cooperation agreements with the government and the main labour and employer unions.

## Protection statuses and permits

*What types of protection statuses did the countries operate with, and were there changes over time? Also, how did the countries differ concerning the scope and format of the temporary protection permits provided to displaced persons from Ukraine?*

Although European countries may be bound by similar international legislation that regulates (minimum) conditions for different protection statuses (e.g., the 1951 Refugee Convention and EU regulations for most EU member states), these international regulations often determine minimum standards, and have to be transposed into the national legislation, resulting in different cross-national regulations and specifications.

Concerning types of protection permits, with only Norway as an exception, all countries differentiated between the two protection statuses refugee status and subsidiary protection (either through EU or national legislation). Most countries also had a form of humanitarian protection status. Otherwise, particularly the UK (and to some extent Germany) stands out by having multiple types of protection permits with specified target groups, where the type of permit also influenced the individuals' rights and restrictions after being granted protection or a visa.

Overall, we see the introduction of several restrictions in protection statuses and their initial duration in response to the high influx in 2015/16. There were mainly two types of restrictions: 1) more restrictive criteria to obtain certain statuses, and 2) the introduction of temporary and/or shortened duration of the initial protection permits.

In 2022, the main policy changes were related to displaced persons from Ukraine. All countries introduced some form of collective, temporary protection (either through the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) or through national regulations), while the UK introduced specific Ukraine visa schemes.

We also see a general selective trend, where several countries have introduced multiple types of permits, visas or resettlement schemes, distinguishing permits and rights based on either country of origin, religion, or mode of arrival. This selective trend is not only a direct response to the situations in 2015/16 and 2022/23 but also part of more regular policy developments in certain countries. Lastly, there is a clear temporary turn in almost all countries, as the duration of first-time permits was reduced in most countries.

## Registration and application process

*Were any changes made in the registration and asylum procedure during the high influxes in 2015/16, and particularly with the introduction of collective temporary protection in 2022?*

The countries did not alter the main elements in the asylum procedure during the high influxes in 2015/16, but processing time increased in most countries and the countries introduced different measures to tackle capacity challenges. Most countries increased the funding to the immigration authorities. Some countries also introduced new administrative solutions, for example, extended (for the authorities) or shortened (for the protection seekers) deadlines, reorganisation of responsibilities, and limiting the rights to legal assistance for the applicant.

In 2022, all countries (except for the UK) implemented a form of collective, temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine, and most applicants did not have to undergo an individual assessment of the need for protection. This allowed for introducing simplified registration and processing procedures, which greatly impacted the processing time in each country. The Nordic countries still required an application through the regular asylum procedure, but automated processes and online registration were introduced. In Germany, Poland and Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine did not have to apply through the regular asylum procedure but had to register to receive a form of identity card or national ID number.

The UK did not operate with collective temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine, but three specialised visa schemes. Thus, displaced persons from Ukraine who were not already resident in the UK needed to apply for one of the visa schemes *before* entering the country.

## Accommodation and services during application process

*How were the responsibilities for reception of protection seekers organised? In addition, what rights and restrictions did protection seekers have concerning accommodation during the application process? Have these rights and restrictions changed since 2015, and did they target different protection statuses differently?*

In the majority of the countries, the national government (often through a national agency) had the responsibility of providing accommodation and other support in the period from registration of an asylum application until the applicants received a final decision. In the two federal countries, Austria and Germany, the responsibility was mainly delegated to the state level. Although the national or state level had the overall *responsibility* for the accommodation and support during this phase, the countries showed a variety of solutions on how they provided these services, with a mixture of nationally led service provision and by outsourcing service provision to municipalities or non- or for-profit actors. During the high influxes, particularly the use of private contractors was introduced or increased to upscale capacity.

Most countries did not restrict the protection seekers' right to find their own accommodation and live outside of the public reception system, and protection seekers were still entitled to at least some financial support if they chose this option (but the countries differed in the type and scope of financial support offered to applicants who lived privately). Norway and Denmark had relatively restrictive policies for finding own accommodation during the

application period. However, in 2022, they introduced targeted policies specifically for displaced persons from Ukraine, which increased this group's flexibility to live privately during the application period.

In situations where the number of protection seekers rises significantly, the receiving countries upscaled their reception capacity quickly. In most countries, local communities and municipalities made invaluable contributions with the reception and accommodation in both 2015/16 and in 2022/23. In all eight countries, many displaced persons from Ukraine lived privately – with family, other networks or other persons opening their homes. Some countries introduced more formal arrangements for private hosts, e.g., by compensating a small amount to private hosts for displaced persons from Ukraine.

## Settlement and intra-national distribution

*After being granted protection, what rights and restrictions did protection beneficiaries have to settle freely where they want in their new host country? Did the countries operate with strategies and criteria to ensure intra-national distribution of protection seekers? Have these rules and distribution strategies changed since 2015, and did they differ between subgroups of protection beneficiaries?*

Before 2015, six out of the eight countries allowed self-settlement after being granted protection, without any major restrictions. Norway and Denmark constituted exceptions, as they imposed restrictions on the right to financial assistance and integration measures if those granted protection did not settle through the public distribution model.

Concerning public distribution of those who did not self-settle, the countries operated with two main models. In half of the countries, the central government allocated the protection holders to municipalities (Denmark or Sweden after 2016) or states (Austria and Germany). In Norway, Sweden (before 2016), Finland and the UK, the central government and municipalities entered into voluntary agreements to settle protection seekers/holders. Poland did not have a national distribution strategy (due to low numbers of international protection holders prior to 2022). Those who were granted protection could settle wherever they wanted in the country, and still be entitled to integration measures and financial support from the municipality they chose to settle in.

The countries were split concerning *when* the distribution process to state or municipal level happened. In Austria, Germany and the UK, the distribution happened before being granted protection (but after registration). In the Nordic countries, the distribution happened after granted protection.

The countries' distribution strategy or criteria for calculating state or municipal quotas also differs across countries (and sometimes alterations are made during high influxes). The distribution criteria included population size, share of "non-Western" immigrants or more complex calculations, including multiple financial and local conditions.

The analysis shows that the countries' settlement models have remained relatively stable during the period of analysis. Related to the situation in 2015/16, only two countries made substantial changes in their settlement models. Sweden increased the national steering and intra-national distribution, and Germany introduced a restriction for persons who relied on financial assistance. In 2022, however, about half the countries made adjustments for displaced persons from Ukraine, often including more liberal practices for self-settlement compared to other groups of protection seekers.

## Permanent residency

*What requirements must be fulfilled to obtain a permanent residence permit, and have they differed over time, across countries and between protection statuses?*

Regulations for receiving a permanent residence permit have been more generally applied to all immigrants, and only rarely do they differentiate between subgroups of immigrants or protection beneficiaries. The most common requirement for a permanent residence permit was a certain minimum residence period. In Finland, the UK and partly Sweden, this remained the main criterion. In five of the eight countries, the minimum residence periods were extended during the period under study, particularly after 2015.

With the exception of Finland and the UK, the other states applied integration requirements that take the form of economic, language or civics related requirements. The general trend from the period under study is toward restrictions, as several countries introduced or tightened existing integration requirements. A number of these arose as part of the response to 2015/16 developments, but there were also reforms in the interim period (2017-2021) that did not relate directly.

In 2022, the collective, temporary protection permit granted to most displaced persons from Ukraine did not count toward permanent residence at all. In theory, displaced persons from Ukraine would “restart the clock” at zero if they transitioned to another form of permit, making for a very long route to permanent residence for this group compared to other groups. Whether this will be the policy once the three-year period of temporary protection ends, or whether one might envisage reclassifying this time if the protection needs turn out not to be temporary, remains to be seen.

## Family reunification

*Were protection beneficiaries exempted from regular requirements, or subject to specific restrictions, when applying for family reunification? Were there differences between protection statuses and development over time?*

Family reunification rules are complex – with different combinations of policy instruments – and have undergone various changes and restrictions in the countries under study over the past decade. In most countries, excluding the UK, those with refugee status were exempted from such requirements if they applied within a certain time frame following application (3-6 months). This kind of favourable access to family reunification for those with refugee status was also proscribed by the EU Family Reunification Directive.

Some forms of restrictions were seen in several European countries following the 2015 influx. In particular, several countries began distinguishing between family reunification rights for those with a refugee status and those holding subsidiary protection permits. Subsidiary protection holders in some states saw their access to family reunification temporarily suspended; a policy previously only applied in Austria. Suspensions ranged from one to three years. Norway and Poland maintained the same rules for both groups, but Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria postponed and restricted access for those with subsidiary protection. Finland introduced an income requirement for subsidiary protection holders’ family reunification. Germany and Austria also stand out in the application of maximum yearly quotas for family reunification for subsidiary protection holders.

While there was a general trend in Europe toward more restrictive family reunification policies, these have not been salient in the 2022 situation and concerning displaced persons



from Ukraine. Collective, temporary protection permits would also be available to most family members, so that families could, in effect, reunify themselves (but barring possible non-Ukrainian family members falling outside of the scope of the EU directive or national eligibility rules in the countries with a stricter interpretation of who is entitled to temporary protection).

## Integration measures

*Did the countries have national integration policies, and how were these funded and implemented? Were protection seekers allowed to work during the application process? What rights and obligations to integration measures did protection seekers have, both before and after being granted protection? And, have these rights and obligations changed since 2015, and did they apply to different protection statuses differently?*

Our analysis shows that the countries had different governance structures and distribution of responsibilities for integration policy development, implementation and funding across government levels. In all the countries (except for the UK), the national government was mainly responsible for the development of integration policies using integration programmes and language courses, but the implementation was executed by lower levels of government, or through non-public actors. The national level (partly) funded nationally regulated integration programmes and/or language courses. However, the actual coverage of such funding could differ considerably, and some countries also got partly funded through EU funds (Austria and Poland).

The application process for protection may be lengthy, and some countries include rights and obligations to particularly civics and language training during the application period (but displaced persons from Ukraine were exempted from these rights and obligations).

After being granted protection, all countries provided the protection holder with access to the labour market. However, before being granted protection, the countries split into two main groups. The Scandinavian countries operated with applications for work permits during the asylum procedures if certain criteria were met, while the other countries had employment-bans (between three to twelve months) for an initial specified time period. Most countries made special amendments for displaced persons from Ukraine, most often allowing them immediate access to the labour market after registration.

Concerning rights to integration measures after protection is granted, all the countries had national regulations for integration programmes and/or language and civics courses prior to 2015, except for Austria and the UK (but Austria later introduced obligatory language courses in 2017). Most programmes included language and some form of civics training, and qualification and/or employment measures. In these countries, participation was obligatory if the protection holder received financial assistance. Regarding displaced persons from Ukraine, Norway (with some moderations), Finland and Denmark were the only countries that provided this group with similar rights to regular integration programmes or language courses. Otherwise, integration measures and language courses for displaced persons from Ukraine mostly depended on non-public efforts or availability and local capacity.

The UK has not had government-provided integration programmes or policies since 2011. However, along with the different protection schemes introduced in 2014 and 2016, some rights to integration measures were introduced for those arriving through selected resettlement schemes. New legislation in 2023 sought to further a 'two-tiered system', where the access to integration measures differentiated between different groups of refugees.

## Financial assistance to the protection seeker

*What type of financial benefits were protection seekers and beneficiaries entitled to in the host country, and has it changed over time? Did the countries provide selective rights to different protection statuses?*

The eight countries differed concerning the rights to financial assistance that they provided 1) to protection seekers *during* the application process, and 2) to protection beneficiaries *after* protection (or a visa) was granted.

Concerning rights during the application process, the analysis shows that some countries differentiated rights related to whether the applicant lived in reception centres (or in other accommodation systems provided by the public sector) or whether they found their own accommodation during the application period. For those who got accommodation with public assistance, all countries operated with nationally fixed rates for pocket money in some format. For those who found their own accommodation during the application process, most countries provided some sort of financial assistance when settled. Denmark and Norway had the most restrictive criteria to be eligible for such financial assistance.

As a response to the situation in 2015/16, Denmark, Norway and Germany restricted the rights to, or level of, the financial benefits, for example, by reducing the amount of pocket money during the application process. Austria, however, increased the financial benefits to adjust for inflation. In 2022/23, three countries increased the financial subsidies for protection seekers (Norway, Germany and Austria). In Finland the reception allowance has been indexed and thus adjusted with rising costs of living.

Concerning financial benefits for those who had been granted protection (or a visa), the countries differed concerning whether the financial assistance was 1) means-tested or an individual right, and whether 2) the country operated with a specialised integration benefit or if the protection holder was streamlined into the regular social benefits system. In Finland, Germany and Denmark, the financial rights were means-tested, while Norway, Sweden and Poland operated with an individual, fixed integration benefit. The UK provided specialised integration benefits for protection holders under some protection schemes, while the others got general means-tested social assistance similar to the general population. In Austria, financial assistance given to protection holders was means-tested, but also varied depending on 1) protection status and 2) different regional rules and practices for support.

The eight countries introduced very different rules concerning financial assistance for displaced persons from Ukraine who had been granted protection or a visa. Four different solutions were introduced, concerning whether this group: 1) was included into the mainstream social benefits system, similar to the general population (UK and Germany), 2) had similar rights as other protection seekers that had been granted protection (Denmark and Norway), 3) continued to receive financial assistance equal to other asylum seekers even after granted protection (Sweden, Austria and Finland during the first year of residence), and lastly, 4) received customised arrangements (in addition to being included in the regular welfare system) (Poland). The two latter solutions implied that displaced persons from Ukraine receive fewer rights to or lower levels of financial support compared to other protection holders that have been granted a residence permit.

If we hold displaced persons from Ukraine out of the equation, most countries provided similar rights to financial assistance across other protection statuses, however, the UK and Austria differentiated rights depending on status.

## Health services

*Did the countries differ concerning what type of healthcare services protection seekers and beneficiaries were entitled to, both before and after being granted protection?*

In all countries, all protection seekers were entitled to emergency healthcare during the application period, but minors also had full access to primary and specialist healthcare services. Poland, the UK and Austria also provided full rights to primary and specialist health care for adults during the application period, but the Scandinavian countries did not (and only partly Finland). In Germany, protection seekers only had access to emergency care, but after 15 months (18 months from 2019) of stay in Germany – if the asylum-procedure was still pending – access to the regular health scheme was granted.

After being granted protection, all countries provided legal residence permits holders with full access to both primary and specialist healthcare, more or less on par with other residents (with some minor exceptions). There were no major changes in healthcare rights for protection seekers during the period of analysis. The only was Sweden's restricted rights for displaced persons from Ukraine, who were only entitled to emergency healthcare even after they were granted protection.

## Pre-school and mandatory schooling for minors

*What rights did protection seekers and beneficiaries who are minors have to pre-school and mandatory schooling? And what alterations have the countries made to accommodate education for minors in times of high influxes?*

All countries provided similar rights to attend pre-school for children who had been granted protection, but in Norway and Denmark (and partly Finland), pre-school was not a right until after protection was granted. In all the countries, protection seeking minors had more or less the same rights and obligations to participate in the mandatory school system as other children in the host country.

Overall, there have been no changes or restrictions in the rights to pre-school or school for newly arrived minors during the period of analysis. However, new (temporary) amendments were introduced to tackle the high increase of minors entitled to (pre-)school, such as adjusting regulations concerning reception/welcome classes, or easing regulations concerning the housing standard or postponing public deadlines for providing access.

In addition, the temporary aspect of the permits for displaced persons (and minors) from Ukraine involved that some countries introduced new solutions to accommodate schooling for these minors, including arrangements for Ukrainian children to follow Ukrainian online schooling (either supplementary or as a substitute for host-country schooling), allowing for special pre-schools/schools or classes for Ukrainian children, and easing formal requirements to hire Ukrainian speaking personnel.

## Overall trends: towards more restrictive, selective and temporary policies for protection seekers

*What were the main trends in asylum, immigration and integration policy developments, across the eight European countries and over time? Are European integration policies*

*becoming more 1) liberal/generous or restrictive, 2) selective or universal, and 3) temporary or permanent?*

Firstly, concerning the liberal/generous versus restrictive dimension, we find that after the high influxes of protection seekers in 2015/16, all the countries (except Poland, which did not experience an increase during this period) mostly introduced different types of restrictive policies. The countries differed in the exact policies and regulations they changed, but overall, there were different types of restrictions within a wide range of policy areas, related to protection statuses, duration of permits, legal assistance during the application process, the appeal process, permanent residency, family reunification, and financial assistance. Although the European response to the high influx of displaced persons from Ukraine was more unified in 2022 than in 2015, with the introduction of collective temporary protection (with the UK as an exception), the comparative analysis shows that there were still great cross-national differences in the rights and restrictions for this group. In some areas and countries, there was a trend of more liberal policies for this group. With the introduction of collective, temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine, the majority of this group got an easier and faster access and path to granted protection. Further, in some countries, displaced persons from Ukraine got exemptions from existing restrictive policies or were provided with more liberal rights, for example, regulations related to accommodation and settlement, temporary return, and access to work. However, in other policy areas and countries, rights or access to services was more restrictive for people displaced from Ukraine than other groups of protection seekers and beneficiaries. The restrictions included a path to permanent residency, integration measures, financial assistance, and healthcare services, and a general insecurity about a durable solution.

Secondly, the analysis above clearly shows that most countries have introduced selective policies for displaced persons from Ukraine (in either a liberal and/or restrictive direction). However, this selective trend was not a new phenomenon for just this group, as several countries already before and after 2015 have introduced differentiated rights and restrictions for various subgroups, depending on either type of protection status/resettlement/visa schemes, probability to stay, nationality/country of origin, or mode of arrival. Some policy areas generally have a more universal scope, meaning that different subgroups of protection seekers and beneficiaries have similar rights and access. Except for displaced persons from Ukraine, the countries generally did not distinguish between rights related to healthcare services, pre-school, mandatory school, and accommodation, settlement and intra-national distribution. However, for policies regulating the duration of first-time permits, family reunification, permanent residency, and rights and obligations to integration measures, most countries have introduced selective rights and restrictions for different subgroups (in one or several of the above-mentioned policy areas).

Thirdly, the introduction of collective temporary protection for displaced persons who fled Ukraine implied an explicit temporary perspective. However, our analysis illustrates how this temporary perspective could more correctly be described as a continuation of an already ongoing temporary trend in many European countries' asylum, immigration and integration policies. The analysis finds that from 2015, several of the countries introduced policies with a more temporary perspective in different policy areas. An important question going forward – both politically and academically – is how this increased temporary focus will affect long-term integration if the protection beneficiaries actually turn out to remain in the host country. It may be challenging to combine policy and ambitions for both integration and return at the same time.

# 1 Introduction

During the last decade, European countries have experienced significant shifts in the influxes of persons seeking protection.

In 2015/16, most European countries experienced a substantial increase in the number of arrivals of people seeking protection. In this period, the majority were persons who fled the ongoing war in Syria, but there were also many arrivals from other countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The high number of arrivals put the reception capacity in many countries under pressure. In this period, the EU struggled to find a unified approach, and several studies have characterised this period as “race-to-the-bottom”, where European countries introduced more restrictive asylum, immigration and integration policies (Hernes 2018; Hagelund 2020; Brekke & Staver, 2018; Lücke et al. 2022; Barthoma & Cetrez 2021; Koikkalainen et al 2021).

However, stricter national border policies, push-backs at the EU external borders and the EU-Turkey Statement and Action Plan (2016)<sup>1</sup> contributed to a reduction of persons who were able to pass European borders, resulting in lower arrival numbers in the following years (Dumbrava 2023; Carrera 2020). Further, with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, national border control and restrictions on general immigration led to further reductions in new arrivals of protection seekers.

In February 2022, the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine led to millions of displaced persons from Ukraine fleeing the war – both internally in Ukraine and across the borders to other European countries. Once again, European countries were faced with record high forced migration flows. Although the majority of protection seekers in 2022 fled the war in Ukraine, the numbers of asylum seekers from other countries also rose significantly in many countries. European countries have met the situation in 2022 with a more unified response than earlier influxes, most importantly, with activating the EU Temporary Protection Directive (EU Directive 2001/55/EC) for the first time to help displaced persons from Ukraine. However, there has still been great variety in the reception and policies towards this group.

Although the two periods of high influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23 affected most European countries, there were significant differences in the absolute and relative number of protection seekers that each country received during these periods. For example, in 2015/16, Sweden by far outnumbered the other countries relative to its population but did not experience a similar relatively disproportionate influx in 2022/23. Poland on the other hand, did not experience increase in 2015/16, but it had the highest levels of displaced persons from Ukraine in 2022. Germany has been a main receiving country in both periods. Finland experienced the highest (+822%) rise of arrivals from 2014 of all EU member states. These cross-national differences are likely to have affected the policy development and response. At the same time, international, European – and not least national – politics also strongly affect country responses, as asylum, immigration and integration policies are among the most politically contested policy areas in many European countries (Grande et al. 2019).

How have European countries' governance and policies for asylum, immigration and integration developed over the last decade, and how did European governments react to particularly these two periods of high influxes of protection seekers? What characterises the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-eu-turkey-statement-action-plan>

governance and policy developments, and are there differences across countries and over time?

## 1.1 The GOVREIN-project assignment and deliverables

This report is part of a larger GOVREIN-project, which was commissioned by The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) in April 2023. The overall assignment from IMDi was threefold, and included:

- Quantitative (descriptive) analysis of asylum flows and integration measures in European countries.
- Qualitative comparative analysis of governance and policy development in European countries, with particular focus on the high influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23.
- Based on the comparative governance and policy analysis, identifying learning points for a Norwegian context.

This report is the project's main deliverable and includes the qualitative comparative analysis of governance and policy developments in eight European countries. Further, to provide context, the report includes a quantitative analysis of European asylum flows and granted protection permits. In addition to this report, the project has produced the following deliverables (see complete references to all the reports under chapter 16):

- **Eight country reports (in English)**  
The comparative analysis of governance and policy developments builds on more detailed country reports of the eight countries analysed. These country analyses are published as independent country reports. All country reports are written in English, and the project partners have been responsible for their respective country reports, while NIBR has been responsible for the three Scandinavian reports:
  - Germany country report (Engler et al. 2023)
  - Austria country report (Berthelot et al. 2023)
  - Finland country report (Koikkalainen et al. 2023)
  - UK country report: (Casu et al. 2023)
  - Poland country report: (Łukasiewicz et al. 2023)
  - Norway country report (Hernes et al. 2023a)
  - Denmark country report (Hernes et al. 2023b)
  - Sweden country report (Danielsen et al 2023)
- **Method note: Challenges comparing return and integration results cross-nationally (in English, written by NIBR)**  
Part of the original assignment from IMDi was not only to compare asylum flows, but also to assess possibilities for comparing return and integration results for protection seekers who arrived in 2015/16 and 2022/23 across European countries. This method note includes both a general assessment of challenges with comparing return and integration results across European countries, and an assessment of data availability and existing analysis in each of the eight countries included in the GOVREIN project, assessing the following two questions: What data sources exists? And what are the possibilities and limitations for cross-national comparison of refugees' integration outcomes and their emigration/return? (Tvedt & Tronstad 2023).

- **Assessment of learning points for a Norwegian context (in Norwegian, written by NIBR)**

An important project objective for IMDi was to use the comparative governance and policy analysis to identify different policies, governance solutions and policy responses used in other countries, as potential learning points for a Norwegian context. To assess whether and how alternative policies could work in a Norwegian context, the note includes an assessment of (selected) alternative solutions, based on input from a workshop with a wide range of Norwegian stakeholders. This assessment is written in Norwegian (Danielsen & Hernes 2023).

## 1.2 Aim and scope

The overall research question for this comparative policy and governance analysis was:

*“What were the similarities and differences in the European governance and policy development from 2015-June 2023, and particularly during the high influxes of protection seekers in 2015/16 and 2022/23?”*

This project has had a strict time limitation, with only seven months from start-up to completion. The assignment from IMDI started in April 2023, and the final report was delivered on 15 November 2023. The study has an extensive scope, including mapping and comparisons along four dimensions:

- 1) across policy fields/topics,
- 2) across eight European countries
- 3) development over time, and
- 4) between subgroups of protection seekers and beneficiaries.

Firstly, in this study, we map governance structures and policy developments for the following eleven topics:

- Governance structures and multilevel responsibilities
- Protection statuses and permits
- Registration and application process
- Accommodation and services during application process
- Settlement and intranational distribution
- Permanent residency
- Family reunification
- Integration measures
- Financial assistance
- Healthcare services
- Pre-school and mandatory school

Secondly, we compare governance structures and policy developments in eight European countries: Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Poland, Germany and the UK. These countries were selected because they vary on relevant contextual factors, such as migration inflows, welfare state systems and EU relations (for more on case selection strategy, see chapter 2.1).

Thirdly, we map policy and governance developments from 2015 to June 2023, but with a particular focus on two emergency situations - in 2015/16 and 2022/23 – where most European countries experienced high increases in or high absolute numbers of protection seeker arrivals.

Fourthly, an important aim of the study has been to document whether there were differences in rights and restrictions for subgroups of protection seekers, depending on statuses and/or permits (e.g., differences before or after granted protection, and differences between those granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or other specific EU or national protection or visa schemes).

### 1.2.1 Three analytical dimensions of comparison

While the country reports strive to provide a more in-depth and contextual description of developments in each country, the comparative analysis aims to uncover patterns and trends across the four dimensions, e.g., if there are similarities and differences across policies/topics, countries, periods, and statuses.

Whether European countries' asylum, immigration and integration policies are converging or diverging has been the subject of long academic debate and analysis (Borevi et al. 2017; Joppke 2017; Goodman 2010; Duszczuk et al. 2020; Sainsbury 2012). Several studies have also specifically focused on patterns of convergence or divergence across countries during times of high influxes (Hernes 2018; Hagelund 2020; Lücke et al. 2022; Barthoma & Cetrez 2021). Building on the existing migration literature, we will discuss overall patterns and trends related to whether governance and policy developments were:

- 1) Liberal/generous or restrictive
- 2) Selective or universal
- 3) Temporary or permanent

Firstly, one of the main questions in the integration literature addresses how European countries develop on the *liberal-restrictive axis* – with many studies concluding that European countries are becoming increasingly more restrictive in areas such as admission policies, access to family reunification and permanent residency and citizenship. (Goodman 2011; Joppke 2007; Lafleur & Mescoli 2018; Klaus & Pachocka 2019). Concerning access to welfare rights (related to the literature on welfare state chauvinism), the question is more whether countries have *generous* welfare rights for immigrants (meaning on par with other citizens) or whether they restrict rights for immigrants and/or protection seekers through different mechanisms, for example based on type of residence permit, residence time and the like (Römer 2017; Jørgensen & Thomsen 2016; Keskinen et al. 2016).

Secondly, more recent studies challenge the dichotomous liberal-restrictive dimension, by arguing that countries may not necessarily be either restrictive or liberal, but that their policies are more or less *selective or “universal”*, studying whether countries distinguish rights and restrictions based on immigration permits and subgroups of immigrants (Staver 2021). In the past, the focus has often been on differences between immigration categories such as migrant workers and protection seekers, but we also see indications of increasing differences between subgroups of those with protection permits (Hernes et al. 2022c; Berlina 2022).

Thirdly, another observation of European immigration and integration policy is a so-called “temporary turn” for protection seekers, e.g., by including stricter requirements for permanent residence and regular assessment of protection needs for those with temporary residence (Eggebo & Staver 2020). Such policy aims to signal and stimulate the return of protection beneficiaries to their home country, if possible (Vitus & Jarlby 2022), but can be demanding to combine with a long-term integration focus, since previous studies show that it is difficult to combine policy and ambitions for both integration and return at the same time (Brekke et al. 2020; Brekke 2001).



## 1.3 Definitions and limitations of the study's scope

The extensive scope and complexity of comparing different policies, countries, statuses and development over time – combined with the short project period of only seven months – naturally implies that we had to make some decisions to limit the scope.

### 1.3.1 Analysis of policies for protection seekers/applicants and protection beneficiaries/holders

This study focuses on policies for persons who arrived in European countries seeking some form of protection and (temporary) residency. However, as will be shown in chapter 5, the countries operate with different types of statuses and permits, which sometimes complicate the use of a common denominator for this group. Thus, in the following, we shortly discuss and define the terms we will use in this report.

We will use the generic term *protection seeker* or *protection applicant* for persons who have registered some form of application for residency based on a need for international protection, but not yet received a first decision. The reason why we do not simply refer to this group as asylum seekers is that in many countries, persons who have fled the war in Ukraine do not apply for protection through the regular asylum system. Some countries have established specific registration or application procedures for this group, which implies that they are not formally seen as asylum seekers. Thus, *protection seeker* or *protection applicant* will be used as a common denominator for all persons who have registered an application for some form of protection, but who have not yet been granted a first decision on their application.

We will use the term *protection beneficiary* or *protection holder* for persons who have received a positive decision on their application for protection and received a legal (temporary) residence permit in the host country. One challenge with this common denominator is that the UK has introduced a variety of visa schemes that target specific groups, and not all of these visa schemes would necessarily fall under the category of protection schemes. For example, for displaced persons from Ukraine, the UK has not introduced a national variant of collective temporary protection, but instead established three different visa schemes (Ukraine Family Scheme, Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Extension Scheme, see UK country report for details). However, to be able to use a common denominator in the report, these groups are included when we refer to protection beneficiaries and holders more generically.

It is important to specify the limitations in the target groups covered in this report. The study does *not* cover analysis of rights and restrictions for persons who have had their application for protection rejected (or the situation during an appeal process), nor for irregular migrants. Further, the analysis does not cover general policies aimed at other types of *immigrants*, for example international students, work immigrants and family immigrants. However, if general policies that apply to all immigrant groups also apply to protection beneficiaries, these are included (e.g., general changes in rules for obtaining permanent residency that apply to all groups of immigrants, including protection beneficiaries).

### 1.3.2 Mainly descriptive comparisons, not causal analyses

The main aim of this project has been to *descriptively* document and compare governance and policy developments – both changes and stability – during the period analysed, with a

particular focus on the two periods in 2015/16 and 2022/23. It has not been within the scope of this study to systematically analyse 1) the mechanism/drivers of policy developments (change and/or stability), 2) the implementation of policies, or 3) the effects of policies.

It has been outside the scope of this study to systematically analyse the mechanisms leading to the policy changes (or stability) that we map and compare in the comparative analysis, for example, if a policy change was 1) a direct response to tackle the situation with high influxes, 2) a finalisation of general (often long-term) political processes, or 3) other mechanisms leading to policy change and stability. Unfolding the mechanisms driving each policy process would entail a detailed analysis of all the respective processes and has not been within the scope of this study, due to its extensive range of policy topics, and the geographical and temporal coverage. However, the country reports do provide more contextual factors of the relevant processes. In many cases, they also include references to existing studies, legal bases and official documents with more detailed descriptions or analysis of the respective policy processes. Based on both new and existing studies, the country reports also often comment on whether the policy developments were a response to the situations of high influxes of protection seekers or part of more general political processes (such as a change in government), but it has not been possible to do this in a systematic manner for all policy areas and changes covered. In the comparative analysis, based on insights from the country reports, we also include overall reflections concerning whether policy changes within each topic were mainly part of a direct “crisis response” during the high influxes, or if they were part of general (national) political processes, but this is not meant as a systematic analysis of the causal drivers of policy changes.

Further, an assessment of the actual policy implementation, and the policies’ (intended or unintended) effects has been outside the scope of this study. For example, we may document that a country introduced new rights and obligations for protection beneficiaries to participate in integration programmes, but we do not aim to evaluate to what extent this policy 1) was implemented according to its intention, 2) if everyone in the target group had this right fulfilled, or 3) if the right to integration programmes lead to more protection beneficiaries entering the labour market (if this was a stated goal). The country reports do sometimes discuss actual implementation and effects for some selected topics, but it has not been within the scope to do this thoroughly for each topic and country.

### 1.3.3 Main focus on national policies

The comparative analysis of policies mainly focuses on *national* government policies and measures. In many countries, lower levels of government and non-public actors are important actors in the development, implementation, and funding of asylum, immigration and integration policies. However, it is outside the scope of this analysis to systematically map different regional and local practices in each country. In cases where the responsibility for policy development is delegated to lower levels of government, we mainly document such delegation of responsibilities and often briefly describe that there are regional/local differences.

## 1.4 Reader guidance to the comparative analysis and country reports

The comparative analysis builds on the country reports and synthesises findings across policies, countries, time periods and different groups of protection seekers. In such a

synthesising comparative analysis, simplification is necessary. Such simplifications imply that important contextual factors may not get the attention they deserve.

The goal of this study has been to combine 1) broad comparative analysis of the overall trends and main comparative characteristics, with 2) more detailed country analyses which are able to include important contextual factors in each country.

To ensure this, we have similar report structures for the comparative analysis and the country reports, where the same topics are covered systematically to make it easy for the reader to look up more detailed information on particular policy changes of interest. This enables the reader to get an understanding of the main similarities and differences for each topic, but also to look up more detailed descriptions (with references) of the specific changes made in the respective country reports.

## 2 Case selection and analytical approach

### 2.1 Case selection of eight European countries

As the GOVREIN-project was commissioned by IMDi, an important goal was to identify *alternative* policies and measures which would later be used to discuss learning points for a Norwegian context (see chapter 1.1). Therefore, we have strived to include European countries that differ on relevant characteristics and contextual factors that could have affected the governance and policy development during the period of analysis.

We have selected eight countries that have different traditions and experiences regarding immigration historically, and that have experienced different levels of inflows during the period of analysis. The eight countries also differ on several dimensions concerning the governance model (unitary/federal), welfare state regime, and EU relations (see classification of the countries in Table 2.1 below).

The case selection was based on a dual approach. The first strategy involved comparing the Nordic countries: Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. The Nordic countries all have comprehensive welfare states with – relatively speaking – similar structural, political, economic, cultural and social frameworks (Brochmann & Hagelund 2012). They are all classified within the “social democratic welfare systems” according to Esping-Andersen’s (1990) classification. Nevertheless, the Nordic countries differ considerably in a number of areas when it comes to asylum, immigration and integration policy, which constitutes a relevant starting point for cross-national comparison and learning, in line with principles of a most similar system design (Borevi 2017).

The second strategy was to include countries that have been the destinations of significant flows of protection seekers, but which differed from the Nordic countries concerning overall governance systems and historical approach to asylum, immigration and integration policies. Therefore, we have included the following countries: the UK, Germany, Austria and Poland.

Table 2.1 classifies the countries according to whether they are unitary or federal states, their type of welfare state regimes and their EU relations (e.g., if they are EU members or not, and if they are part of the Common European Asylum System [CEAS]<sup>2</sup> and/or the Schengen agreement<sup>3</sup>). Below the table is a brief description of each country, highlighting important aspects that make them relevant for this cross-country comparison (for more detailed descriptions of the countries’ immigration and integration history, and political system and situation, see the respective country reports).

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<sup>2</sup> The European Commission defines the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) as “A framework of agreed rules which establish common procedures for **international protection** and a uniform status for those who are granted **refugee status** or **subsidiary protection** based on the full and inclusive application of the **Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol** and which aims to ensure fair and humane treatment of **applicants for international protection**, to harmonise asylum systems in the EU and reduce the differences between Member States on the basis of binding legislation, as well as to strengthen practical cooperation between national asylum administrations and the external dimension of asylum”.

<sup>3</sup> The Schengen Agreement is a treaty between European nations which eventually led to the creation of a common travel area in which there are few internal border checks. Today, 27 European countries, including 23 of the 27 EU Member States and the four European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – are part of the Schengen area. (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/schengen-agreement-and-convention.html>)

Table 2.1: The eight countries' governance and welfare state systems, including EU relations

	<b>Unitary/ federal state</b>	<b>Welfare state regime</b>	<b>EU member</b>	<b>Schengen cooperation</b>	<b>CEAS</b>
<b>Norway</b>	Unitary	Social Democratic	No	Yes	No
<b>Denmark</b>	Unitary	Social Democratic	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Sweden</b>	Unitary	Social Democratic	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Finland</b>	Unitary	Social Democratic	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Austria</b>	Federal	Conservative-corporatist	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Germany</b>	Federal	Conservative-corporatist	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Poland</b>	Unitary	Central European Welfare Model	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>UK</b>	Unitary	Liberalist	No	No	No

**Norway** is a unitary state, a non-EU member, but part of the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA)<sup>4</sup>. As a non-EU member, Norway is not part of the CEAS but is part of the Schengen agreement. Norway classifies as a social-democratic welfare type regime which is characterised by principals of universalism, social protection, and policies for reducing unemployment rates (Lauzadyte-Tutliene, Balezentis and Goculenko 2018; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Norway has gradually moved to more restrictive immigration policies during the last 20 years, but simultaneously introduced rather extensive integration policies, particularly for those granted protection. In a Scandinavian context, Norway is usually placed in the middle – between Denmark (restrictive) and Sweden (liberal) – on the restrictive/liberal dimension (Brochmann & Hagelund 2010).

Similarly to Norway, **Denmark** is also a unitary state and classified within the social democratic welfare regime family. However, Denmark constitutes an interesting case concerning their relation to the EU. Denmark is an EU member state and part of the Schengen Agreement but has opted out of the CEAS. Denmark is often classified as one of the most restrictive European countries on immigration and integration indices (Goodman 2010; MIPEX 2023) but has rather extensive integration programmes for those granted protection (both as a right and obligation).

**Sweden** is also a unitary, social democratic welfare state, an EU member, and part of both the Schengen agreement and the CEAS. Sweden has often been promoted as the multicultural flagship (Borevi 2010) and has historically received a relatively high share of protection seekers. Up until 2015, they had relatively liberal immigration policies compared to other European countries. However, after Sweden received the highest share of protection seekers relative to its population in 2015/16, the country underwent a major transition in their asylum, immigration and integration policies.

**Finland** shares many similarities with the Swedish case, by being a unitary, social democratic welfare state, an EU member, and part of both the Schengen agreement and the CEAS. It has traditionally been a country of emigration and it became a net receiver of immigrants only in the 1980s and 1990s (Heikkilä 2017). The annual number of protection seekers arriving in Finland up until 2015 was relatively low, and differed greatly from its

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<sup>4</sup> The EEA entered into force in 1994 and brings together the EU Member States and the three EEA EFTA States — Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway — in a single market, referred to as the "Internal Market". Switzerland is a part of the Schengen area based on separate agreements with the EU.

neighbour Sweden, which had been a much more attractive country of destination for humanitarian migration.

**The UK** is an interesting country to compare as it is currently outside the EU, and even during its time in the EU, it has always been outside the CEAS and has not been a member of the Schengen agreement. The UK is often classified as a liberalist welfare regime, where the state offers a modest level of social benefits and usually only provides means-tested assistance, and the market holds a strong standing (Esping-Andersen 1990; Lauzadyte-Tutliene et.al. 2018). The country has a long immigration history, and has been ethnically and culturally diverse and religiously plural for centuries (Vertovec 2007). However, the UK's immigration policies have – since the 1905 Aliens Act – been characterised by a desire to limit and restrict migration to the country (Patel 2021). Since the start of the millennia, British governments have increasingly relied on a number of ad hoc schemes to deal with particular crises and events rather than an overall holistic policy approach.

**Germany** is an integrated member of the EU, the Schengen agreement and the CEAS, and a federal state. Germany is a representative of a "conservative-corporatist" welfare state according to the Esping-Andersen's (1990) classification, characterised by a close employment and family link, where corporatism and social partners play an important role for the government (Österle & Heitzmann 2019, 21). During recent immigration history, Germany has shifted between restricting and liberalising their asylum, immigration and integration policies, but in the years leading up to 2015, there was a liberalising trend (SVR 2014). During both influxes analysed in this report, Germany has been one of the top receiving countries.

**Austria** shares many similarities with Germany, as an integrated member of the EU, the Schengen agreement and the CEAS. It is also a federal state and classified within the same "conservative-corporatist" welfare regime type (Esping-Andersen's 1990; Österle & Heitzmann 2019,21). Despite these similarities, Austria has had a different immigration history. Despite its long history of international migration and internal multi-ethnicity, Austria has in recent years taken a restrictive approach to immigration and integration. The Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020 offers a good characterisation of the Austrian case as a "halfway unfavourable" host country, characterised as only halfway granting immigrants with basic rights and equal opportunities, and by not providing immigrants with a secure future in the country (Solano & Huddleston 2020).

**Poland** is a unitary state, an EU member and part of both the Schengen cooperation and the CEAS. It represents the "Central European Welfare Model", characterised by lower income inequality than in Eastern Europe, higher ratio of workers under temporary contracts, and higher government spendings on social contributions than Eastern Europe but lower than the EU-27 average (Lauzadyte-Tutliene et al. 2018). Poland differs from the other seven countries as they have an even shorter immigration and integration history following the collapse of communism (Okólski & Wach 2020; Mołęda-Zdziech et al. 2021; Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2022). Until 2015, forced migration has been rather absent from the public and political agenda. Poland is a particularly interesting case during this period of analysis because of its contrasting situation in 2015/16 and 2022/23. In 2015, Poland did not get an increased number of asylum seekers due to, at the time, the dominance of other migration corridors to Europe, especially the Central Mediterranean and Eastern Mediterranean migration corridors to Europe, multiple push-backs at the country's external borders (Łukasiewicz 2017b), and that Poland remained mainly a transit rather than a destination country (Sobczak-Szelc et al. 2022). However, in 2022, Poland became the largest receiver of displaced persons from Ukraine.

## 2.2 Analytical approach for the comparative analysis

As the main aim of this project has been to have a stringent and systematic cross-national analysis, all project partners have been involved in the development of the comparative framework and the quality assurance of the comparative governance and policy analysis, through six steps (from April to November 2023).

### **Step 1 (April-May): Development of proposals for country report templates and a common analytical framework**

NIBR first developed drafts of the country reports for the Scandinavian countries based on the topics described in the project proposal to IMDi. NIBR also developed a suggestion for a detailed analytical framework for each topic covered, which included a specification of governance and policy development 1) before 2015, 2) from 2015-2021, and 3) from 2022 to June 2023. In the analytical framework, all countries were to document whether there had been changes in national legislation and measures for each of the eleven topics covered and the respective time periods, but also document if there had *not* been changes. These drafts were sent to all project partners and to IMDI before the next step, a joint workshop.

### **Step 2 (June): Joint workshop to develop a common analytical framework and templates**

To develop a common analytical framework, representatives from all project partners participated in a physical two-day workshop in Oslo. In the workshop, we systematically went through each topic and discussed main categories and subtopics that should be covered, and how the operationalisation of the analytical framework should be filled out. After the workshop, NIBR sent out two revised templates for each country to write/fill out. The first was the analytical framework with tables for each topic, including detailed information about differences between subcategories of protection statuses and permits (including the three time periods mentioned above). The second was the country report template which mirrored the topics in the analytical framework, with specific instructions of which questions should be addressed under each topic.

### **Step 3 (June-August): Writing the country reports and filling out the comparative framework**

Each country team was responsible for writing their respective country reports and filling out the detailed tables in the analytical framework for the comparative analysis. In July, we also had a joint project meeting to discuss challenges with the existing templates and what level of detail to include, and made minor adjustments based on these discussions.

### **Step 4 (September-October): First draft of comparative analysis**

Based on the first drafts of the eight countries' country reports and the filled out analytical frameworks for each country, NIBR was responsible for making a first draft of the comparative analysis. The first draft was sent to all project partners with two assignments: 1) quality assure the interpretation and classification of their respective country, and 2) comment on the overall analysis. All partners provided written comments and corrections to NIBR. Further, we had a joint digital meeting to discuss more general concerns and challenges with the comparative analysis. Based on the discussions in the meeting, we agreed on solutions to these concerns, and agreed on minor revisions in the country report templates.

### **Step 5 (October-November): Final revisions and quality assurance**

NIBR made final revisions in the comparative analysis based on the feedback from the other partners, and the partners were given a last round of revision and quality assurance of the final report.

### **Step 6 (November): Comments from IMDi and final report**

IMDi was sent the first draft of the report for comments on 1 November. After this round of comments from IMDI, the reports were finalised by 15 November 2023.

## **2.3 Methods for the country reports**

NIBR was responsible for the country reports for Norway, Denmark and Sweden, while the other partners were responsible for their respective country reports. The national analyses were conducted based on document studies of secondary literature and relevant legislation and other measures related to the governance and policy development of the project topics. Where relevant, the country teams conducted interviews with relevant stakeholders to quality assure findings. As all project partners had other previous and ongoing projects related to the project topics, the national analyses were based on both existing analysis and data collection, and to a large degree also supplemented with new analyses, particularly of more recent developments. For a description of the methods, data sources and related projects that the respective national analyses were based on, see the individual country reports.



### 3 Comparative analysis of flows of protection seekers and granted protection

How have the migration flows of protection seekers to European countries varied cross-nationally over the last decade? Which protection statuses were mainly used, and how did the recognition rates differ between the main sending countries? What differences were there related to the composition of protection seekers, such as country of origin, gender, and age – both across countries and over time?

In this chapter, we describe the influx of protection seekers to, and protection permits granted in, Europe over the past decade in terms of magnitude and composition, with particular focus on the eight countries covered in this project: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Austria, Poland and the UK (hereafter, the GOVREIN8 countries). Based mainly on comparative Eurostat data, the aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the situation during the past twelve years, with specific focus on the periods in 2015/16 and 2022/23, when most European countries experienced exceptionally large influxes of displaced person seeking protection compared to previous periods.

The descriptive quantitative analysis in this chapter provides important context for the comparative policy analysis (chapters 4-14) for the GOVREIN8 countries. We compare developments across the eight countries and include comparisons with the EU average.

#### **Data on asylum flows**

Data on asylum flows are sourced from Eurostat Asylum Statistics, which publishes harmonised and comparable data for European countries (Eurostat 2023). These data are based on administrative sources, supplied to Eurostat by statistical authorities, interior ministries or related immigration agencies. The data presented in this chapter is primarily sourced from four different datasets provided by Eurostat. Annual aggregated data covers the period 2012–2022, while monthly and quarterly data covers Jan–Jun 2023:

- 1) Decisions granting temporary protection ([Eurostat 2023a](#), [2023b](#)),
- 2) First-time asylum applicants ([Eurostat 2023c](#), [2023d](#)),
- 3) Resettlement refugees ([Eurostat 2023e](#)), and
- 4) First-instance decisions on asylum applications ([Eurostat 2023f](#), [2023g](#)).

Note that there may be inconsistencies between Eurostat and national statistics offices. Some persons may be registered multiple times, as each data point represent registration by authorities at a given moment. Here, Ukrainian arrivals from March 2022 is described with harmonised Eurostat flow data: annual decisions granting temporary protection. Eurostat produce stocks data as well, by removing protection holders who have since departed and aggregating the number of beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of every month. The differences are explained in the annex to the Technical Guidelines for data collection ([Eurostat 2022](#)).

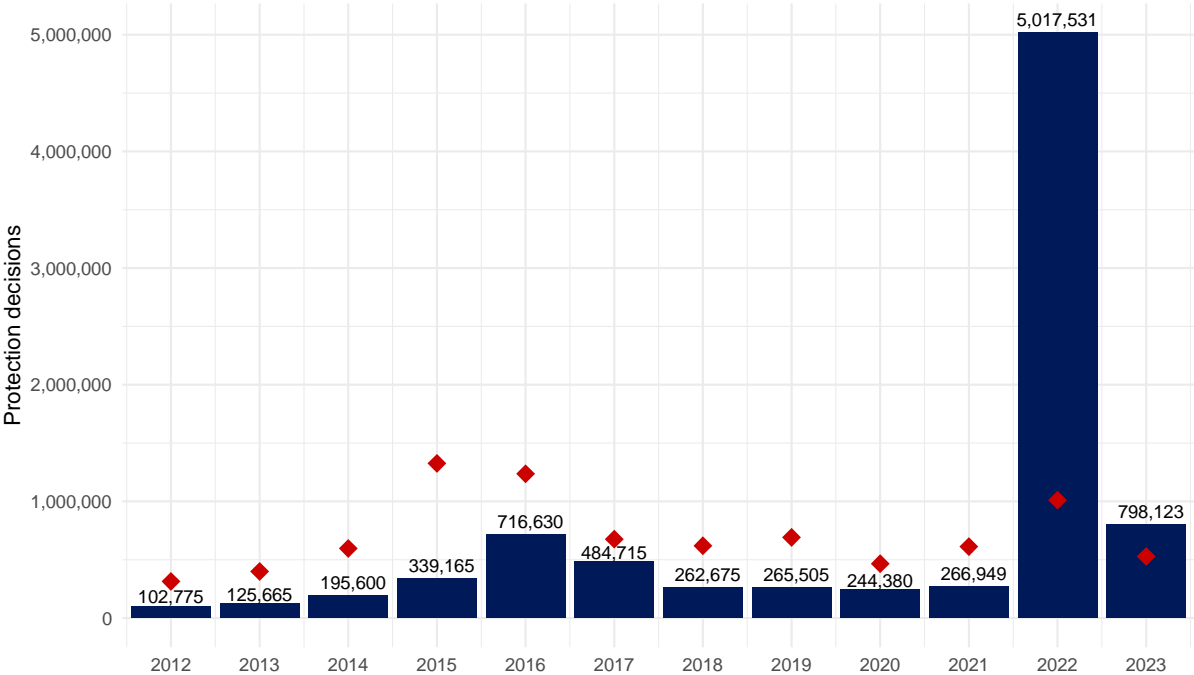
In addition, data for the UK after Brexit (2020–2023) has been supplemented from the Home Office, which includes asylum applications and decisions, and visa grants under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. Any additions to the harmonised Eurostat data are annotated in the following text where relevant.

Eurostat source: [Information on data - Migration and asylum – Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)  
Source for UK after 2019: [Home Office 2023](#).

### 3.1 Asylum flows and protection permits granted

The number of arrivals and first-time applications of protection seekers in Europe have fluctuated substantially, both over time and between countries. Figure 3.1, below, displays the variation over time in the EU27, the UK and the EFTA countries combined. Red diamonds in the figure represent the annual number of first-time asylum applicants (not including displaced persons from Ukraine). The blue bars in the figure represent beneficiaries of protection<sup>5</sup> each year, including registered displaced persons from Ukraine.

Figure 3.1: First-time asylum applicants and beneficiaries of protection (including registered displaced persons from Ukraine) in the EU27, EFTA countries and the UK, 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023f, 2023g, Home Office 2023. Data on resettlement refugees in 2023 is not available.

Overall, the red diamonds in Figure 1 show large fluctuations in influx of protection seekers to European countries. These flows are characterised by sharp peaks eclipsing 1.2 million in 2015 and 2016, sloping off to around 600,000 in the following years, before a decline in the pandemic lockdown year in 2020. In 2021, it increased to the pre-pandemic levels in 2018–2019. In 2022, the number again rose to nearly one million asylum applicants, the third highest level in this 11-year period. The number for 2023 includes only asylum applications lodged in the first half of the year but has already surpassed 520,000. The trend is forecasted to persist for the remaining six months, which would bring more than one million regular asylum applicants to the EU+ in 2023 ([Eurostat 2023h](#)).

<sup>5</sup> Beneficiaries of protection comprise all protection holders with statuses included in Eurostat 2023a (temporary protection), 2023e (resettlement refugees), and 2023f (Geneva Convention status, subsidiary protection, humanitarian status).

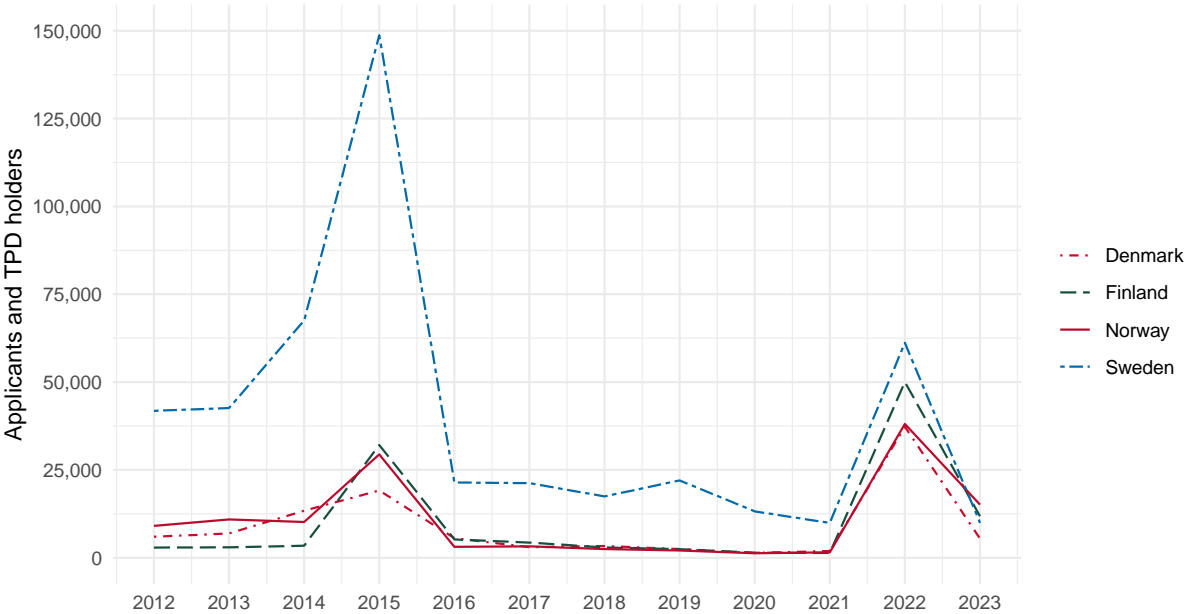
The blue bars show the annual number of protection permits granted, including registered displaced persons from Ukraine. In the years preceding 2022, the figure shows that 2016 and 2017 were the highest peaks with around 700,000 (2016) and just below 500,000 (2017) granted protection permits. In the following four years, 2018-2021, the number of granted protection permits amounted to around 250,000. In 2022, Europe experienced unprecedented numbers of persons granted protection, caused by the large number of persons fleeing the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, combined with a rise in general protection seekers from other countries, resulting in over five million protection permits granted in 2022, and nearly 800,000 as of June 2023.

### 3.1.1 Cross-national differences during the two periods of influxes

How have the migration flows of protection seekers to European countries varied cross-nationally in the GOVREIN8 countries in the last decade, and how did the two periods of high influxes affect the countries differently?

The total influxes of protection seekers include both regular asylum applicants and displaced persons from Ukraine, who are granted temporary collective protection in all EU countries and all GOVREIN8 countries except for the United Kingdom. The total number of protection applicants from 2012 to June 2023 is displayed in figures 3.2 and 3.3 below (the Nordic countries and the non-Nordics: Austria, Poland, Germany and the UK, respectively). Note that this presentation differs from Figure 1, where displaced persons from Ukraine were separated from the applicant numbers (red diamonds, Fig. 3.1), as they do not have to claim asylum through the regular asylum system and were therefore included among the protection holders (blue bars in Fig. 3.1).

Figure 3.2: Annual first-time asylum applicants and registered displaced persons from Ukraine in Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, 2012–June 2023.

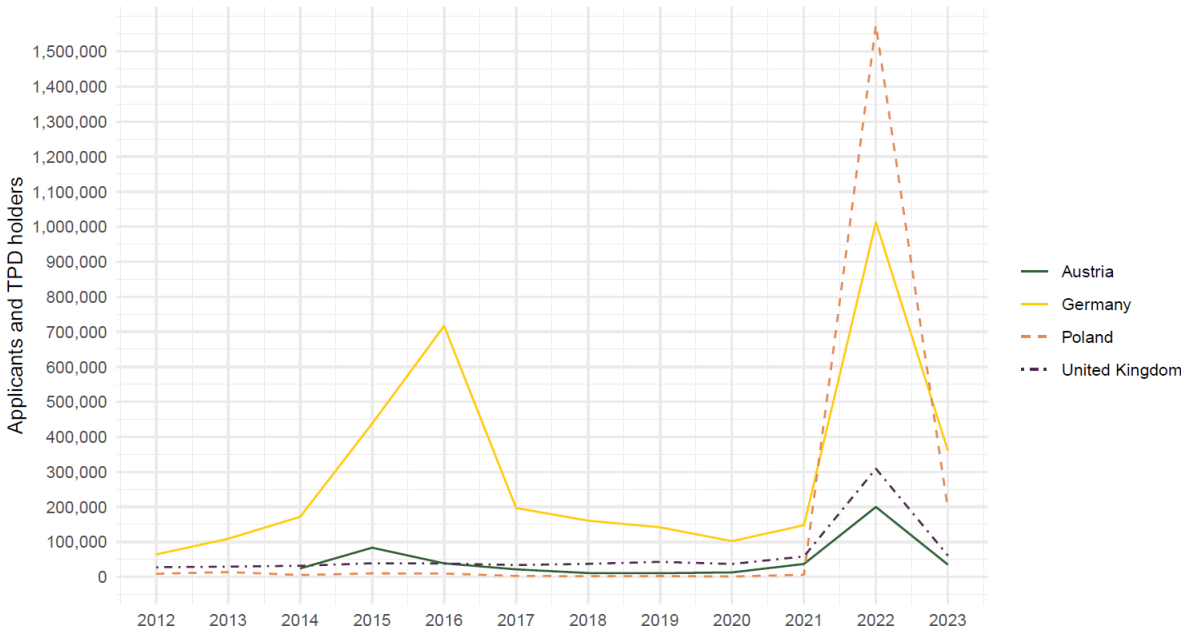


Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d.

Figure 3.2 shows that Sweden stands out compared to the other Nordic countries and has received more protection seekers in the entire period, except in 2023 (as of June). All the

Nordic countries experienced significant increases in 2015, but the numbers dropped in 2016, followed by relatively low numbers until 2022. In 2022, all four countries had high inflows, mostly related to the reception of displaced persons from Ukraine. The countries with the largest influxes in 2022 were Sweden and Finland, while Norway has received the most protection seekers in 2023, according to the preliminary numbers for 2023 (until June). These are predominantly displaced persons from Ukraine.

Figure 3.3: Annual first-time asylum applicants and registered displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria, Germany, Poland and the UK, 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, Home Office 2023. Eurostat is missing harmonised data for Austria in 2012 and 2013.

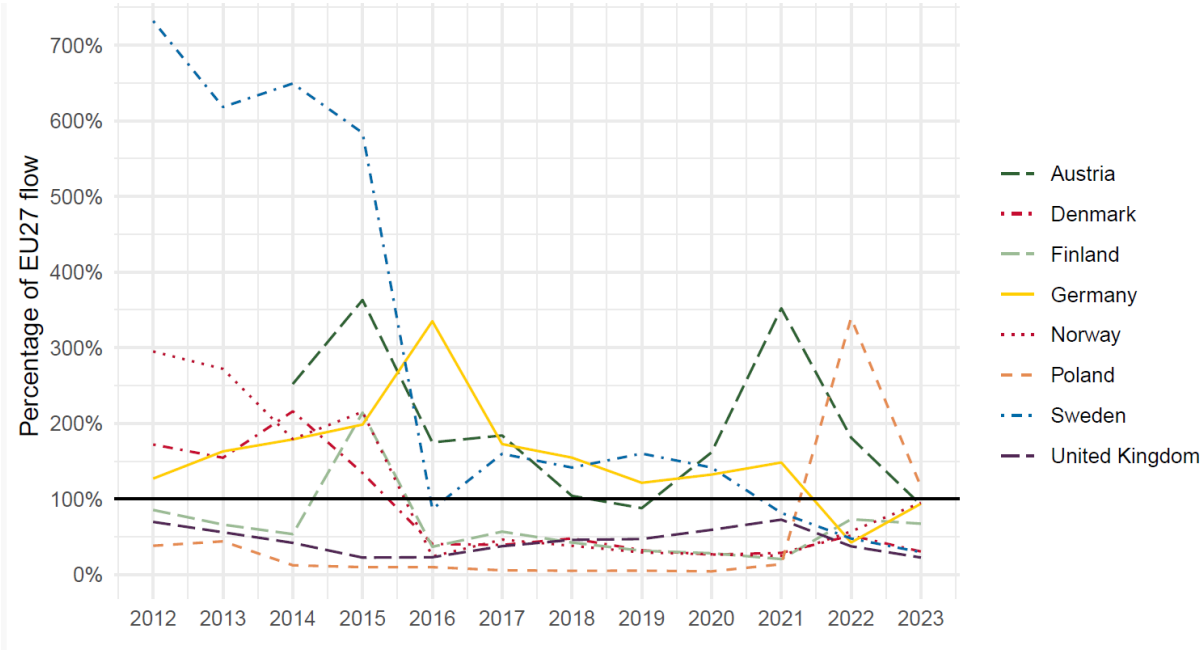
Figure 3.3 shows that Germany was by far the most important country of destination in 2015 and 2016. Of all first-time asylum applicants within the EU27, Germany received 35% in 2015 and 60% in 2016 (many of those did actually arrive in 2015 but were only registered in 2016). All four countries received higher influxes in 2022 than in 2015. Poland received very few protection seekers up until 2021, but after the war in Ukraine started in 2022, the country registered more than 1.5 million persons fleeing from Ukraine. All four countries saw declining arrivals in the first half of 2023.

Note that the flow data of first-instance decisions presented here – based on Eurostat data – may undercount Ukrainian arrivals in 2022 in some countries. However, the flow data do portray the ongoing and rapidly developing situation pertaining to the influx of protection seekers, which represents a challenge for the authorities who process protection claims, regardless of whether these Ukrainians have departed since. The gap between these sources for Ukrainian arrivals can be illustrated with the case of Poland, which had registered nearly 1 million beneficiaries of protection in Dec 2022 (stocks), but where more than 1.5 million decisions granting protection has been recorded (flow).

While there are significant disparities between the absolute numbers of protection seekers who arrived in different countries, these numbers do not account for differences in population size. Figure 3.4 shows the countries' relative share compared to their populations and compares

them to the annual EU average (the 100% baseline). The EU baseline is the annual number of first-time applicants and displaced persons from Ukraine  $n$  divided by the EU population each year in millions,  $p$ :  $n/p = 100\%$ . In the 12-year period, the EU average ranges between 500 arrivals per million inhabitants in 2012, increasing to around 2700 in 2015 and 2016, and reaching its maximum at 11,600 per million inhabitants in 2022. Weighted flows to the specific countries in the figure below are computed as arrivals per million inhabitants and represented as a percentage of the EU average flow that year.

Figure 3.4: Annual first-time asylum applicants and registered displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria, Germany, Poland and the UK, 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, Home Office 2023.

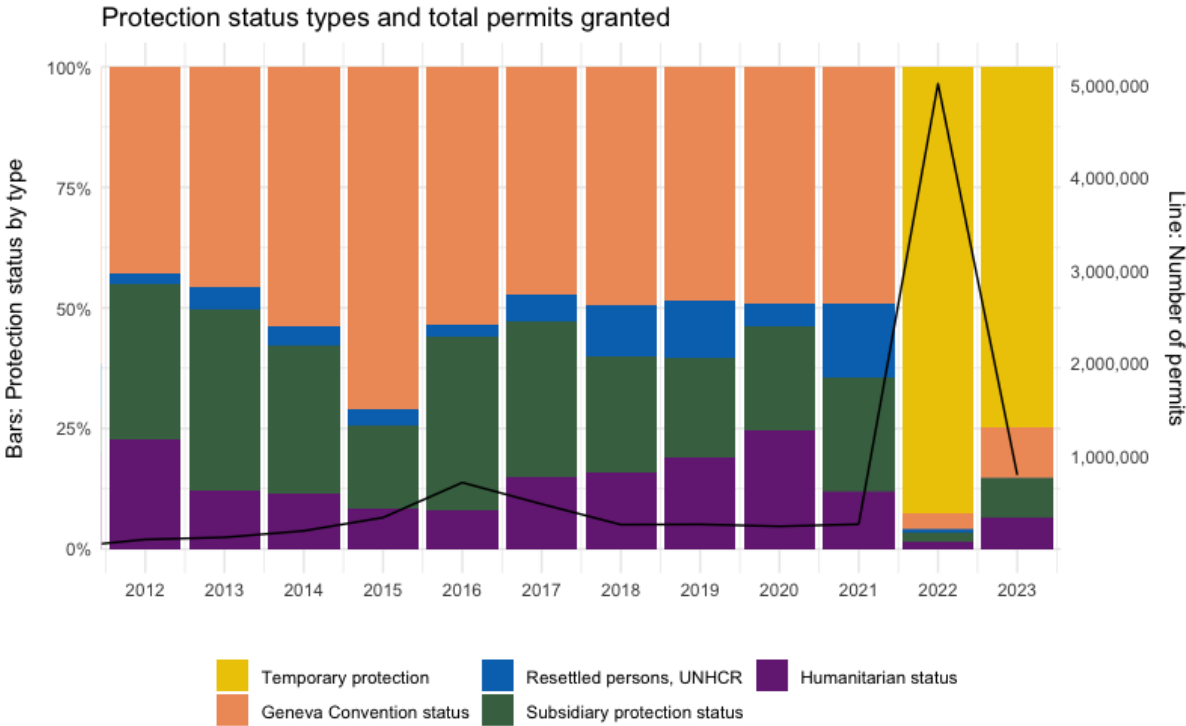
Up until 2016, Sweden received some 600–700% of the EU average relative to population. In absolute numbers, the country of no more than 10 million inhabitants received 156,000 applicants in 2015 (12% of the EU total). Relative to the Swedish population, this amounted to 16,020 applicants per million inhabitants, nearly six times more than the EU average. The weighted flows also illustrate that Sweden and Austria received the highest shares of arrivals relative to population in 2015. Germany, however, peaked in 2016, when most of the other countries experienced declines. Sweden, Germany and Austria mostly received larger weighted flows than the EU before 2021/22. In 2022, both Germany and Sweden had relatively few first-time applicants compared to the EU average.

In absolute numbers, flows of protection seekers to the four Nordic countries diminished by 90% in 2016. Consequently, Denmark and Norway received larger weighted flows than the EU baseline until 2016, when it dropped substantially. Poland, the UK and Finland have received a lower share than the EU average during the entire period, with two exceptions: Finland received 200% of the EU baseline in 2015, and Poland saw a substantial influx in 2022, caused by large numbers of displaced persons from Ukraine.

### 3.1.2 Changes in the type of protection status granted

What types of protection statuses have European countries used during the period of analysis? As will be discussed in the comparative policy analysis in chapter 5 on protection statuses and permits, the eight countries have had national regulations that distinguish between different protection statuses, and their implementation and usage of these protection statuses also differed (see also the respective country reports for detailed analysis of applied protection statuses). Despite national differences, Eurostat has harmonised data cross-nationally, and distinguishes between five main categories: Geneva Convention status, subsidiary protection, humanitarian protection, resettled refugees, and displaced persons from Ukraine granted some form of temporary protection. The UK does not grant displaced persons from Ukraine collective temporary protection but has introduced specific Ukraine visa schemes for displaced persons from Ukraine (see UK country report for details). However, in the figure below, displaced persons from Ukraine under these UK visa schemes are included in the category “temporary protection” to portray the total number of persons displaced from Ukraine that have been granted some form of residence permit in the European countries<sup>6</sup>.

Figure 3.5: Type of protection permits granted in the EU27, EFTA countries and the UK, 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023e, 2023f, 2023g, Home Office 2023. Data on protection permits for 2023 only include temporary protection permits, as data on the other types of permits were not available at the time of analysis.

Figure 3.5 shows the share of different protection permits granted in the EU27, EFTA countries and the UK in the bars, and the total number of protection permits granted (black line). It shows

<sup>6</sup> In the UK, only the two major Ukraine Visa Schemes are included: the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. The Ukraine Extension Scheme is excluded, as it only applies to persons with existing permissions to be in the UK ([Home Office 2023](#)).

that refugee status according to the Geneva convention<sup>7</sup> (orange bars) has been the main protection status in the European countries up until 2021, with a particularly high share in 2016 following the 2015/16 influx of protection applicants, when around 70% of all protection permits issued had this status. The second most used protection permit used has been subsidiary protection (green bars).

Humanitarian protection<sup>8</sup> (purple bars) – a type of nationally granted protection to immigrants who do not qualify for the other international protection statuses (Geneva Convention and subsidiary protection) – was also in use in most countries, although it constituted a smaller share compared to the other statuses. The use of humanitarian protection rose in the period between 2018-2021, with the first year of the pandemic (2020) being an exception.

Not all countries accept significant numbers of resettlement refugees through UNHCR, but the UK, with its wide range of different visa schemes (as detailed in the UK country report), has granted protection to a large share of these refugees, along with Sweden, Norway, Germany and France.

Overall, many different protection statuses have been in use up until 2021, and there are clear patterns where protection seekers from specific countries are provided certain protection statuses. Syrians have been more likely to receive international protection such as Convention Refugee status or subsidiary protection, while many Afghans received humanitarian status in several countries.

Displaced persons from Ukraine constituted most of the protection permits in the past two years, at 93% in 2022 and 75% in the first half of 2023. Though the *relative* share of regular protection permits – which are essentially provided for non-Ukrainians – fell in 2022 due to the sudden increase of Ukrainian protection seekers, the absolute number of protection holders granted regular permits in 2022 (367,000) was somewhat higher than in the four preceding years 2018–2021 (250,000). In 2023, 200,000 regular permits had been granted in the first 6 months.

### 3.1.3 Recognition rates depending on country of origin

How did the recognition rates differ between the main sending countries, and were there differences in the recognition rates of the GOVREIN8 countries?

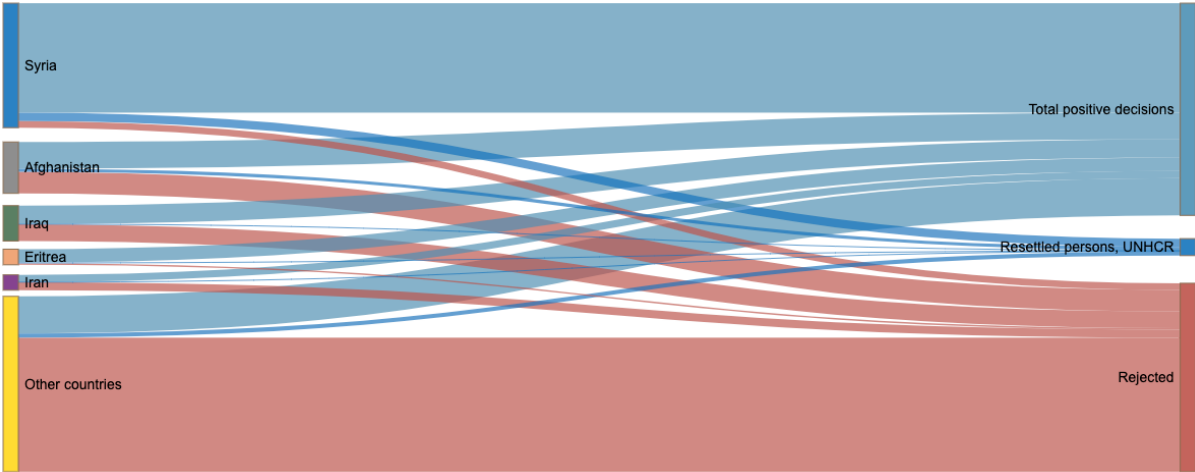
There are disparities in recognition rates for protection seekers from different sending countries. This variation is displayed in Figure 3.6, which includes protection seekers from the major sending countries to the GOVREIN8 between 2012–June 2023. The figure only shows first-time decisions on asylum applications. Thus, subsequent decisions and outcomes of appeals are not included, and real approval rates may be slightly higher.

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<sup>7</sup> All the European countries are signatories to the Geneva Convention of 1951 relating to the status of refugees, amended by the New York Protocol of 1967, which specify the rights of refugees ([Directive 2011/95/EU](#); [EU 2015](#)).

<sup>8</sup> Protection seekers who are ineligible for international protection may still be provided protection on humanitarian grounds. Beneficiaries of different types of national protection may all be categorised as having humanitarian status, as this status is not harmonised at EU level (European Commission 2023b).

Figure 3.6: Recognition rates separated by country of origin for the GOVREIN8 countries, 2012- June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023e, 2023f, 2023g, Home Office 2023. Data on resettlement refugees in 2023 is not available.

Figure 3.6 shows that about half of the asylum applications were positive. Both Syrians (88%) and Eritreans (85%) had higher recognition rates, while about half of Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians were granted protection. Protection applicants from other countries generally had lower recognition rates; only one fifth of these first-time applicants were granted protection.

More detailed analysis shows that there were substantial differences in recognition rates across countries, and fluctuations within each country over time. These differences and fluctuations are largely linked to what share of origin countries they received applicants from. For example, Norway had relatively high recognition rates overall, but a large share of persons seeking protection were from Syria and Eritrea, who generally have high recognition rates. Poland, on the other hand, had many applicants from Ukraine (before 2022) and Russia (often Chechens with Russian citizenship), and very few of these were granted protection. For more information about the main sending countries to each host country, and the recognition rate for each group in the respective host country, see the country reports.

### 3.2 Developments and cross-national differences in the group composition of persons granted protection

Population structure refers to the composition of a population in terms of various demographic characteristics. Some key components of population structure for protection beneficiaries are the country of origin, age and gender composition. So, how has the composition of protection holders – with respect to sending countries, gender and age – changed over time, and are there cross-national differences?

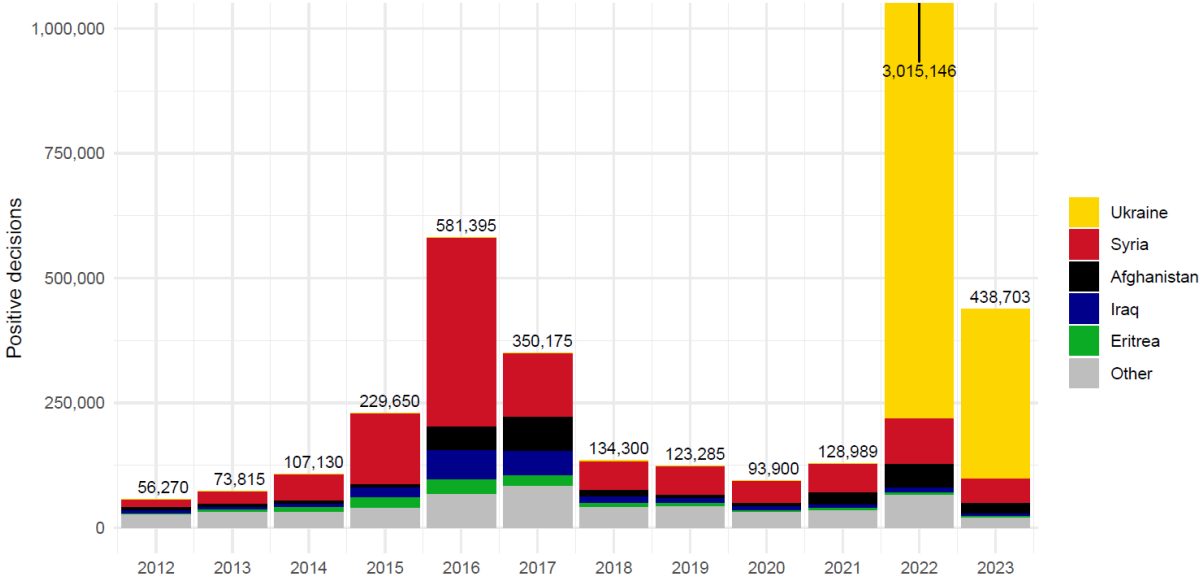
#### 3.2.1 Main origin country groups among protection holders: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Ukraine

What were the main country groups that were granted protection permits in the GOVREIN8 countries, and do these differ cross-nationally?



Figure 3.7 shows the five main origin countries from which protection applicants were granted residence permits in the GOVREIN8 countries.

Figure 3.7: Persons granted protection based on country of origin in the GOVREIN8 countries, 2012– June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023e, 2023f, 2023g, Home Office 2023. Protection grants include Geneva Convention status, subsidiary protection, humanitarian status, resettlement, and temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine (including variations on the TPD). Data on resettlement refugees in 2023 is not available.

Figure 3.7 charts the top five countries of origin for those granted protection in the GOVREIN8 countries. Although the total number of persons granted protection amounted to over three million in 2022, the Y-axis is cut at one million to make it possible to discern the different sending countries in the preceding years.

In the decade before the Ukrainian influx in 2022, most protection beneficiaries in the GOVREIN8 came from three origin countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, matching the EU27. In the full 12-year period from 2012–2023, Ukrainians were by far the largest group, and in the following breakdown they are excluded, focusing solely on regular protection decisions (on asylum applications and resettlement, not including TPD/Ukraine). Among these, half of the 2.17 million beneficiaries of protection in the GOVREIN8 were from Syria (50%), followed by Afghanistan (13%) and Iraq (8%). There are cross-national differences, however. While the same three sending countries were dominant in Germany and Austria, there was cross-national variation between the other six GOVREIN countries.

In Norway, Denmark and Sweden, Eritreans (not Iraqis) were the third largest sending country in 2015–17. This contributed to making Eritreans the second largest group in the full period from 2012–2023 in the Scandinavian countries, second to Syria. In Denmark, Iranians were the third largest group, while Afghans were the third largest in Norway and Sweden.

In Finland, fewer Syrians arrived, but they were still among the top three groups granted protection. Iraqis (24%) surpassed Syrians (22%) and were the largest group of protection holders in the 12-year period. In the UK, Syria, Afghanistan and Iran were the three largest sending countries.

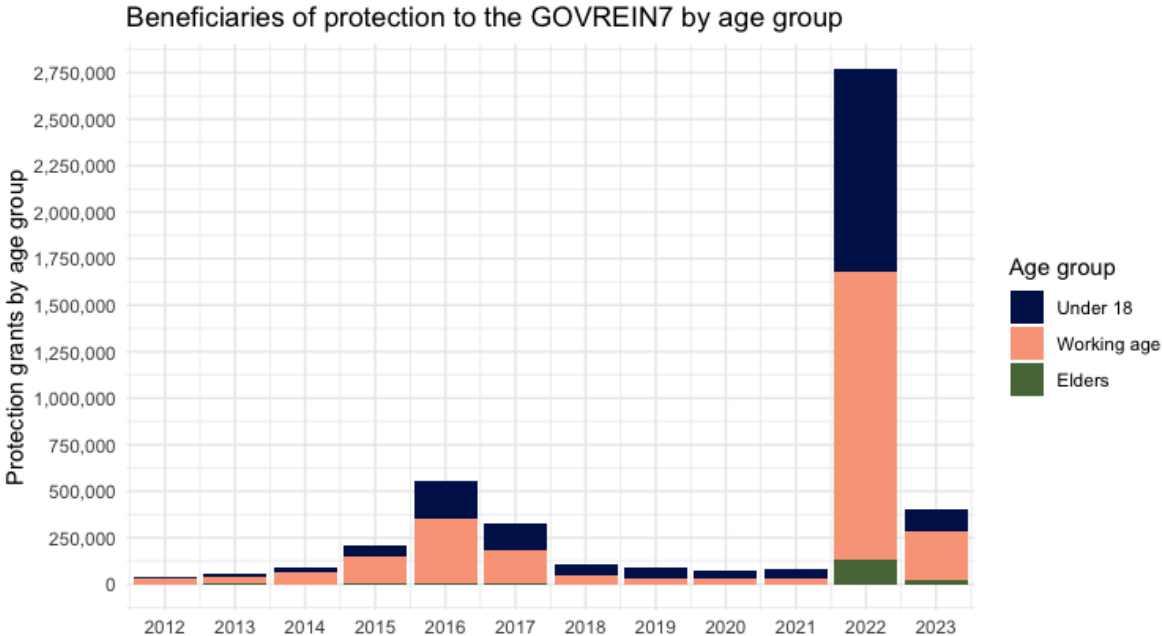
Protection holders in Poland have more different sending country profiles than the other seven nations. In Poland, the major citizenships of protection beneficiaries were Belarus, Ukraine and Russia (mostly Chechens).

### 3.2.2 Age groups and dependency ratios

The age composition of protection beneficiaries is highly relevant when designing policies for particularly reception and integration, because children, the elderly and other adults are in need of very different services (e.g., healthcare needs, elderly care versus schooling, number of persons of working age versus retired, etc.). So, what was the age distribution for those who had been granted protection when analysing the share of persons of working age, compared to minors and elderly? How has this developed over time and are there cross-national differences?

Figure 3.8 shows the age distribution among those who have been granted protection in the GOVREIN7 countries (excluding the UK), distinguishing between three main age categories: children (under 18 years), adults/working age (18-63 years), elderly (64+ years).

Figure 3.8: Age distribution among protection beneficiaries in the GOVREIN7, the UK excluded, 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023e, 2023f, 2023g. Data from the UK is not included due to non-harmonised age data.

Figure 3.8 shows that the age composition has varied over the last decade. From 2012 to 2016, about two thirds of those granted protection were of working age, while nearly one third were minors. However, in 2015, the share of children was somewhat lower, at 26%. From 2017, although the absolute number of persons granted protection was very low, the percentage of children increased and constituted about half of those granted protection. In 2022, the share of minors actually decreased to 36% and dropped further to 27% in 2023 (as of June). However, as the total numbers of persons granted protection rose significantly in 2022 and 2023, the countries experienced a significant increase in the absolute numbers of

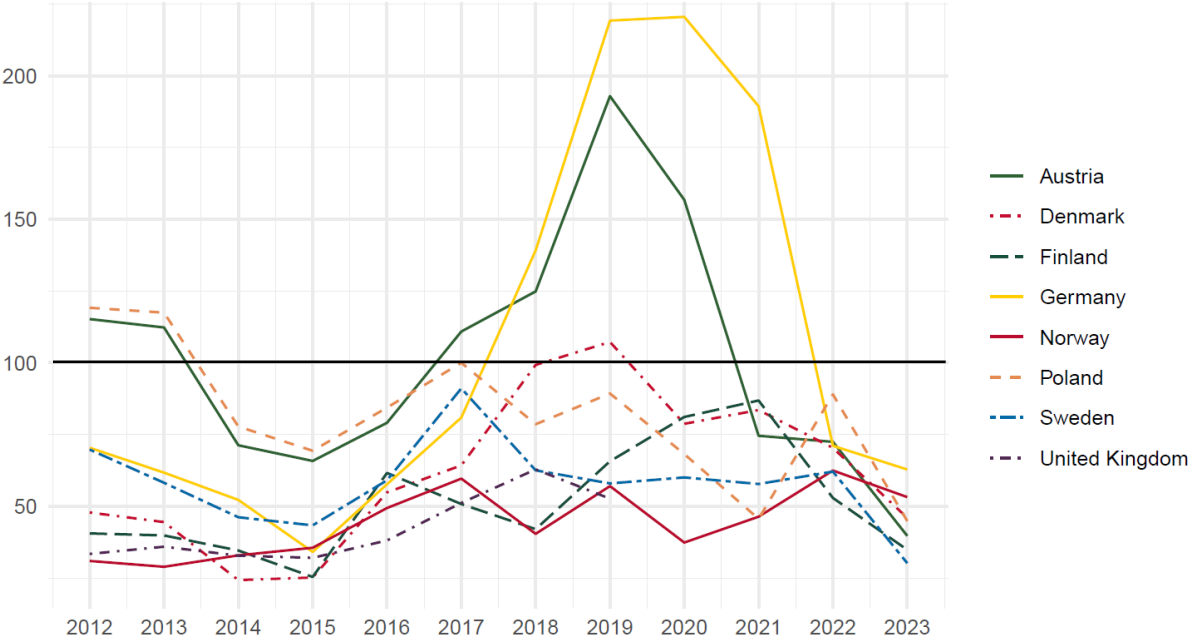
minors. When comparing absolute numbers, the eight countries received just above 200,000 minors in 2015, but in 2022, they received over one million minors.

In the period from 2012 to 2021, the share of elderly people (over 64 years) was very low, constituting between 1-2%. Although the share of elderly persons was still at modest levels compared to the other two age groups, it rose to 5% in 2022 and 2023. As the total number of persons granted protection was very high during these two years compared to previous years, this involved a significant increase in the total number of elderly protection beneficiaries. When comparing the two periods of high influxes, we see that while there were just around 10,000 elderly persons granted protection during the three-year period from 2015-2017 in total, the number reached over 160,000 in total during the 18 months from 2022 to June 2023.

When analysing the age composition, a commonly used measure is the age dependency ratio, which is a demographic measurement that expresses the ratio of economically dependent age groups (here, children below 18 years and the elderly over 64 years) to the economically productive, or working-age, population in a given area or society (WHO 2023). This ratio is a useful indicator for understanding the support burden placed on the working-age population, and it can have implications for social and economic policies. The dependency ratio is expressed as (economically dependent population / working-age population) \* 100. It will equal 100 when the two groups, the dependents (minors and elderly) and the working-age population, are of identical size. If the dependency ratio is higher than 100, there is a large share of children and elderly among the group total, and if the dependency ratio is lower than 100, the majority of the group are people of working age.

How did the age dependency ratio differ between countries during the period of analysis? Figure 3.9 shows the age dependency ratio for protection holders in the GOVREIN8 countries.

Figure 3.9: Age dependency ratio for the GOVREIN8 countries, 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023e, 2023f, 2023g. Data from the UK after 2019 is not included due to non-harmonised age data from the Home Office.

Figure 3.9 show that there are very large differences between the dependency ratios in the eight countries, and they have also fluctuated substantially over time.

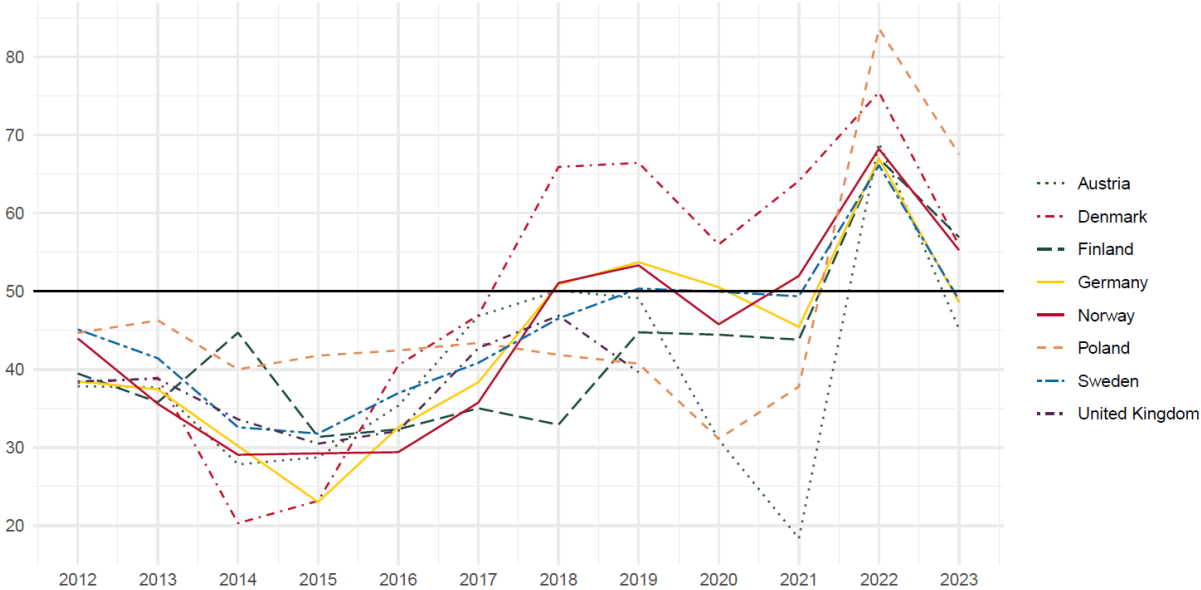
The majority of countries had dependency ratios below 100 throughout most of the period analysed, meaning that there was a larger share of persons of working age that were granted protection compared to elderly and minors. Although all countries experienced large fluctuations, Norway, Finland, Sweden and the UK all had dependency ratios below 100 from 2012 to 2023, and Denmark only had a short period in 2018 and 2019 where the ratio went just above 100. Poland has experienced very large fluctuations, but after having a larger share of minors and elderly in 2012-2013, the dependency ratio was below 100 most of the proceeding years. Austria has experienced the largest fluctuations, with a majority of minors and elderly in 2012-2013 and 2017-2020, and a majority of working age persons in the other years. Lastly, Germany had a dependency ratio below 100 until 2017, but then experienced the largest relative share of minors and elderly of all the countries from 2018-2021, before it dropped in 2022-2023. The high dependency ratios for Austria and Germany reflects that they have received substantial numbers of children, many of which were unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs).

The dependency ratio of all those who were granted protection in 2022 declined with the arrival of displaced persons from Ukraine. Over the 18 months for which data is available (2022–July 2023), it averaged at about 80, implying a higher share of persons of working age. This was discernibly higher than for those who received residence permits in 2015–2017, when it averaged at around 60. However, note that Figure 9 displays relative numbers, and that in 2022 and 2023, all countries experienced significant increases in the absolute numbers of minors and elderly persons who were granted protection (as described in Figure 3.8).

### 3.2.3 Major shift in gender balance

How has the share of adult males and females among those who were granted protection changed over time, and does it differ cross-nationally?

Figure 3.10: Share of women among adult (18+ years) first-time applicants (including registered displaced persons from Ukraine), 2012–June 2023.



Data: Eurostat 2023a, 2023b, 2023e, 2023f, 2023g. Data from the UK after 2019 is not included due to non-harmonised age data from the Home Office.

Figure 3.10 analyses the gender distribution between *adult* (18+ years) men and women who were granted protection during the respective year, by presenting the share of adult women among protection seekers to each country. It shows that from 2012 to 2018, all the countries had a larger share of men who were granted protection, although there were large fluctuations for some countries and differences between the countries. All countries experienced a drop in the share of women who were granted protection during the 2015/16 influx.

In the period between 2017-2021 the largest cross-national discrepancy occurred, but overall, most countries experienced a rise in the share of protection beneficiaries who were women during this period. In Norway, Denmark and Germany, the women outnumbered the men during some years in this period, particularly in Denmark. However, since most countries granted relatively few protection permits during this period, the absolute number of women was still relatively modest.

Denmark and Austria stand out as the countries with largest fluctuations in the gender balance during the entire period analysed. Denmark's gender balance has ranged between 20% women in 2014 to 75% in 2022, while Austria's gender balance has fluctuated up and down with the lowest drop in 2021 (below 20% women) to a peak of over 65% women in 2022.

After the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, men between 18 to 60 years were generally not allowed to leave Ukraine, which also led to a switch in the gender balance in all countries. From 2022, the share of women surpassed men in all countries. Although all the countries had a majority of women who were granted protection in 2022, there were still large differences. Poland topped the chart with over 80% women, Denmark with 75%, while the other six countries had around 65%. However, the share of women dropped significantly in 2023 (as of June). Poland still had a substantially higher share of women compared to the other countries, with about two thirds of the persons granted protection being women. Denmark had a larger decline, falling to about 55% along with Norway and Finland, while Germany, Austria and Sweden dropped just below 50%.

### 3.3 Summary

The analyses show that asylum inflows have varied significantly over the past ten years, with 2015/16 and 2022/23 being the absolute peak years. The countries included in this project (GOVREIN8), such as Germany, Sweden, Austria, and Norway, were among the countries in Europe that received the highest number of asylum seekers in 2015/16, both in absolute numbers and relative to their populations.

For persons granted protection in Europe, since 2012, the main sending countries are Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, and in the last one and a half years, Ukraine. Displaced persons receive different permits for residence in different countries. Before 2022, granted asylum (Geneva Convention status) was the most common type of permission granted to people seeking protection, followed by subsidiary protection in the eight countries. In 2022 and 2023, temporary collective protection for displaced persons from Ukraine constituted the majority of granted permits, but there was also an increase in protection seekers from other parts of the world, and the granting of other types of permits in 2022/23. There are also great disparities in recognition rates for protection seekers from different sending countries.

Overall, asylum seekers have been predominantly men. Our analyses suggest that this also characterises the eight countries in this project. This changed abruptly in 2022 with the significant influx of displaced persons from Ukraine. There was a large majority of women in this group, but the numbers for 2023 (until July) show a more even gender balance compared with 2022.

The age composition has varied over the last decade. From 2012 to 2016, about two thirds of those granted protection were of working age, while nearly one third were minors. From 2017, although the absolute number of persons granted protection was relatively low, the percentage of children increased and constituted about half of those granted protection. In 2022, the share of minors actually decreased to 36% and dropped further to 27% in 2023 (as of June). However, as the total numbers of persons granted protection rose significantly in 2022 and 2023, the countries experienced a significant increase in the absolute numbers of minors. When comparing absolute numbers, the eight countries received just above 200,000 minors in 2015, but in 2022, they received over one million minors. In the period from 2012 to 2021, the share of elderly people (over 64 years) was very low, constituting less than 2%. Although the share of elderly persons was still at modest levels compared to the other two age groups, it rose to 5% in 2022 and 2023, comprising 160 000 persons.

## 4 Governance structures and multilevel responsibilities

What governance structures did the countries have for the immigration and integration field: How were responsibilities for policy development and implementation distributed across levels of government, and what formal role did non-public actors play, if any? Have these governance structures changed during the period of analysis?

Studying 'migration governance' includes analysis of what various kinds of actors – such as local governments, national governments, private companies, regional and international organisations – are doing when they try to manage or regulate migration (Geddes 2022). Immigration and integration are complex policy fields, so-called "wicked issues" that cross traditional organisational, sectoral and administrative lines (Rittel & Weber 1973; Pachocka et al 2020; Geddes et al. 2019; Zincone & Caponio 2006). The multilevel governance of the immigration and integration field also crosses governmental lines and addresses the relations between different governmental levels through the distribution of responsibilities for policy development and implementation (Scholten & Penninx 2016). Different governance models will also involve different forms of funding for underlying actors (municipalities, volunteers, private actors, etc.). European countries have chosen different solutions for how the work should be developed and organised, for example when it comes to the degree of national governance versus local autonomy (Hernes 2017; 2022a), and the use of private and voluntary actors as suppliers (Gebhardt 2016; Scholten & Penninx 2016). In times of so-called crises, governments may also create new (temporary) organisational solutions.

This study encompasses topics present in both immigration (including asylum), and integration policies. In this chapter, we map the responsibilities and roles different actors have, and distinguish between responsible actors for immigration and responsible actors for integration (although they may be the same in some countries/periods).

In the following chapters, more details of the specific organisational structure will be presented for each topic (when relevant). The main purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the main organisation and distribution of responsibilities, and which administrative and organisational solutions were (temporarily) introduced to meet the challenges of the high influx of protection seekers in 2015/2016 and 2022/23. We first present the national distribution of responsibilities between ministries and national agencies before we compare distribution of responsibilities between different levels of government. Thereafter, we compare the role of non-public actors: non- and for-profit actors and private persons/households. Lastly, we describe examples of different coordination measures the countries have taken during the periods of high influxes of protection seekers.

### 4.1 National responsible ministries for immigration and integration

Table 4.1 presents which ministries have been responsible for the immigration and integration portfolios, along with specific dedicated ministers during the period of analysis.

Table 4.1: National ministries responsible for the immigration and integration portfolios, 2015-June 2023.

	Norway	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Austria	Poland	Germany	United Kingdom
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION</b>	<p>Ministry of Justice and Public Security</p> <p>2015: Specialised Minister for Immigration and Integration within the same ministry.</p>	<p>Before 2015: Ministry of Justice</p> <p>2015: Ministry of Immigration and Integration</p>	<p>Ministry of Justice with a specialised Minister of Migration</p>	<p>Ministry of the Interior</p>	<p>Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs</p>	<p>Ministry of Interior (and Administration since 2015)</p> <p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>2017-2019: Specialised Member of the Council of Ministers responsible for Polish humanitarian aid</p>	<p>Ministry of the Interior / Foreign Affairs / Labour and Social Affairs / Economic Cooperation and Development / Economic Affairs and Climate Action.</p> <p>Special Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration</p> <p>Since 2023: Special Commissioner for Migration Agreements</p>	<p>Home Office (Ministerial Department)</p>
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTEGRATION</b>	<p>Before 2015: Ministry of Children, Equality and Inclusion</p> <p>2015: Ministry of Justice and Public Security with specialised Minister for Immigration and Integration</p> <p>2017: Ministry of Research and Knowledge and Research</p> <p>2021: Ministry of Employment and Inclusion</p>	<p>Before 2015: Ministry for Children, Equality, Integration and Social affairs and Ministry of Employment</p> <p>2015: Ministry of Immigration and Integration</p>	<p>Ministry of Employment</p> <p>2015: New title for responsible Minister of Employment and Integration (previously Minister of Employment).</p>	<p>The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment</p>	<p>Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs</p> <p>2020: New Federal Minister for Women, Family, Integration and Media under the Federal Chancellery</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (minor changes in ministry name/responsibility over the years)</p> <p>From 2022: New position of Minister without portfolio (Minister-Member of the Council of Ministers), responsible for social integration.</p>	<p>Ministry of the Interior / Labour and Social Affairs / Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth / Justice / Education and Research</p> <p>Special Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration</p> <p>From 2022: Commissioner for Antiracism</p>	<p>Home Office</p> <p>Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</p> <p>Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office</p>



#### 4.1.1 Responsible ministry/ministries for immigration

Table 4.1 shows that there have only been minor changes when it comes to which ministries hold the overall responsibility for the immigration field (including asylum). The countries differed in terms of whether the responsibilities for immigration were mainly under one ministry or divided between two or several ministries. The four Nordic countries and the UK had one main responsible ministry – either the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Interior. In the UK, the Home Office, a ministerial department, had primary responsibility for immigration policy. Since 2014, the UK's Minister of State for Immigration was responsible for illegal migration and asylum, including: small boats policy (operations with the Ministry of Defence), asylum decision making and accommodation, returns and removals (including third country agreements), detention estate.

Austria, Poland, and Germany divided the responsibilities for immigration among two or more ministries. In Austria, the Federal Ministry of Interior was responsible for border politics, including return and deportation procedures, and was primarily responsible for policy development regarding the asylum system. The Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs handled visas and permits (and partly integration until 2019, see next point). Germany had a mainstreaming approach, dividing immigration responsibilities between the federal ministries responsible for internal affairs, labour, economy, foreign affairs, and development. In the area of asylum policy, the Ministry of the Interior had a central role. Since 2005, there was also a Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration (assigned to the Chancellery). In February 2023, the position of a special commissioner for migration agreements was created. Poland split the responsibility between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and also had a specialised Member of the Council of Ministers responsible for Polish humanitarian aid.

#### 4.1.2 Responsible ministry/ministries for integration

Where the responsibilities for integration were located within the ministerial structure vary considerably both across countries and over time, ranging from the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Poland), the Home Office (UK), the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Finland), to the Ministry of Justice and Border Control (Norway), or by having a specialised Ministry (or Minister) for Immigration and Integration (Denmark). During the period of analysis, the integration field underwent more ministerial changes than the immigration field. While in the UK, Germany, Finland and Sweden, the national responsibilities remained stable (except for a symbolic name change for the responsible minister in Sweden in 2015), the other four countries made several changes.

In Norway, the responsibility for integration shifted multiple times. Before 2015, the integration portfolio was located within the Ministry of Children, Equality and Inclusion. As a response to the increased number of asylum seekers in 2015, the government moved the integration portfolio to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and created a new ministerial post, a specialised Minister of Immigration and Integration. Between 2017 and 2021, the integration portfolio was moved two times, due to changes as a result of new government coalition partners entering the government in 2017 (where the integration portfolio was moved to the Ministry of Research and Knowledge) and following a new government after the election in 2021 (moved to the Ministry of Employment and Inclusion).

In Denmark, before 2015, the integration portfolio was placed within the Ministry of Children, Equality, Integration and Social affairs. When the new centre-right government took office in

June 2015, they established a new specialised Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing (later removed “housing” from the title in 2016). Although this change coincided with the rise of asylum seekers, the change was mostly political, and should not be interpreted as a direct response to the high influx of protection seekers.

In Austria, the integration responsibilities lied within the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, but after the formation of a new green-right coalition in 2019, the integration portfolio was moved to the Federal Chancellery with a specialised Federal Minister for Women, Family, Integration and Media. In Poland, the responsibility has remained in the same ministry, however, from 2022, the government established a new position of Minister without portfolio in the Council of Ministers, responsible for social integration, in particular for foreigners and social groups in need of support (including displaced persons from Ukraine). In Germany, as with immigration, integration was understood as a cross-sectional task (mainstreaming approach), where several ministries were responsible. In the field of integration, the most important ministries were the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and Research.

During the period of analysis, the UK did not have a national integration policy (or strategy) (as existed from 2005-2011, see country report), but the national actors responsible for integration-related policies were the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with additional funding allocation from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Since 2021, the newly created Minister of State for Refugees was accountable for safe and legal routes and resettlement (incl. Ukraine and Afghanistan resettlement schemes).

The analysis shows that several countries had specialised political appointees that were responsible for immigration and/or integration issues. These appointees were either a specific ministerial position within the responsible ministry (e.g., in Sweden, in Norway between 2015-2017), or a specialised position outside of the general ministerial affiliation (the Federal Minister for Women, Family, Integration and Media under the Federal Chancellery in Austria, and a Commissioner for Migration, Refugee and Integration and a Commissioner for Anti-Racism (from 2022) in Germany). In the UK, the Minister of State for Refugees was a ministerial office jointly in the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

#### 4.1.3 Mostly “regular” ministerial changes

Based on the analysis above, we see that although there have been several incidences of changes in the ministerial structures, these changes have mainly been part of governmental reorganisations (often new political coalition partners, governmental changes after elections, or changes because of person-specific governmental changes, see more details in the country reports). The only structural changes in ministerial responsibilities that were directly related to the high influxes are the changes in Norway in 2015 and the more symbolic name change of the responsible minister for integration in Sweden in 2015. However, as seen in chapter 4.6, many countries established new coordinating bodies to increase capacity and to ensure coordination during the situations with high influxes.

## 4.2 National agencies

Table 4.2 maps the responsible national agencies for immigration and integration.

Table 4.2: Responsible national agencies for immigration and integration, 2015-June 2023.

	Norway	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Austria	Poland	Germany	United Kingdom
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION</b>	Directorate of Immigration	Danish Immigration Service	The Swedish Migration Agency	Finnish Immigration Service (Migri)	Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum  2021: Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services	Office for Foreigners	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees  Federal Employment Agency  German Agency for International Cooperation	Home Office
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTEGRATION</b>	Directorate of Integration and Diversity	Before 2015: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR), Board of Appeal and the Social Services  2015: Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI)	The Swedish Public Employment Service	Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.	Austrian Integration Funds	No national agency with specialised responsibility for integration.	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees  Federal Employment Agency	No national agency with specialised responsibility for integration

Table 4.2 shows that while all countries had one or several agencies dedicated to immigration issues, there is some variation in the integration field. Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Austria had national specialised integration agencies. In Germany, there was no specialised integration agency/agencies, but the agency responsible for immigration also covered the integration portfolio. In Sweden (and partly Germany), the national employment agency held the responsibility for integration. The UK and Poland did not have national agencies responsible for integration issues.

During the period of analysis, the agencies responsible for immigration and integration have remained very stable, with only a few exceptions. Denmark had a larger restructuring of agency responsibilities for integration in 2015. While the responsibilities for different parts of the integration tasks were previously distributed between three agencies, in 2015, the government established a specialised new agency, the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration.

Austria also established a new agency/public enterprise – the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services – which was to coordinate and implement federal asylum policies and was responsible for return counselling and legal advice.

In Finland, there were no changes in the organisational structure, but in 2015, some tasks were transferred from the Police and the Finnish Border Guard to the Finnish Immigration Service, thus strengthening its role. The Finnish Immigration Service became responsible for all tasks related to travel documents, permits, citizenship and the asylum interviews.

### 4.3 Regional government responsibilities

Table 4.3 maps the regional responsibilities for immigration and integration, if any.

Table 4.3: Regional responsibilities for immigration and integration, 2015–June 2023.

	Norway	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Austria	Poland	Germany	United Kingdom
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION</b>	No	No	No	Under ministerial guidance, the Regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment (ELY Centres) were responsible for large-scale influxes of migrants together with municipalities and NGOs, and for municipal settlement/distribution.	States co-fund <i>Basic Welfare assistance</i> for protection seekers with federal level and were mostly responsible for the implementation of immigration and asylum laws.  2022: Displaced persons from Ukraine fell directly under the responsibility of the states by default.	Regional Voivods operated regional Foreigners Affairs Departments.  2022: Voivodes were responsible for crisis intervention including relocation of displaced persons from Ukraine from the border and within the country and arranging mass/collective accommodation.	States were co-legislator in some cases and could set up humanitarian admission programmes and regional deportations bans. Responsible for the implementation of some aspects of immigration policies, and accommodation of protection applicants (with local level)	No
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTEGRATION</b>	Before 2015: No  2021: New formal responsibilities for co-implementation of integration policies (with local governments).	No	County Administrative Board guide, coordinate and advise municipalities on integration issues.	Regional ELY Centres and six Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI) implement integration policies with local integration authorities at the municipal level.	Provinces responsible for integration measures.	Regional Voievods transfer funding to the local Poviats Family Support Centres that run integration programmes.  2022: Local governments made welfare programmes available to displaced persons from Ukraine.	States acted as co-legislators with federal level: they could set up regional integration laws and policies. States were also responsible for the implementation of integration policies, with local level.	Some responsibilities were under the 4 constitutive nations.  At regional level, Twelve Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships were responsible for coordinating and supporting regional dispersal policies for different protection schemes and developing migration priorities.

In most countries, regional authorities had some form of responsibilities for the immigration and/or integration field, mostly related to the implementation process. Concerning immigration and reception, in half of the countries – Norway, Denmark, Sweden and the UK – the regional level had no responsibilities related to such issues. In the two federal states, Austria and Germany, the states had an important responsibility for the implementation of the national immigration laws. In Germany, the states could also function as co-legislators for some issues and were responsible for accommodation during the application procedure. In Austria, the state and federal level co-finance some services. In Finland, 15 regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment (ELY Centres) functioned as the country's regional state administrative authorities. They were responsible for preparing for large-scale influxes of migrants at the regional level together with municipalities and NGOs, and for the coordination of municipal settlement of protection seekers. In Poland, the regional Voivods operated Foreigners Affairs Departments.

Turning to integration responsibilities, the regional level was involved in all countries (except for in Denmark), but the responsibilities vary. In Finland, the regional levels were responsible for the implementation of integration policy measures through the ELY Centres. In Norway, after 2021, the counties formally became an actor in the integration field and got delegated specific responsibilities for providing career guidance to introduction programme participants, advising in the municipal settlement process, and developing regional qualification plans for immigrants. In Sweden, the County Administrative Board was responsible for guiding, coordinating and advising the municipalities on integration issues, and also managed some grants related to reception and integration that the municipalities could apply for.

In Poland, the Voivods were responsible for transferring (national) funding to the local Poviats Family Support Centres that run integration programmes. In the UK, policies related to integration were implemented through multilevel governance, which places some responsibilities under the remit of the four constitutive nations of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland). The UK had also established twelve Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships, which were local government-led partnerships funded by, but independent of, the Home Office. Their role was to coordinate and support delivery of national programmes in asylum and refugee schemes as well as agreed regional and devolved migration priorities. These operated within the context of ad hoc strategies under the remit of the UK's four constitutive nations.

The German States (Länder) had an important role both in immigration and integration policy. They were co-legislators, together with the federal level. They could adopt their own integration and refugee admission programmes (federal level needed to agree on the latter). They had leeway in implementing national laws and policies. This concerns, for example, the granting of residence permits, but also the way they organise accommodation for those seeking protection.

#### 4.3.1 Few formal changes in regional responsibilities

There were few changes during the period of analysis. As part of the new Norwegian Integration Act in 2021, the regional counties were delegated new formal responsibilities. Otherwise, the only formal change in responsibilities for the regional levels was an increased responsibility in Austria and Poland in 2022.

### 4.4 Local government responsibilities

Table 4.4 maps the local government responsibilities for immigration and integration, if any.

Table 4.4: Local government responsibilities for immigration and integration, 2015-June 2023.

	Norway	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Austria	Poland	Germany	United Kingdom
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION</b>	No	A few selected municipalities cooperate with the Danish Immigration service for running reception centres.  2022: Municipalities were given the legal authority to establish emergency reception centres.	Responsible for UASC after registration  2022: May be allocated the responsibility for displaced persons from Ukraine.	No	No	No formal responsibilities, but from 2022, local administration engaged largely in the relocation of displaced persons from Ukraine from the Polish-Ukrainian border and within the country, putting in place ad hoc services.	No formal responsibilities, but local authorities could influence the implementation of foreigner's law.	No
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTEGRATION</b>	Implementation of language training and integration measures/programmes.	Implementation of language training and integration measures/programmes.	Implementation of language training and civics courses (not integration programmes).	Coordination of development, planning and monitoring of integration at the municipal level and implementation of the Integration Act.	Responsible for local integration measures (e.g., German courses, courses in the home countries' languages)	Integration programmes and other measures.  2022: Welfare services for displaced persons from Ukraine.	Responsible for implementation of national and regional integration policies and other local integration measures.	Responsible for local integration measures (not nationally regulated).

As immigration (including asylum) mainly is a national or state-level responsibility, with national agencies or states often being responsible for much of the service provision (either directly or through outsourcing), the local level has fewer responsibilities. In Norway, Finland, Austria, the UK and Poland, local authorities had no formal responsibilities for immigration policies according to this definition. However, with the significant number of displaced persons from Ukraine fleeing over the Polish borders in 2022, local administrations engaged largely in the relocation of them from the Polish-Ukrainian border to other parts of the country and putting in place ad hoc services.

In Sweden, the responsibilities for UASC were transferred directly to the municipalities after registration, implying that they were responsible for accommodation and services also during the application process before the minor was (potentially) granted a residence permit.

In Denmark, a few selected municipalities cooperated with the Danish Immigration service in running reception centres, as service providers, but this was not a general local responsibility. However, in 2022, municipalities were given authority (but not an obligation) to establish emergency accommodation (see more in chapter 7.1).

German municipalities had multiple a wide range of tasks and responsibilities. They act as important lobbyists vis-à-vis the federal and state governments. They were responsible for implementing national and regional policies. In doing so, they had different formal and informal leeway depending on the area of responsibility. This concerns, among other things, the issuing or changing of residence permits in foreigners' authorities, but also the design of accommodation for protection-seekers and holders, social benefits or labour market policy offers.

Integration policies, however, are most often a local responsibility, either as an implementer of nationally regulated integration policies or as the main developer and implementer of policies in absence of a national strategy/policy. In most countries, the local level was the main responsible actor for implementation of integration programmes or plans for protection holders (although they are often allowed to sub-contract these services to non- or for-profit actors, see chapter 4.5). However, in Sweden, the national agency was responsible for coordinating and providing integration programmes, while the municipalities were responsible for language and civics courses. In Finland, the responsibilities for integration measures were divided between the regional ELY Centres and the municipalities.

## 4.5 Formal responsibilities for non-public actors

As mentioned in chapter 1 (the introduction), this study mainly focuses on national responses and policies, and does not systematically map different regional and local solutions and practices. Further, we are not able to discuss informal arrangements and evaluate the *degree* to which non-public actors step in to supplement or 'fill the gaps' of public service provision. It is important to emphasise that in all the countries analysed, civil society, private actors and NGOs have played a crucial role in aiding protection seekers – and the governments – in tackling the situations with increased influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23. It is also challenging to map and compare informal and supplementary services and activities from non-public actors, because these initiatives often happen at the regional or local level, and not through national arrangements and formal responsibilities. Thus, the following analysis of responsibilities and roles for non-public actors is limited to covering their formal roles, e.g., where non-public actors had a formal delegated responsibility, or cases where they had formal roles in the service provision. Table 4.5 distinguishes between 1) NGOs and other non-profit actors, 2) for-profit actors, and 3) private persons/households.



Table 4.5: Formal responsibilities and roles for non-public actors, 2015-June 2023.

	Norway	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Austria	Poland	Germany	United Kingdom
<b>NGOS AND OTHER NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS</b>	Dedicated NGO was delegated responsibility for information/legal counsel to asylum seekers.  Non-profit organisations were service providers (running reception centres, language courses, etc.)	The Red Cross was the main provider of reception centres (publicly funded).	No	The Finnish Red Cross ran reception centres (along with the state and municipalities).	NGOs provided consultative work in asylum procedures, the provision of certain basic welfare services, integration programmes or voluntary return programmes, cooperating by means of service contracts.	NGOs were responsible for information/legal counselling to asylum seekers and language services and could provide services for asylum seekers in reception centres (e.g., language training).	NGOs and Welfare Organisations performed different tasks, including political lobbying, counselling, providing social services (funding from public and private sources).	From 2022: Migrant Help (NGO) held contract with Home Office to provide advice and report accommodation issues for people who were in asylum accommodation and waiting for an asylum decision.
<b>PRIVATE (FOR-PROFIT) ORGANISATIONS</b>	Private actors were service providers through public tenders (reception centres, language courses, etc.).	Private actors were service providers through public tenders (reception centres, language courses, etc.).	Private actors were service providers through public tenders (reception centres, language courses, etc.).  In 2015 and 2022: use of private organisations to upscale reception capacity.	In 2015 and 2022: Use of private organisations to upscale reception capacity.	Private actors as service providers of accommodation for protection seekers, and counselling.  German courses outsourced to private language institutes.	Private entities could run Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers (outsourced), but workers were paid by the Office for Foreigners.  Funding to private institutions that ran mass accommodation centres.	Private actors could be service providers through public tenders (reception centres, language courses, etc.).	Asylum accommodation provision was outsourced to private actors.
<b>PRIVATE PERSONS/ HOUSEHOLDS</b>	No	2022: Possibility for funding to private households who housed displaced persons from Ukraine.	No	No	Private households who offered accommodation could charge up to €200 per month for rent (paid by government).	2022: Temporary funding to private households who housed displaced persons from Ukraine.	2019: Private persons could act as sponsors and mentors in private sponsorship admission programmes.	In 2015 and 2022: Community Sponsorship Schemes (in 2022 with partial public funding).

### 4.5.1 NGOs and other non-profit actors

The countries included NGOs in various roles. In Denmark and Finland, the national Red Cross was the main service provider of reception centres (publicly funded). In Norway, NGOs were also service providers of reception centres (but in competition with private actors). Further, some countries had formally delegated the responsibility for legal counselling and advice during the asylum procedure, through either national or international funding (Norway, Austria, Poland, Germany and UK). Lastly, NGOs were often providers of integration activities, either as formal service providers (funded by the central or local governments) and/or supplementary to public services.

### 4.5.2 Private for-profit actors

In most countries, many immigration and integration services were outsourced. Private actors could compete to be service providers, both nationally and locally, but the degree of privatisation differed. For example, in some countries, the responsibility for language courses was a municipal responsibility, but the municipalities could decide if they provided these services themselves or if they outsourced it to other actors. In Germany, however, language courses were directly outsourced to private language institutes.

Most countries included private actors as service providers for reception centres and accommodation. In Sweden, private actors were normally not providers of this service, but during the high influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23, private actors were included to upscale capacity. In Finland, prior to 2015, all reception centres were run either by the state, municipalities, or the Finnish Red Cross. Since 2015/16, private companies have also been used to provide reception services. In the latest competitive tender process conducted in 2022-2023, seven out of the 23 selected service providers were for-profit companies.

### 4.5.3 Private persons/households

The help from private persons during these periods of high influxes have been essential in all countries, and particularly with many Ukrainians living with family and other network from 2022. However, some countries introduced possibilities of public funding (not fully, but minor grants) for private households who accommodated displaced persons from Ukraine.

Denmark introduced new legislation that allowed for the provision of funding to private households that housed displaced persons from Ukraine. In Poland, households that hosted displaced persons from Ukraine initially received a small financial compensation from the government.

The UK has provided private persons with a formal role through their Community Sponsorship Scheme, where hosts take on the responsibility for hosting protection seekers during an initial period. In 2022, the new schemes introduced for displaced persons from Ukraine also offered some financial support in the form of monthly "thank you payments" for private households (not available to those hosting other protection seekers). In Austria, the Basic Income (financial assistance to protection seekers and holders) included a specified amount for covering rent, which could be used to pay rent to private households.

## 4.6 Coordination measures in times of high influxes

During situations with high influxes, the need for coordination between responsible actors at different levels of government – and between public and non-public actors – increases. Coordination activities may take many forms: through new formal structures or measures, through increased coordination through established coordination measures and arenas, or through informal and ad hoc activities (Bouckaert et al. 2016). The two latter categories, although they may be just as important – may be harder to document without in-depth studies. Thus, it has not been within the scope of this project to systematically compare all possible horizontal and vertical coordination activities that were put in place (or not) during 2015/16 and 2022/23, particularly because it is often challenging to confirm that such activities have not taken place.

Thus, in this chapter, we present *examples* of different formal coordination activities that were put in place to improve the coordination between relevant actors during the situations of high influxes.

### 4.6.1 Establishing new coordinating structures or dedicated political appointees

In 2015, The Finnish government established a crisis management group at the Ministry of Interior to manage the situation. It included the Minister for Interior and representatives from the Finnish Immigration Service, the National Police Board, the Finnish Border Guard, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and sometimes the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Office of the President of the Republic, the Finnish Red Cross, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Finance. Also, a ministerial working group with top elected officials on migration (the Minister of the Interior, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Finance, among others) was established to compile and maintain situational awareness of the asylum seeker situation and related measures. The Government Situation Centre provided overviews of the situation to the leaders of the country and the National Bureau of Investigation also reported on the situation daily.

From September 2015 and for one year, Austria put in place a temporary “refugee coordinator”, with responsibility to coordinate the distribution of protection seekers across national territories. In 2022, a national structure called "Refugee Coordinators" was established to coordinate multi-level governance. In addition to inter-ministerial coordination and communication with the government's crisis committee, the refugee coordination office aimed at systematic exchanges between the federal government and chairpersons of the state governments.

In 2022, Poland established a new position – the Government Plenipotentiary for war refugees from Ukraine – as a new Secretary of State in the Ministry of Interior. Further, the Social Integration Department was established within the structures of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, one of whose tasks was to develop and implement a comprehensive five-year social inclusion strategy. An Expert Team for Social Inclusion Strategies was also established “composed of experts dealing with migration phenomena, specialists in labour law, social security, housing policy, health policy, inclusion in education or the support system for people with disabilities, as well as practitioners of inclusive activities, including social activists, employers and local government officials”.

## 4.6.2 Using established crisis management structures

Sweden had a Swedish Crisis Management Coordination Secretariat, a body which sought to develop, coordinate and follow up crisis management between different ministries. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency also had a coordinating role and used existing structures for producing status reports and organising collaboration conferences during crises. These structures were used in 2015/16 and 2022/23.

## 4.6.3 Cross-sectorial crisis meetings to ensure horizontal coordination

In 2015, in Norway, the high rise in asylum seekers increased the need for interdepartmental coordination between different agencies. As a response, coordination meetings were conducted between national actors such as the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, the National Police Immigration Service, the National Police Directorate, the Norwegian Directorate of Health and the Norwegian Directorate of Civil Protection. These meetings were conducted weekly, later monthly, to secure the same situational awareness across agencies, to clarify any contradictions and to discuss challenges. These interdepartmental meetings were resumed in 2022.

## 4.6.4 Multilevel information arenas and agreements with non-public partners

To ensure multilevel coordination, the Norwegian regional County Governors organised information meetings (a structure which was established during the corona pandemic). In Denmark, the government and the municipal interest organisation KL, also entered a formal agreement of cooperation in both 2015 and 2022.

In both Norway and Denmark, the governments entered a tripart declaration of cooperation with the main labour union and employer organisations in 2015.

## 4.7 Summary

### 4.7.1 National responsibilities

Concerning the ministerial responsibility for asylum, immigration and reception, the countries had a relatively stable structure. The four Nordic countries and the UK had one main responsible ministry – either the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Interior, while the other countries split the responsibilities between two or more ministries.

During the period of analysis, the integration field has undergone more ministerial changes than the immigration field. The location of the integration portfolio in the ministerial structure varied considerably both across countries and over time. In the UK, Germany, Finland and Sweden, the national responsibilities remained stable, while the other countries made changes. Germany had generally taken a mainstreaming approach for both immigration and integration, dividing responsibilities between different sectorial ministries.

Several countries also had special political appointees with dedicated responsibilities, for example a dedicated minister or commissioner for integration (e.g., Austria, Poland, Germany). Although there were several incidences of changes in the ministerial structures during the period of analysis, these changes were mainly part of regular governmental reorganisations, and seldom directly related to the high influxes of protection seekers.

Concerning agencification, while all countries had one or several agencies dedicated to immigration issues, there was some variation in the integration field. While half of the countries had specialised integration agencies (Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Austria), the UK and Poland did not have dedicated national agencies responsible for integration issues. In Germany, the agency responsible for immigration also covered the integration portfolio, and in Sweden, the national employment agency held the responsibility for integration.

#### 4.7.2 Multilevel governance

In most countries, regional authorities had some form of responsibilities for either the immigration (half of the countries) and/or integration field (seven of eight countries). The responsibilities were mostly related to implementing national policies, but in the federal states (Germany and Austria) and the UK, the states (or the constitutive nations in the UK) also had some formal authority for policy development of immigration and integration policies.

Concerning local level responsibilities, in the majority of countries, local governments did not have formal responsibilities for immigration policies. However, during the influx in 2022, Poland, Sweden and Denmark involved local authorities in the initial reception to a larger degree (which normally was a national responsibility). In Germany, the local level had a wide range of responsibilities for both the immigration and integration fields. Otherwise, in all eight countries, the local level was responsible for either implementing national integration policies and/or developing local integration policies (supplementary to national policies or in the absence of nationally regulated integration policies).

#### 4.7.3 Non-public actors

In all the countries, civil society, private actors and NGOs played a crucial role in aiding protection seekers – and the governments – in tackling the situations with increased influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23. Concerning their formal roles, NGOs were in many countries used as service providers of reception centres and services, language courses and other integration activities. Further, some countries had formally delegated the responsibility for legal counselling and advice to NGOs.

Many countries also outsourced different immigration and integration services, where private actors could compete to be service providers. During the high influxes, many countries increased the use of private service providers for upscaling the reception services and accommodation.

The help from private persons and civil society during these periods of high influxes was essential in all countries. However, some countries formalised the role of private hosts by introducing possibilities of public funding (not fully, but minor grants) for private households who accommodated displaced persons from Ukraine (Poland and Denmark). The UK have also had private persons more formally involved through different private sponsor schemes.

#### 4.7.4 Coordinating measures in times of high influxes

The analysis presents examples of different formal coordination activities that were put in place during the situations in 2015/16 and 2022/23. Several countries (e.g., Poland, Denmark, Norway and Austria) established new coordinating (often temporary) structures such as a crisis management group, a dedicated political appointee or regular cross-sectorial meetings. Such structures were set up to ensure horizontal coordination between different

national agencies and/or responsible ministries, and/or to ensure vertical coordination with subnational governmental levels and non-public actors.

Sweden did not establish new structures, but used established crisis management structures to develop, coordinate and follow up crisis management between different ministries, and for reporting. Denmark also had examples of more formal coordinating mechanisms, through formal agreements of cooperation between the national government and local government organisations, or tripartite cooperation agreements with the government and the main labour and employer unions.

## 5 Protection statuses and permits

What types of protection statuses did the countries operate with, and were there changes after 2015? Also, after the Russian full-scale invasion in 2022; how did the countries differ concerning the scope and format of the temporary protection permits provided to displaced persons from Ukraine?

European countries are bound by different international legislation that regulates (minimum) conditions for different protection statuses. For example, all the studied countries have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention. Many of the studied countries – but not all – are also bound by EU regulations, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) (where Norway, Denmark and the UK are exceptions). Although these international regulations may harmonise European countries' criteria for protection and protection seekers' rights, they only regulate minimum standards. The countries also have to transpose international regulations into their national legislation, resulting in different cross-national regulations and specifications.

Depending on the type of protection status a person gets, rights and restrictions may differ concerning financial assistance, integration measures, requirements for family reunification, etc. In this chapter, we mainly document different statuses and changes in the length of first statuses given. In the proceeding chapters covering specific rights and restrictions, an important element is whether there are differences for the respective topic also between subgroups of protection seekers/holders, and then we build on the knowledge about different statuses that are documented in this chapter.

In this chapter, we first compare the countries' various types of protection statuses and highlight changes in 2015/16 and 2022/23. For changes after 2022, we first present changes made for other groups of protection seekers, before we provide a more detailed analysis of changes made for displaced persons from Ukraine.

### 5.1 Protection statuses

Table 5.1 describes the countries' various types of protection statuses, including convention refugee status and subsidiary protection (SP), other statuses, and if the country has specific regulations for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). Further, it documents changes after 2015 and 2022. For changes after 2022, table 5.1 only presents changes for groups of protection seekers other than those eligible for collective temporary protection (changes for this latter group are described in chapter 5.4).

Table 5.1: Protection statuses, 2015–June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>REFUGEE STATUS AND SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION (SP) BEFORE 2015</b>	Single refugee status with two separate legal bases. 3-year first-time permits.	National legislation separating between refugee status and SP. Normally 5-year permits.	Refugee and SP. Permanent residency when granted protection.	Refugee and SP. 4-year first-time permits.	Refugee (permanent protection) and SP (temporary protection, 1 + 2 years).	Refugee status (3-year first-time permits)  SP (2-year first-time permits)	Refugee status (3-year first-time permits) and SP (1+2 years)	Refugee and SP (which is called "humanitarian protection"). Generally, 5-year permits.
<b>OTHER STATUSES</b>	Humanitarian status	Humanitarian status	Humanitarian status	Humanitarian status  1-year permits on "compassionate grounds".	Humanitarian status	Humanitarian status  Permit on "tolerated stay"	Humanitarian protection called "Ban on deportation".  "Right to asylum"  Particular resettlement schemes	"Discretionary leave to remain"; "Leave to remain under family or private life rules" "Leave outside the rules"; "Indefinite leave to remain"
<b>SPECIAL PERMITS FOR UASC</b>	Special temporary status for UASC who got their application rejected, but where lack of parental care in home country made return impossible.	Special temporary status for UASC who got their application rejected if the child would be at great disadvantage if returned to the home country.	No, similar protection permits as adults apply.	No, similar protection permits as adults apply.	No, similar protection permits as adults apply.	No, similar protection permits as adults apply.	UMAs may receive a "tolerated stay" status until their coming of age.	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Leave



	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>CHANGES FROM 2015 TO 2021</b>	2015/16: Restrictions in criteria for refugee status, and increased use of temporary permits for UASC.	2015: New temporary protection status. Shorter and more selective duration of initial permits.	2016: Temporary residence for refugees and SP. Restrictions in criteria for humanitarian protection, but exception for UASC (2017).	2016: Restrictions in subsidiary protection criteria.  Category of humanitarian protection removed.	2016: Refugee status preliminarily restricted to 3 years.	No change	Increased use of subsidiary protection. Accelerated asylum procedure for persons fulfilling certain criteria.	New resettlement schemes. 2014-2016 Immigration Acts ("Hostile environment" policies). New regulation for UASC.
<b>CHANGES FROM 2022 (NOT INCLUDED CHANGES FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE)</b>	No change	2022: Special protection status for Afghans who aided Danish authorities.	No change	No change	No change	New temporary permit for Belarus protection seekers	No change	New resettlement schemes.  Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Illegal Immigration Act 2023: Differentiating duration of permits and rights for subgroups of protection holders, lower threshold to withdraw protection status, and basis for removal to third country.

### 5.1.1 Refugee status and subsidiary protection

Sweden, Finland, Austria, Poland, and Germany are all part of the CEAS, which distinguishes between the main protection statuses: refugee status and subsidiary protection status. Although Denmark is an EU-member state, they are not part of the CEAS, but the Danish Aliens Act also make distinctions between refugee status and subsidiary protection. The UK also operates with a refugee status, and a status similar to that of subsidiary protection, however, the UK uses the legal term ‘humanitarian protection’ for this category. Contrary to the other countries, Norway does not distinguish between refugee status and subsidiary protection, but has a single refugee status, with two separate legal bases (convention definition) and “other refugee” similar to subsidiary protection.

The countries differ concerning 1) whether they had different rules for subgroups of protection seekers, and 2) the duration of the first permit for protection.

Firstly, Norway, Sweden, Finland, UK and Denmark had similar rules for those granted refugee status and subsidiary protection, while the other countries had more selective rules, with separate rules for the duration of (first) protection permit for these two groups.

Secondly, before 2015, Sweden was the only country that provided all protection seeker groups with immediate permanent permits when granted protection. Austria provided those with refugee status with immediate permanent residence permits, however, contrary to Sweden, subsidiary protection holders got temporary protection for one year, with a potential two-year extension. Germany provided those with refugee status a three-year permit while those with subsidiary protection had the same as Austria: first one-year permits, with a two-year extension. Poland provided those with refugee status a three-year residence permit and those with subsidiary protection a two-year permit with an option to apply for Polish citizenship afterwards or to extend the permit.

Finland, Denmark, and the UK had similar rules for those who were granted refugee status and subsidiary protection, with first-time permits of four (Finland) and five (UK and Denmark) years. In Norway, the initial residence permit was issued for a three-year period for all protection applicants, except in cases where the identity was in question.

### 5.1.2 Other statuses

Table 5.1 shows that most countries operated with a form of humanitarian protection (although it may go under country-specific names). Different forms of humanitarian protection generally provide protection seekers who do not qualify for a refugee or subsidiary protection status possibility for protection if certain other criteria are met. We do not aim to compare the detailed criteria for these different permits in this analysis, but more details on each permit (and references) are found in the country reports. These protection statuses may be subject to different durations of protection (often temporary and shorter than other protection permits) and may also come with restricted rights.

In addition to humanitarian protection, some countries operated with other national protection statuses. Germany operated with a category called “right to asylum”, for persons persecuted on political grounds where only state persecution was considered. The status had similar rights as those with refugee status. Finland had a 1-year residence permit on compassionate grounds for those, for whom removal from the country would be manifestly unreasonable due to e.g., a medical condition or severe vulnerability if returned to home country.

The UK had several more protection statuses: 'Discretionary leave to remain' was granted to individuals who did not qualify for international protection but who were able to demonstrate particularly compelling reasons why removal would not be appropriate. The period of leave granted was determined on a case-by-case basis but would not normally be for more than 2.5 years. The UK also operated with two other statuses where the applicant had to meet specific criteria: "Leave to remain under family or private life rules" and "Leave outside the rules" (see country report for details).

Some countries also had national resettlement schemes, either through the resettlement programmes assisted by UNHCR, or other national schemes often directed at specific nationalities. In most of these cases, the resettled persons got the same rights as those with refugee status. However, in the UK and Germany, different resettlement schemes could involve specific rights and restrictions accorded to different groups (see country reports for more details).

### 5.1.3 Specific protection statuses for UASC

Austria, Sweden, Finland and Poland did not have specific legislation concerning protection statuses for UASC.

After a peak in arrivals in 2008-09, Norway introduced a special restricted and temporary status for UASC who did not qualify as refugees, but whose only claim to remain in Norway was the lack of available parental care which made return impossible. This status was in practice a form of delayed enforcement, where their residence permit would lapse once they turned 18 years. However, before 2015, it was rarely applied.

In Denmark, if UASCs got their asylum application rejected, the Immigration Service would consider giving a temporary residence permit if there was reason to believe the child would be at great disadvantage if returned to their home country. This permit could not be extended past the age of 18. UASCs who had their asylum application approved, would receive a temporary residence permit from 1 to 2 years. By the time the residence permit expired, the Immigration Service would consider whether to extend the permit. When the child turned 18, they could receive a permanent residency, but only if they fulfilled certain requirements.

In Germany, with regard to the residence status, the same principles applied to UASCs as to other foreign nationals. Being particularly vulnerable, minors enjoyed protection and could be deported only in exceptional cases, if return to a person with parental authority or to a suitable institution was guaranteed. In general, UASCs received a "tolerated stay status" until their coming of age.

The UK had a special status – UASC Leave – for those who did not qualify for refugee status or humanitarian protection, if they were under 17.5 years old and could not be returned because there were no adequate reception arrangements in the country to which they would be returned. "UASC leave" was granted for a period of 30 months or until the child turned 17.5 years old, whichever was shorter.

## 5.2 Changes from 2015-2021

### 5.2.1 Restricting access of protection permits and limiting their initial duration

Almost all the studied countries introduced more restrictive policies related to protection statuses after 2015. There were mainly two types of restrictions: 1) more restrictive criteria to be eligible for certain protection statuses, and 2) introduction of temporary and/or shortened duration of initial protection permits.

Firstly, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Germany introduced new restrictive requirements or practices to be eligible for protection. Norway made one amendment that would exclude certain applicants from refugee status altogether, with significant impact. Until 2016, the Norwegian Immigration Act mirrored the three-part EU Qualification Directive test for an Internal Protection Alternative: it had to provide *effective protection*, it had to be *accessible*, and it had to be *reasonable* to refer the claimant to it. The Norwegian amendment removed the *reasonable* criteria. Not having to consider whether, for example, returns to Kabul were *reasonable* for Afghan claimants who may have never been to Kabul, allowed for a wider use of an internal protection alternative for Afghan protection seekers (thus implying a rejection on the asylum application).

Sweden limited the access to the humanitarian protection status called “Protection due to exceptionally distressing circumstances”. A residence permit on this basis could from now only be granted if it would be contrary to a Swedish convention commitment to reject or deport the foreigner. However, a special initiative for UASCs were implemented in June 2017. USACs who had received an expulsion order, or would have received one, could be “[...] granted residence permits for studies at upper secondary schools” if they met certain criteria.

Since 2016, Finland stopped granting subsidiary protection on the grounds of the security situation in the asylum seeker’s region of origin if the applicant was considered to have an internal flight alternative, i.e., the possibility of relocating to a safe area in their home country. Further, humanitarian protection, a national residence permit category, was removed from the Aliens Act in May 2016, because it was considered to be more lenient than subsidiary protection (which is based on EU regulations). The aim was to ensure that the Finnish legislation was not more favourable in this respect when compared with other EU Member states. Previously, Finland had issued temporary residence permits in situations when a foreign citizen could not be returned because they refused to leave or delayed the process. In May 2015, this was prohibited in the Aliens Act.

Germany changed a practice which had great impact on the protection status for particularly Syrian protection seekers. In 2015, almost all (99.5%) of Syrian nationals granted protection in Germany obtained a refugee status. This high recognition rate was a result of the administrative practice since the end of 2014. A high number of asylum applications forced the responsible office to decide based on the application dossier and refrain from individual hearings of applicants from Syria, as well as Iraq and Eritrea. However, individual hearings were again increasingly applied in 2016 and 2017, which resulted in a decrease in granting refugee status to Syrians to between 30-50%. Instead, subsidiary protection was granted a lot more often. In parallel, the right to family reunification was suspended for persons with subsidiary protection status (see chapter 10). Further, to reduce the overall workload, an accelerated asylum procedure was introduced in March 2016; this applied to different groups, e.g., those from safe third countries, persons who have deceived the authorities or

refused to give fingerprints, persons who have destroyed identity documents and subsequent applicants.

The second type of restrictions was an introduction of temporary and/or shortened duration of initial protection permits. In Norway, although the legislative possibility was already introduced in 2009, up until 2015, temporary protection to UASC was only the exception, not the rule. In 2016, changes were made which increased the use of temporary protection dramatically, especially for children from Afghanistan.

In Sweden, the government introduced a temporary law (which later was extended, and most new changes became permanent law in 2021) restricting rights for persons who sought protection. The two main categories for protection (UN Convention refugees and subsidiary protection) remained but permits under these protection statuses became temporary instead of permanent. Similarly, Austria (which previously gave those with refugee status permanent protection as long as the status was not denied) introduced initial temporary three-year residence permits in 2016.

From 2015, Denmark started what has later become labelled a “temporary paradigm shift”, starting the introduction of several new measures aiming at more temporary permits. Firstly, they introduced a new protection status, the “General Temporary Protection Status”, which was given to many Syrians. This status implied a one-year temporary residence permit. For the other existing statuses, the duration of the initial residence permit was also reduced from five to two years for refugees and one year for the category “Individual Temporary Protection Status”.

## 5.2.2 New resettlement schemes for targeted groups

Some countries introduced new or altered existing resettlement schemes. We have not conducted a systematic review of all national resettlement schemes in all countries (as most resettled refugees often get the same rights as convention refugees) but provide some examples from selected countries.

In Germany, a regular resettlement quota was introduced in 2015. A separate residence title for resettlement refugees was created in this context, however, they got the same rights as recognised refugees. Further, an ongoing (since 2013) federal humanitarian admission programme for Syrians was not renewed, but a new humanitarian admission scheme from Turkey (also focussing on Syrians) – which was connected to the EU-Turkey Statement and Action Plan – was activated in 2016. In 2019 Germany launched a new Private Sponsorship Program for Refugees.

In the UK, higher influxes of protection seekers into Europe prompted policy adjustments that targeted specific groups. This resulted in the introduction of the *Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme*, initially aiming to provide protection to vulnerable individuals and families from Syria. In 2017, the scheme was extended to neighbouring Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) countries affected by the conflict. In addition, the *Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme* aimed to grant protection to children from MENA countries and their family members. The *Community Sponsorship Scheme* was introduced in 2016. Two other temporary measures were introduced in 2019, the so-called “Calais Leave” and changes to “UASC Leave” (see details in country report), which were granted to certain individuals to be reunited with family members in the UK.

### 5.3 Changes from 2022 (not related to displaced persons from Ukraine)

Since 2022, all countries made new regulations regarding displaced persons from Ukraine (see analysis of this in the next section), but some countries also made changes in the regulation for other groups of protection seekers.

In Denmark, as a continuation of the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan, a temporary special act was introduced for persons who have assisted the Danish Authorities in Afghanistan. This protection status is not considered asylum.

Poland made a change related to other permits. In 2022, an amendment to the Act on Foreigners introduced a new type of temporary residence permit for holders of national humanitarian visas from Belarus (from August 2020 to June 2023, Poland issued over 52,000 humanitarian visas to Belarusian nationals). This type of temporary residence permit was issued for three years. Its holders were entitled to full access to the Polish labour market and from 2023 they could apply for Polish travel documents for foreigners.

In 2022, the UK introduced a Nationality and Borders Act, which reinforced the differential treatment of people fleeing similar conditions (and even from similar countries/towns) on the basis of how they reached the UK rather than in consideration of underlying motivations and conditions. For asylum applications made before June 2022, permission to stay was usually granted for a period of five years. However, for those who applied on or after this date, the Act differentiated between two groups of refugees, providing the two groups with different entitlements (e.g., length of permission to stay, route to settlement, access to family reunion, and recourse to public funds). Individuals who come to the UK directly, claim asylum without delay, and are able to show good cause for any illegal entry or presence, will be recognised as Group 1 refugees ('Refugee Permission'). Those who fail to meet one or more of these requirements will be Group 2 refugees ('Temporary Refugee Permission') and will be given lesser entitlements as a result. Further, the new Nationality and Borders Act lowered the threshold for revocation of refugee status, so that refugees who have been convicted and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment may be removed, compared to the existing requirement that the crime is punishable by a sentence of two years. Crucially, illegal entry itself can result in a serious crime conviction and a 12-month sentence, which gives the government legal justification for deportation on the grounds of illegal entry alone. Further, following the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement, the government replaced the Dublin Regulations with new rules, which provided scope for removals to safe third countries, in those cases in which an asylum seeker has arrived in the UK via a safe third country where they could reasonably have applied for asylum. This set the basis for further legislation on removal to a safe third country, which resulted in the controversial UK-Rwanda partnership agreement. A number of resettlement schemes were also introduced: the *UK Resettlement Scheme*, the *Afghan Citizens Resettlement Schemes*, and *Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy* (see country report for more details).

### 5.4 Changes from 2022 concerning displaced persons from Ukraine

Table 5.2 describes the different types of permits and the scope of the target group for collective temporary protection for persons who have fled the war in Ukraine, and their rights to apply for other types of residence permits.

Table 5.2: Types of residence permits for displaced persons from Ukraine, 2022-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>TYPE OF PROTECTION STATUS/PERMIT</b>	Collective temporary protection (national regulation)	Collective temporary protection (national regulation)	EU TPD	EU TPD	EU TPD	National legislation for UA citizens. EU TPD for non-UA citizens or UA citizens not protected by national regulations.	EU TPD	3 visa schemes: the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine), the Ukraine Extension Scheme
<b>EXTENDED PERIOD CONCERNING TIMING OF ARRIVAL/PRIOR RESIDENCE COMPARED TO THE EU TPD</b>	Those who fled "shortly before" 24 February 2022 or were outside Ukraine for up to 90 days before, and those with residence permits in Norway.	Those who arrived after February 1, 2022, and those who had other residence permits in Denmark.	Those who arrived in Sweden on, or after, October 30, 2021 (with certain conditions).	Those who arrived "slightly before" February 24, 2022, and those who already resided in Finland before the war.	No	No, but Ukrainian nationals are free to stay legally until 4th of March 2024 (and in some cases longer).	Those who "shortly before" 24 Feb 2022 arrived in Germany or stayed in another EU country, and those who had other residence permits in Germany.	Visa schemes apply to those who have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022. The Ukraine Extension Scheme applies to Ukrainians already in the UK.
<b>RESTRICTED TARGET GROUP COMPARED TO THE EU TPD</b>	Similar to the EU TPD.	Not included: Third-country nationals (but refugees included), and Ukrainians with dual citizenships or residence permit in another country.	EU TPD	EU TPD	EU TPD	Third country nationals, selected groups of Ukrainian citizens	EU TPD	The Ukraine visa schemes were mostly applicable to UA nationals or their immediate family members (with some exceptions).
<b>ELIGIBLE FOR OTHER PERMITS</b>	Yes, may apply for other permits (work, studies), but not individual asylum.	Yes, may apply for other permits (work, studies), but not individual asylum.	No	Yes, may apply for work or study-based permits.	No	From April 2023, only for work and entrepreneurship, but exceptions for people of Polish origin.	Yes, may apply for other permits. Also, special regulation applies for Jews from Ukraine.	Displaced persons from Ukraine may apply for asylum if not eligible for the Ukraine schemes, but the person must apply from within the UK.

### 5.4.1 Type of permit

As shown in table 5.2, the EU member states – Sweden, Finland, Austria, Poland, and Germany (not Denmark) – were all bound by the EU TPD. However, Poland had a dual approach. The Act of March 12, 2022 (on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of this state) regulated rules for Ukrainian citizens and their families. The EU TPD applied to third-country nationals other than Ukrainian citizens or Ukrainian citizens who were not protected by the Act of March 12. Denmark (which is an EU member state but opted out of the CEAS and therefore not bound by the TPD) and Norway both passed national legislations that largely mirrored the TPD. The TPD specify the target group as:

- Ukrainian nationals residing in Ukraine who have been displaced on or after 24 February 2022 and their family members.
- Stateless persons, and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, who benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 and who have been displaced from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022, and their family members.
- Stateless persons and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine who can prove that they were legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit issued in accordance with Ukrainian law, and who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country [of origin] or region [within their country] of origin.

The UK has taken a different approach than the other European countries. In this regard, it is important to remember that the UK is not part of the Schengen border agreement, thus Ukrainians cannot travel visa-free to the UK, as they may in other European Schengen countries. In response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the UK government introduced three visa-based schemes, which allowed displaced persons from Ukraine and certain family members to come to the UK: through joining family in the UK via the Ukraine Family Scheme; to live with independent UK sponsors via the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme – also known as “Homes for Ukraine” – with an expected sponsorship commitment of at least six months; and for those already in the UK on student, seasonal work, or other temporary visas to extend their stay via the Ukraine Extension Scheme. These new immigration routes provided the right to stay in the UK for an initial three-year period, but the Ukraine-specific schemes did *not* confer refugee status. Anyone entering or remaining in the UK under the three schemes would *not* enter the regular asylum or dispersal system. However, displaced persons from Ukraine could apply for asylum in the UK if they were not eligible for the Ukraine schemes, but to apply for asylum the person must be in the UK.

### 5.4.2 Extended period concerning timing of arrival/residence

The EU TPD included a specific time limit for being eligible, namely that the applicant had to be residing in Ukraine on or after 24 February. However, some countries have extended this time limit but with varying cut-offs (see table 5.2). Austria is the only country that has not made amendments to extend/adjust the deadline of 24 February 2022. Germany and Finland made a specification that it may include persons who fled “shortly before” 24 February 2022. Sweden, Denmark and Norway provide clear extended cut-offs with specific dates.

Several countries also made amendments to include persons who already resided in the country on other permits.



### 5.4.3 Restricted target group compared to the EU TPD?

Concerning those who are eligible for collective protection, Denmark has a more restrictive target group compared to the other countries. The Danish Special Act does not apply to third-country nationals unless they have been recognised as refugees in Ukraine, nor to Ukrainians who have dual citizenships or a residence permit in a country other than Ukraine. In September 2023, Finland stopped issuing temporary protection status to third-country nationals who have fled Ukraine and who were not granted international protection or a permanent residence permit by Ukraine.

For the special UK visa schemes, although some stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness may be eligible if they meet the family member criteria for the Ukraine Family Scheme, or if they have evidence of a Ukrainian immediate family member for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, people who lack documentation may face practical difficulties in accessing the scheme. If not eligible, stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness may only enter the UK by applying for asylum, but as mentioned, applications for asylum cannot be made from outside the UK.

### 5.4.4 Possibility to apply for other types of residence permits?

The target groups of collective temporary protection have the right to hand in an application for individual asylum, however, in most countries, the immigration authorities have reported that they will not process these applications as long as the (temporary) rules for collective protection apply. However, the countries differed concerning the target group's rights to apply for other (non-protection) permits. In Sweden and Austria, the target group of the TPD could not apply for other types of permits. Finland, Denmark, Norway and Germany had no such restrictions, so displaced persons from Ukraine could apply for a residence permit based on family ties, study, or work if they meet the respective national criteria.

In Poland, amendments in the Polish Act on assistance (2022) separated between two groups after November 2022: Those with collective protection who were planning to undertake employment under specific terms or entrepreneurial activities as foreseen in the Act on Foreigners (2013), would get a three-year residence permit. However, displaced persons from Ukraine unable to comply with these requirements were entitled to obtain a one-year long residence permit. Poland also had a special permit for people of Polish origin, who were enabled to submit other permits regardless of their TPD status.

Germany also had a special regulation based on the applicant's background and applied to Jewish Ukrainians. Those who were Ukrainian nationals, stateless or third-country nationals with a legal residence permit in Ukraine, who were Jewish and were legally staying in Ukraine before 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, who spoke a certain level of German (A1) and who were welcomed by a local Jewish person, could apply for a residence permit on humanitarian grounds for one year.

### 5.4.5 Exceptions in temporary return regulations for displaced persons from Ukraine

In all the countries (except for Finland), protection holders are normally subject to restriction concerning temporary travels back to their home country, as this may involve a risk of cessation of their protection status.

For displaced persons from Ukraine, the countries have made exceptions from this restriction. Those who were granted residence permits were allowed to visit Ukraine without losing their protection status or permit, but the countries' operationalisation of these exceptions differed.

Most countries did not operate with specific time restrictions for such travels, but their rights to financial assistance and housing would be affected with longer stays.

For example, Sweden would not revoke residence permits for displaced persons from Ukraine in cases of short visits to Ukraine. Displaced persons from Ukraine were allowed to leave Sweden and return as long as the residence permit was valid, but it could affect rights to housing and financial support. However, if the permit was still valid when returning, they might be entitled to again receive support.

Finland had no restrictions on the duration of temporary return to Ukraine. However, reception allowance could only be paid to persons residing in Finland. Therefore, if a person resided abroad for more than seven days in a month, the allowance was only paid for the days the person was physically in Finland.

In Germany, for those receiving basic income benefits, the job centre had to agree to the absence for a continuation of payment and for the registration to stay valid. If pension was received, four weeks abroad were allowed per year. Further, a stay of over six months was considered as a return, and the residence title would become invalid. However, it was possible to apply for a longer absence from Germany.

In the UK, those under the Ukraine schemes could leave the UK and return as many times as they like, generally up to one month each time within the 3-year visa period (with exceptions made for death of close family members or medical treatment). If they were in receipt of welfare benefits, special rules applied for reporting any periods of absence without losing benefits.

## 5.5 Summary

Although European countries may be bound by similar international legislation that regulates (minimum) conditions for different protection statuses (e.g., the 1951 Refugee Convention and EU regulations for most EU member states), these international regulations often regulate minimum standards, and also have to be transposed into the national legislation, resulting in different cross-national regulations and specifications.

Concerning types of protection permits, with only Norway as an exception, all countries differentiated between two protection statuses: refugee status and subsidiary protection, either through EU or national legislation. The countries were split on whether the duration of the first permits were different for these two protection statuses. While Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the UK did not differentiate between these two statuses before 2015, Austria, Poland and Germany operated with shorter first-time permits for those with subsidiary protection. Most countries also had a form of humanitarian protection status (although under different national labels/names). Otherwise, particularly the UK (and to some extent Germany) stands out by having multiple types of protection permits with specified target groups, where the type of permit also influences the individuals' rights and restrictions after being granted protection or a visa.

After the high influxes of protection seekers in 2015/16, all countries (except for Poland which did not experience an increase during this period) introduced different types of

restrictions related to protection statuses. There were mainly two types of restrictions. Firstly, some countries introduced more restrictive criteria to obtain certain statuses, related to the internal flight option (Norway and Finland), restricting or removing humanitarian protection as a potential permit (Finland and Sweden), and increasing the use of subsidiary protection for Syrians (Germany). Secondly, several countries introduced temporary and/or shortened duration of the initial protection permits: Norway started issuing temporary permits for UASCs; Sweden and Austria changed (certain) initial permits from permanent to temporary, and; Denmark and Austria reduced the duration of the first-time permits.

In 2022, the main policy changes were related to displaced persons from Ukraine. As of June 2023, there were few changes related to the other protection statuses in this period, but with two exceptions. Firstly, Poland introduced a special temporary residence permit for holders of national humanitarian visas from Belarus. Secondly, unrelated to the situation in Ukraine, the UK increasingly restricted the right to asylum and introduced differential treatment of subgroups, depending on their mode of arrival.

Concerning policies for displaced persons from Ukraine from 2022, all countries (except for the UK, see below) introduced a variant of collective temporary protection, either through the EU TPD (Sweden, Finland, Austria and Germany), through national legislation largely mirroring the EU TPD (Norway and Denmark), or a combination of both (Poland). There are some minor variations in the exact operationalisation of the target group for the collective protection status. One major difference is whether displaced persons from Ukraine could apply for other types of permits (e.g., work and student permits), or if they did not have this opportunity. Poland and Germany also introduced special permits for displaced persons from Ukraine who had a Polish or Jewish (Germany) background.

The UK stands out compared to the other countries, as it did not implement a national variant of a temporary collective protection status, but rather introduced three specialised visa schemes which displaced persons from Ukraine could apply for (before entering the country).

Overall, we see the introduction of several restrictions in protection statuses and their initial duration in response to the high influx in 2015. Further, we see a selective trend where several countries have introduced multiple types of permits, visas or resettlement schemes that distinguish permits and rights based on either country of origin, religion, or mode of arrival. This selective trend is not only a direct response to the situations in 2015/16 and 2022/23, but also part of more regular policy developments in the certain countries. Lastly, there is a clear temporary turn in almost all countries, as the duration of first-time permits was reduced in most countries, and several countries introduced more temporary permits for several groups.

## 6 Registration and application process

Were any changes made in the registration and asylum procedure during the high influxes in 2015/16, and particularly with the introduction of collective temporary protection in 2022?

A rapid increase in the number of protection seekers may put the registration and application procedures under pressure. In this chapter, we firstly present the general process for registration and application processes in the eight countries before we map changes during the influxes in 2015 and 2022.

### 6.1 Registration process and governmental responsibilities before 2015

In the eight countries, asylum seekers must register their application upon arrival, either with the border or local police (Austria, Norway, Denmark, Poland and Finland) or directly with the immigration authorities (Sweden). In the UK, an asylum claim can be made at the port of entry or at the Home Office. In the German case, protection seekers can file an asylum request with different authorities (e.g., border police, normal police, foreigners' authority, BAMF field office). They then receive a notification (proof of arrival). This is not yet the formal asylum application, but the formal asylum application must then be submitted to a BAMF field office.

In some countries, the police were responsible for the initial asylum interview, while in others, the immigration authorities took over the responsibility for interviews, etc. after the initial registration. In all countries, the national immigration agency was responsible for the assessment of the asylum application.

### 6.2 Changes in 2015 – upscaling capacity

The overall components of asylum procedures did not change during the high influxes in 2015, however, the increased number put restraints on the administrative capacity in most countries. In most countries, the average processing time for asylum applications increased considerably. The countries introduced different measures to tackle these capacity challenges (except for Poland, which unlike the other countries in the sample, received fewer people in this period, partly due to push-backs at the borders). The list below is not meant as a thorough mapping of all measures to increase capacity, but examples of changes and solutions in some countries.

Firstly, in most countries, the immigration authorities received increased funding to tackle immigration and the increased workload of registration and application assessments. For example, in Germany, a large number of additional staff were hired at the responsible federal office. Other authorities also provided administrative assistance and seconded personnel.

Secondly, administrative solutions were also introduced. Sweden, which received the largest number of asylum seekers relative to its population in 2015/16, had to prioritise registration of applications over the assessment of applications during the initial period. In Austria, the deadline for immigration authority's first instance decision was temporarily extended from 6 to 12 months, while that of the protection seeker for contesting the decision has in some cases been halved from 4 to 2 weeks. Additionally, an accelerated procedure was introduced to reject more quickly some applications from countries whose success rate were low. In Finland, the overall application process remained the same, but the initial asylum application

interview conducted by the police or the border guard before 2015 was now transferred to the national immigration authorities. In addition, changes were introduced in the name of speeding up the application process and curbing costs. These include, for example, restrictions in the legal aid available to the applicant that ultimately weakened the position of the applicants and their chances of filing a successful application.

Thirdly, several countries increased the capacity for registration through extended opening hours for registration centres or opening new ones. For example, in Norway, to alleviate the capacity problems, two large arrival centres were established where both registration and health checks were conducted in the same location, and where asylum seekers were also accommodated temporarily. At these centres, all agencies involved were present in the initial reception phase (for description, see Norwegian country report).

### 6.3 Simplified procedures for displaced persons from Ukraine in 2022

In 2022, with UK as the only exception (see below), seven of the eight countries implemented a form of collective temporary protection for persons fleeing the full-scale war in Ukraine, either through national legislation or the EU TPD (see chapter 5.4). The majority of applicants for collective temporary protection did not have to undergo an individual assessment of the need for protection, which greatly impacted the processing time in each country. With few individual assessments for this group, many countries simplified their registration and application processes. The descriptions below are not meant as a complete list of all measures, but examples of different solutions.

In some countries – Sweden, Denmark, and Norway – temporary protection seekers had to apply through the regular asylum procedure, but simplified and automated processes were introduced. In Sweden and Denmark, online registration was made possible and encouraged. In Sweden, the Migration Agency developed an online application portal where displaced persons from Ukraine could apply for protection if they had a biometric passport. Persons applying through the online portal, and who had made their own accommodation arrangements, did not need to physically meet with the Migration Agency until after they have had their application processed. However, if they needed help with accommodation or financial support, they had to visit the Migration Agency in person. In Denmark, temporary protection seekers could also apply through an online scheme. After the protection seeker had filled out and delivered the scheme, they had to book a physical appointment with the Immigration Service for an identity check.

In Norway, the government allowed registration at multiple locations. In the initial phase, displaced persons from Ukraine had to apply for protection through the regular asylum procedure, which from 2021 took place at one National Arrival Centre. However, the rapid increase in arrivals from Ukraine created rather chaotic circumstances at the National Arrival Centre during the initial period after February 2022. Further, many displaced persons from Ukraine who had fled to their families in other parts of Norway criticised that they had to travel to this one centre to register if they stayed in other parts of the country. Thus, the authorities quickly decided to allow de-centralised registration procedures at regional police districts around the country.

In Finland, the application for temporary protection was submitted at a police station or at the border upon arrival to the country. Following registration, the Finnish Immigration Service decided on the application in a simplified process, where the only required document was a

passport or some other identity document. The temporary protection seekers got a decision within one to four weeks of their application by mail.

In Poland, Ukrainian citizens were automatically registered as TPD beneficiaries after they submitted an application for a national ID number (PESEL). Within a maximum of 30 days after crossing the border, applicants were required to visit a municipal authority and file an application for the PESEL number, and this was received immediately after filing the document.

The Austrian implementation of the EU TPD worked particularly well by enabling displaced persons from Ukraine to be directly recognised, as long as the individual was part of one of the groups covered by the EU TPD. No individual assessment was made by the immigration authorities as the protection grant did not follow the regular asylum procedure. The registration, which includes the taking of fingerprints, had to be done at certain police stations or in special reception or registration centres, of which almost half were located along the border with Hungary. The identity card was then issued to the registered address of the applicant. Registering one's address was mandatory for every resident and had to happen within three days after arrival/moving.

In Germany, displaced persons from Ukraine could initially self-register in an online tool. They then received a digital notification of arrival, which also gave them the right to work. At the same time, a new registration and distribution system (FREE) was developed and used only for displaced persons from Ukraine. In addition to the registration of personal data and fingerprints, this system also served to distribute the protection applicants among the federal states. At the latest after expiry of the visa period (90 days) and in order to apply for social benefits, displaced persons from Ukraine had to register in this system with the local authorities.

As mentioned in chapter 5.4, displaced persons from Ukraine who want to stay in the UK needed to apply for one of two different visa schemes *before* entering the country, or for an extension to their visa if they were already in the country on a temporary visa. Thus, as they held visa permits before arrival, they did not need to register or apply through the regular asylum system.

## 6.4 Summary

The countries did not alter the main elements in the asylum procedure during the high influxes in 2015/16, but processing time increased in most countries and the countries introduced different measures to tackle capacity challenges. Most countries increased the funding to the immigration authorities. They also introduced new administrative solutions, for example, extended (for the authorities) or shortened (for the protection seekers) deadlines, reorganisation of responsibilities, and limiting the rights to legal assistance for the applicant. Further, several countries increased the capacity for registration, through extended opening hours for registration centres or by opening new ones.

In 2022, as all countries (except for the UK) implemented a form of collective temporary collective protection for displaced persons from Ukraine, the majority of applicants did not have to undergo an individual assessment of the need for protection. This allowed for introducing simplified registration and processing procedures, which greatly impacted the processing time in each country. The Nordic countries still required an application through the regular asylum procedure, but automated processes and online registration were introduced. In Germany, Poland and Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine did not have to

apply through the regular asylum procedure but had to register to receive a form of identity card or national ID number.

The UK did not operate with collective temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine, but three specialised visa schemes. Thus, displaced persons from Ukraine who did not already stay in the UK needed to apply for one of the visa schemes *before* entering the country.

## 7 Accommodation and services during application process

How were the responsibilities for reception of protection seekers organised and what changes were made in situations of high influxes to increase reception capacities in the receiving countries? In addition, what rights and restrictions did protection seekers have concerning accommodation in the period from registration until they receive a decision on their application? Have these rights and restrictions changed since 2015, and did they target different protection statuses differently?

In situations where the number of protection seekers rises significantly over a short period of time, receiving countries have to quickly upscale their reception capacity.

As will be shown in this chapter and chapter 8 on settlement and distribution, the countries had different accommodation and distribution models, which complicates cross-national comparisons. While some countries have clear distinctions between the governance structure and rights *before* and *after* protection is granted, other countries do not. Further, for displaced persons from Ukraine applying for collective temporary protection, the time from registration to protection being granted has been very short – often only a few days or weeks. Thus, not all countries have developed policies that separate between rights before or after granted protection for this group. Nevertheless, as our aim is to provide comparative analyses, we have made the distinction to separate between analysis of governance and rights before (this chapter) or after (chapter 8) granted protection, because some countries do have a clear distinction between these two phases. Thus, in cases where there is not a clear distinction in policies for displaced persons from Ukraine before or after being granted collective protection (often due to short processing time), their rights are mainly analysed in chapter 8 on settlement and distribution. Settlement and accommodation for protection seekers who arrive through national or UNHCR resettlement schemes – who have already been granted protection before arrival to the host country – are also dealt with in chapter 8.

It is beyond the comparative scope of this project to cover rights and governance of persons who have their application for protection rejected, however, in some of the country reports, reception of this group is also covered.

We start the chapter by mapping the governance structures and responsibilities for accommodation and support during the application process: who was responsible, how did the countries provide service (public or non-public service provision, or both?), and what strategies were applied to quickly upscale capacities in 2015 and 2022?

Thereafter, we describe if the countries had restrictions on whether the protection seekers could find their own accommodation when their application was processed. Further, we analyse how these rights may have changed after 2015 and 2022 and compare if the countries operated with or introduced selective rights to subgroups of protection seekers.

### 7.1 Governance and responsibilities

Table 7.1 describes the main responsible actors for the reception and accommodation of protection applicants: who were responsible, and how was the service provision carried out? It also summarises how the countries upscaled their reception and accommodation capacities during the large influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23.



Table 7.1: Responsibilities and governance of accommodation and reception services, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE ACTOR(S)</b>	The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration	Danish Immigration Service	The Swedish Migration Agency overall responsibility.  Municipalities responsible for UASC after registration.	Finnish Immigration Service	Initial reception centres ran by federal agency.  State level responsible during application process.	The Office for Foreigners ran (open) reception centres for asylum seekers. The Border Guard ran closed detention centres.	States were responsible for reception, together with the municipalities.	UK Home Office (ministerial department)
<b>MODE OF SERVICE PROVISION (BEFORE 2015)</b>	Reception centres outsourced to municipalities, private and non-profit service providers.	Reception centres outsourced to the Red Cross and selected municipalities.	The Swedish Migration Agency ran reception centres.	Reception centres run by both Finnish Immigration Service and outsourced to the Finnish Red Cross and other private and public entities.	Reception centres at both federal and state level were outsourced to private and non-profit service providers.	Some reception centres for asylum seekers were outsourced to private and non-profit service providers, others remained public.	Publicly run state centres (states and municipalities), and accommodation outsourced to private and non-profit service providers.	Reception services were outsourced to 3 private providers (COMPASS contracts).

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>CHANGES FROM 2015 TO 2021</b>	Upscaled capacity through exiting service providers and "emergency accommodation"	Service providers upscaled reception capacity.	The Swedish Migration Agency upscaled capacity of own services and through outsourcing to private organisations.	Upscaling through outsourcing: Finnish Red Cross upscaled capacity and new private actors also became service providers.	NGOs increased reception capacity (with insufficient state funding). Increased use of private accommodation.	No changes or even descaling due to low influx of protection seekers in 2015 but made plans for potential upscaling capacities.	Increased federal funding for reception services.  Increased usage of private accommodation and new facilities.  Lowering building standards.	2019: COMPASS replaced: 'Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts' (AASC) divided into 7 regional contracts awarded to 3 private providers. 'Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility' (AIRE) contract awarded to Migrant Help.
<b>CHANGES FROM 2022</b>	Upscaled capacity through exiting service providers and "emergency accommodation".  Increased use of private accommodation.	Red Cross upscaled reception capacity.  Municipalities given authority to establish emergency reception centres.  Funding opportunity for private households hosting displaced persons from Ukraine.	Increased responsibilities for municipalities to accommodate displaced persons from Ukraine.	Upscaled reception capacity by renting private accommodation. Increased outsourcing of reception services to for-profit companies. New "municipal model".	Upscaled federal reception centres, state-led emergency centres, and usage of private households.	Upscaled capacity for displaced persons from Ukraine through a variety of actors and initiatives; voivodes, local governments, NGOs, and other public institutions. The majority were accommodated in private housing (with initial funding to private hosts).	Prolonged and increased federal funding to states for costs.  Private accommodation was "institutionalised" through the emergence of online matching platforms.	No change

In the majority of the countries, the national government had the responsibility of providing accommodation and other support in the period from registration of an asylum application until the applicants received a final decision. In the four Nordic countries, this responsibility lied with the national immigration agencies. In Sweden, however, the responsibility for UASC was handed over to the municipalities immediately after registration. In the UK, a ministerial department – the UK Home Office – was in charge. Similarly to the Nordic countries, in Poland, the national Office for Foreigners was responsible for open reception centres, but the Border Guard was responsible for closed, guarded detention centres.

In the two federal countries, the responsibility was mainly delegated to state level. In Austria, the initial reception and accommodation was run by a federal agency (BFA), but after an application was accepted for processing, the responsibility was moved to the state level. In Germany, state governments were responsible for reception, together with the municipalities.

Although the national or state level had the overall *responsibility* for the accommodation and support during this phase, the countries show a variety of solutions on how they provide these services, with a mixture of nationally led service provision and outsourcing service provision to municipalities or non- or for-profit actors. Sweden was the only country which, before 2015, solely relied on publicly run reception centres and services. In Finland, the Finnish Immigration Service ran centres in combination with outsourcing reception services to the Finnish Red Cross and other agencies. Germany had a mix of state run and outsourced accommodation (for- and non-profit).

The other countries all outsourced these services, but it was a mixture between (selected) municipalities and/or different types of non- and for-profit service providers.

### 7.1.1 Changes after 2015 – upscaling capacity through new and existing structures

In response to the increase in asylum seekers arriving around 2015, all the countries had to upscale their reception capacity considerably (except for Poland, which did not have significant increases during this phase). Some countries mainly kept their governance model intact, but upscaled capacity through already existing structures and service providers.

Norway, Finland and Denmark mainly upscaled capacity through the existing system, by extending contracts with existing and new contractors. Further, the Norwegian Immigration Agency also established so-called “emergency accommodation”, and entered into lease agreements with hotels, conference centres, campsites etc., ensuring that asylum seekers were provided with a minimum provision of beds and meals. Although the intention was for stays in such emergency accommodations to only last for a few days, in practice, the duration of stays became significantly longer. Finland also upscaled greatly through outsourcing by extending contracts with the Finnish Red Cross, but also by including private actors as contractors.

Sweden introduced private actors as service providers for the first time to tackle the large influx. The national Swedish Migration Agency, which previously ran reception centres and accommodation themselves, not only upscaled their own service capacity but also started to outsource services to private organisations.

Austria provides an interesting case. In Austria, both temporary changes (either for an indeterminate period of time or between 2015-2018) as well as long-term adjustments to reorganise and upscale national and regional capacities were made. The federal level increased capacity by establishing more federal reception centres (for the initial phase),

which also included “emergency structures”, such as tent camps and container facilities. These temporary structures faced manifold legal blockades by the municipalities, thus the federal state was empowered to intervene by the “right to crackdown”, valid until the end of 2018. For the winter, the federal agency (BMI) also rented event infrastructures like conference halls and stadiums to contract out temporary camps with high capacity, outsourced to private for-profit organisations, state enterprises, private persons, as well as municipalities and states, and even with the Republic of Slovakia, where one camp hosted 500 asylum seekers. To increase the accommodation capacities in the states, NGOs opened new centres and expanded the existing ones, leading to increased expenses for them. Normally, the contractors presented their bills to the state, which in turn received 60% from the federal state. However, the NGOs were not reimbursed to the extent of their spending, which made them reluctant to advance money without a definitive and a priori financial approval by the state in the future. Nevertheless, in this context of a hesitant and conflictual multi-level bureaucracy, the population of Austria was very involved in 2015, and the NGOs counted on its support for spending and volunteering. Moreover, private accommodation of protection seekers increased thanks to private households’ solidarity, by accommodating protection seekers in their home.

In Germany, the federal government agreed to financially support the state governments when additional costs accrued. Due to the shortage of living space in reception facilities, additional facilities such as hotels, sport centres and similar spaces were used. Private people also offered accommodation to the protection seekers, but no public support was offered to them. To ease the situation of insufficient accommodation space, some legal standards were lowered in relation to building and operating reception facilities.

Lastly, as mentioned, Poland did not experience a large influx in 2015 and no significant changes were made. However, the politicisation of the topic (due to the general situation in Europe) made the government introduce new strategies and plans for potentially upscaling capacities. At the same time, asylum recognition rates in Poland decreased and pushbacks of asylum seekers at Polish borders resulted in smaller numbers of asylum claims being processed.

### 7.1.2 Changes in 2022/23

In 2022, we see that many countries built on the same approach as in 2015, but that several countries also introduced new solutions to tackle the high number arriving, and that both municipalities and private hosts in some countries took on a more formal role than previously.

Norway built heavily on experience from the 2015 situation, and the Norwegian Immigration Agency upscaled both regular reception centres and their capacity with so-called ‘emergency accommodation’.

Finland also followed much of the same approach as in 2015 (upscaling existing capacity and increased outsourcing), but they also introduced a “municipal model” that has been intact since Spring 2022. The municipal model is a temporary solution where the Finnish Immigration Service compensates municipalities for the costs of providing accommodation and other reception services for those seeking and receiving temporary protection.

In Denmark, similarly to 2015, the Danish Immigration Service opened asylum centres in several new places in the country run by the Red Cross, however, they also introduced two new approaches to meet capacity challenges. Firstly, as the upscaling of asylum centres was not sufficient, many municipalities also established emergency accommodation to

accommodate the large influx during the first months, for example in community centres or in closed schools. In this way, the municipalities took responsibility for running accommodation, reminiscent of asylum centres, but without initially having the authority or finances to do so. However, the parliament quickly adopted a legislative change (in March 2022), which gave the municipalities the necessary authority and funding to initiate accommodation for displaced persons from Ukraine. This new arrangement was not an obligation for the municipalities, as the municipalities could refer persons to the state-run reception centres. Secondly, as in most countries, many initial arrivals from Ukraine lived privately. As a new measure, the Danish government introduced the possibility for private households which accommodated displaced persons from Ukraine to receive financial support to partially cover the hosts' costs for food and rent.

In Austria, consequences of the states' unwillingness to sufficiently reimburse costs for NGOs who upscaled capacity in 2015, affected the situation in 2022. Many NGOs were unwilling to advance money without a reimbursement guarantee in an upscaling effort. Further, there was a conflict between the federal and state level (see details in country report), resulting in the federal state having to reopen some 13 centres and open five additional ones to accommodate over 5000 asylum seekers who were in the procedure and under the responsibility of the states. However, the Austrian implementation of the EU TPD worked particularly well by enabling protection seekers from Ukraine to be directly recognised and thus under the responsibility of the states. Overall, capacities were quickly upscaled through emergency centres, mostly in event infrastructure in Vienna, and thanks to the accommodation of displaced people from Ukraine in private households of family members and other networks.

In Poland, soon after the large influx of forced migrants from Ukraine to Poland started, accommodation arrangements were made for people fleeing the war, without distinguishing their legal statuses in advance. This included large-scale temporary accommodation. The largest were provided by voivodes with central-government funding and operated by volunteers, social organisations, local businesses or universities; others were set up by local authorities and NGOs. They were initially located in cities near the Polish-Ukrainian border but were later opened in or near Poland's largest cities in both public and private spaces (e.g., exhibition halls). However, the majority were accommodated in private apartments that they rented or borrowed free-of-charge, or they lived with Polish families or with family or friends from Ukraine residing in Poland. For the first four months, those hosting refugees received a small financial compensation for hosting, but this compensation was later removed.

In Germany, the federal funding to the states for increased costs were prolonged in 2022. Further, private accommodation as an alternative was structured and "institutionalised" through the emergence of online matching platforms, however, private hosts did not get direct public financial support (as in Denmark and Poland). Similar to 2015/2016, numerous new reception centres were set up this time too, for example in the form of container settlements.

As people fleeing Ukraine who entered the UK under its Ukraine visa schemes did not enter the asylum system, changes made to the UK's dispersal accommodation system did not apply to their situation. Displaced persons from Ukraine who entered the UK through these visa schemes had the right to rent property in the UK from the date of arrival or to rely on the available hosting schemes, both of which has entrenched the privatisation of the responsibility for the support of protection seekers.

In Sweden, the government introduced legislation providing the municipalities with increased responsibilities for accommodating displaced persons from Ukraine. Seeing as displaced persons from Ukraine who had been granted collective temporary protection continue on asylum seekers rights in Sweden, there was no clear difference in rights or restrictions to accommodation before or after granted protection. Thus, we describe this new municipal model in chapter 8.

## 7.2 Restricted rights to find one's own accommodation?

Table 7.2 describes whether the countries had restrictions on whether the protection seekers could find their own accommodation when their application was processed (before being granted protection). Further, we analyse how these rights may have changed after 2015 and 2022.

Table 7.2: Accommodation models and rights/restriction for self-settlement during application period, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>RESTRICTIONS ON FINDING ONE'S OWN ACCOMMODATION DURING APPLICATION PERIOD</b>	Yes. Strict criteria for public financial support if living privately.	Yes. Restrictions in access to find one's own accommodation and restrictions on public financial support if living privately.	No, and still eligible for financial assistance.	No, and still eligible for financial assistance.	No, and still eligible for financial assistance.	No, and still eligible for financial assistance.	No, and still eligible for financial assistance.	No, and still eligible for financial assistance.
<b>CHANGES FROM 2015 TO 2021</b>	No change	No change	No change	No change	From 2017: Restriction to live in the designated state during application process.	No change	Max. stay in reception centre extended from 3 to 6 months (in 2019, extended to max. 18 months).	No change
<b>CHANGES AFTER 2022</b>	Less restrictive rules for self-settlement for displaced persons from Ukraine.	Less restrictive rules for self-settlement for displaced persons from Ukraine.	No change	No change	No change	No change in the rights for asylum seekers; new ad hoc systems developed for displaced persons from Ukraine, but less relevant because of the short application period.	No change in rights (and not relevant for displaced persons from Ukraine with short application period).	No. Those entering the UK via schemes for Ukrainians, required to self-settle (they do not enter the asylum system or dispersal accommodation).

Two questions are relevant when assessing whether a country imposes restrictions on protection seekers' right to find their own accommodation and live outside of the public reception system (e.g., in reception or asylum centres) before being granted protection: 1) Are they actually allowed to settle freely during the application process or are they obligated to live in a public reception centre, and 2) if self-settlement is allowed, does this choice imply decreased right for financial assistance?

Table 7.2 shows that most of the countries did not have absolute restrictions on finding one's own accommodation during the application phase, and protection seekers were still entitled to at least some financial support if they chose this option. However, there is cross-national variation in what type and scope of financial support the public offer to applicants who lived privately (for details of financial assistance during the application phase, see chapter 12).

However, some countries did have general restrictions on the protection seekers' rights to settle freely within the host country during this initial period.

Germany had restrictions on the asylum seekers rights concerning where in the country they could take up residence. After registration, asylum seekers were immediately referred to the individual states via a quota system (for more on this model, see chapter 8 on distribution and settlement). Protection seekers initially remained in reception facilities in the assigned federal state, and they were generally obligated to stay in the state they had been assigned. In addition to the state-run initial reception facilities, which existed in all federal states, there were very different types of accommodation, e.g., smaller hostels or flats. How quickly protection seekers could leave the initial reception facilities depended on several factors (available housing, vulnerability, families with children, country of origin). The move to private accommodation had to be agreed with and authorised by the relevant authorities.

In Finland settlement in private accommodation was possible, but no financial support was given to cover the costs of the rent and one still had to be a client of a designated reception centre and report there regularly.

Norway and Denmark stand out concerning limiting rights for protection seekers who found their own accommodation during the application process.

Denmark had the most restrictive rules for living outside the public reception system. The main rule in Denmark was that asylum seekers should reside in reception centres during the application procedure, however, there were exceptions to this practice if specific requirements were met. In most cases, at least 6 months had to have passed since the application for asylum was submitted, unless the person was settled with a spouse. Further, the housing had to fulfil requirements concerning the standard and it could not be located in a "vulnerable area". The applicant and the host in Denmark also had to meet specific requirements. Neither the applicant nor the host could have committed criminal acts and the host had to have a residence permit in Denmark. Living privately also had consequences for financial allowances and other benefits. If the applicant lived alone or with a spouse, the person had to be self-supporting and lost the right to financial benefits. If the applicant was settled with other family or friends, the applicant retained the right to certain financial support.

In Norway, asylum-seekers were not obligated to reside in reception centres during the application process, but normally they forfeited their access to all financial assistance if they opted out of the public reception system. There was an exception, a system called 'alternative reception placement' (AMOT), where the asylum seeker could live outside of the regular reception system without losing rights to financial aid. However, there were very strict criteria for application, and it was not widely applied for (for details, see country report).



In the UK, the national government made provisions for dispersal accommodation (or more recently, as described in the country report, for initial, dispersal or contingency accommodation). If provided, accommodation was offered on a 'no choice' basis (for the individual) in a dispersal area (i.e., away from London and the South East). Under the UK's dispersal policy, support could be given for accommodation and/or subsistence only. Therefore, applicants did not lose their right to support merely on the basis of self-settlement, although this support was means-tested and dependent on a destitution assessment.

### 7.3 Policy changes from 2015 to 2021

Most countries did not make any changes in the protection seekers' rights for accommodation and self-settlement as a response to the 2015 influx, however, Austria and Germany made certain changes in the proceeding years.

In Austria, the mobility for those who received financial assistance (Basic Welfare Support) was restricted in 2017, obligating them to live in the state which was in charge of the provision. Thus, asylum seekers in the procedure were tied to a state irrespective of whether they lived in state facilities or were self-settled.

Germany altered some rules in 2019. From 2019, protection seekers were obligated to remain in the initial reception centre until the decision on the asylum application for a maximum of 18 months (with exception of families with children to which the period of maximum 6 months applied).

### 7.4 Policy changes after 2022

In most countries, regulations regarding accommodation and settlement for displaced persons from Ukraine did not distinguish between the phase before or after granted protection, as the application process often was very brief. Thus, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, general rights and restrictions concerning accommodation, settlement and public distribution for displaced persons from Ukraine are mainly covered in chapter 8 on settlement and distribution.

However, Denmark and Norway made targeted policies in 2022 specifically for displaced persons from Ukraine which regulate accommodation rights *during the application period*.

Denmark introduced increased flexibility to live privately during the application period for displaced persons from Ukraine. This groups had no requirement to live in an asylum reception centre in the first period after the application has been submitted, as they did not have to fulfil the same requirements as other asylum seekers. They were free to live with family, friends and other networks during the application period, and they could also be entitled to financial support while living privately. Further, as mentioned above, Denmark also introduced possibilities for financial support for private households to partially cover their costs for food and rent for hosting displaced persons from Ukraine.

Norway also eased the requirements for displaced persons from Ukraine to live in private accommodation during the application period. Seeing as many in this group stayed with friends and family (particularly the initial months after the full-scale Russian invasion), the government decided to expand the AMOT system (described above) and introduced a 'temporary alternative reception placement' (MAMOT) in March 2022. MAMOT involved that displaced persons from Ukraine who found a place to live in a municipality – either with family members, other private persons or a home organised by voluntary organisations or by

the municipality – could apply to be registered for MAMOT in the municipality. This extended right included less restrictive criteria than the original AMOT system which applied for other asylum seekers, implying that displaced persons from Ukraine had more freedom to find alternative housing without losing rights to public assistance.

It is important to specify that the new flexible rules for finding one's own accommodation during the application period in Denmark and Norway were restricted to displaced persons from Ukraine. Thus, these changes involved increased selectivity between different groups of protection seekers in the two countries.

## 7.5 Summary

In situations where the number of protection seekers rises significantly over a short period of time, receiving countries have to quickly upscale their reception capacity.

Concerning the governance of the accommodation and reception services, in the majority of the countries, the national government (often through a national agency) had the responsibility of providing accommodation and other support in the period from registration of an asylum application until the applicants received a final decision. In the two federal countries, Austria and Germany, the responsibility was mainly delegated to the state level. Although the national or state level had the overall *responsibility* for the accommodation and support during this phase, the countries showed a variety of solutions on how they provided these services, with a mixture of nationally led service provision and by outsourcing service provision to municipalities or non- or for-profit actors.

In 2015, all the countries had to upscale their reception capacity considerably (except for Poland, which did not have significant increases during this phase). Some countries mainly kept their governance model intact, but upscaled capacity through already existing structures and service providers. Sweden introduced private actors as service providers for the first time to tackle the large influx.

In 2022, many countries built on the same approach as in 2015, but several countries also introduced new solutions to tackle the high number arriving, including that both municipalities and private hosts in some countries got a more formal role than previously. First, in most countries, local communities and the municipalities made invaluable contributions with the reception and accommodation of displaced persons from Ukraine. Sweden, Denmark and Finland also made changes in the formal central-local responsibilities, increasing the municipal responsibilities during the reception phase (which was mainly a national responsibility before). Second, in all eight countries, many displaced persons from Ukraine lived privately – with family, other networks or other persons that opened their homes. Some countries introduced more formal arrangements for private hosts. In Denmark, initially in Poland and partly in the UK, private hosts could receive a small amount of financial compensation for hosting displaced persons from Ukraine.

Concerning restrictions in the protection seekers right to find their own accommodation and live outside of the public reception system, we find that most of the countries did not have such absolute restrictions, and that protection seekers still were entitled to at least some financial support if they chose this option. There was cross-national variation in what type and scope of financial support the public sector offered to applicants who lived privately. However, some countries had general restrictions on the protection seekers' rights to settle freely within the host country during this initial period. Germany and Austria had a distribution system after registration, where the protection seekers were obligated to live in the designated state they had been assigned. Denmark had the most restrictive rules for living

outside the public reception system. In Norway, protection seekers normally forfeited their access to all financial assistance if they opted out of the public reception system.

In most countries, regulations regarding accommodation and settlement for displaced persons from Ukraine did not distinguish between the phase before or after granted protection, as the application process often was very brief. However, Denmark and Norway made targeted policies in 2022 specifically for this group which regulated accommodation rights *during the application period*. Both countries, which generally had restrictions on finding one's own accommodation during the application period, introduced increased flexibility to live privately during the application period for displaced persons from Ukraine. They were free to live with family, friends and other networks during the application period, and still be entitled to financial support while living privately. These new flexible rules were restricted to displaced persons from Ukraine and not applicable for other groups of protection seekers, thus involving increased selectivity between different groups of protection seekers.

## 8 Settlement and intra-national distribution

After being granted protection, what rights and restrictions did protection holders have to settle freely where they want in their new host country? In addition, did the countries operate with specific strategies and criteria to ensure a particular distribution of where protection holders settle or are settled through public assistance? Have these rules and distribution strategies changed since 2015, and did they differ for different groups of protection holders?

As mentioned in chapter 7, the countries differ concerning whether they had clear distinctions between the governance models for accommodation and settlement *before* and *after* protection is granted, particularly for displaced persons from Ukraine. Thus, for cases where there are not distinct policies for displaced persons from Ukraine before and after protection is granted, their rights are mainly covered in this chapter. Here, we also cover settlement and accommodation for protection seekers who arrive through national and UNHCR resettlement schemes – who have already been granted protection before arrival to the host country.

When addressing rights and restrictions to free settlement, there are two main questions to be answered. Firstly, do the protection holders have the right to freely settle wherever they want after they are granted a residence permit, or does self-settlement entail restrictions on certain rights for financial aid or publicly funded integration measures? Secondly, if there are restrictions, and for those who need public assistance to find housing, what models of publicly steered settlement do the country follow? Is the distribution based on central allocation (implying that the national government distributes people to regions or municipalities), or is the public settlement model based on voluntary agreement between the national government and lower levels of government? Simply put, may the lower levels of government voluntarily decide if they want to accept publicly steered settlements in their community (which often implies that they commit to providing certain services to these new residents)?

Further, concerning publicly steered settlement – either through central allocation or through voluntary central-local agreements, two aspects are relevant. Firstly, the countries differ concerning *when* distribution takes place, either already during the application period, or after protection is granted. Secondly, the countries may also operate with different criteria for distributing individuals across the country, either through population size or through more complex distribution keys.

In this chapter, we firstly present the overall settlement models in each country before 2015, concerning the four questions outlined above (summarised in table 8.1). Thereafter, we map changes in these models after 2015, and from 2022.

Table 8.1: Settlement models and distribution criteria, 2015–June 2023.

	NORWAY	DENMARK	SWEDEN	FINLAND	AUSTRIA	POLAND	GERMANY	UNITED KINGDOM
<b>SETTLEMENT MODEL BEFORE 2015</b>	Restrictions on self-settlement. Mainly publicly steered settlement with voluntary central-local agreements.	Restrictions on self-settlement. Mainly publicly steered settlement with central allocation to municipalities.	Self-settlement for those who find own accommodation. Otherwise publicly steered settlement with central-local agreements (but central allocation of UASC).	Self-settlement for those who find own accommodation. Otherwise publicly steered settlement with central-local agreements.	No restrictions on self-settlement after granted protection. Central allocation to states during application phase, thereafter self-settlement.	Self-settlement	No restrictions on self-settlement after granted protection.  Central allocation to states during application phase, thereafter self-settlement.	Self-settlement for those who find their own accommodation. Otherwise publicly steered settlement with central-local agreements.
<b>WHEN DOES DISTRIBUTION TAKE PLACE?</b>	After granted protection	After granted protection	After granted protection	After granted protection	During application	No national system of distribution.	During application period	During application period
<b>DISTRIBUTION CRITERIA</b>	Goal of national dispersal, but not whole-country approach.	Share of "non-Western" immigrants in municipalities.	From 2016: Municipal population, labour market, reception of protection seekers/holders.	Whole-country approach	State population	No national system of distribution.	Distribution key: 2/3 was the state's share of tax revenue and 1/3 was the population share.	Primarily encouraged in dispersal areas (outside London and the South East).
<b>CHANGES FROM 2015 TO 2021</b>	Temporary whole-country, and new (restricted) possibility for self-settlement.	No change	New Settlement Act 2016: continued self-settlement, but otherwise central allocation. From 2020: Reduction in financial assistance if settled in a "vulnerable area".	No change	No change	No change	From 2016 : New residence requirements for three years.	No change
<b>CHANGE IN 2022/23</b>	Whole-country approach in dispersal criteria. Increased <i>practice</i> of self-settlement.	Municipalities given 4 days to take over responsibility after protection is granted (previously max. 60 days).	Central allocation of displaced persons from Ukraine to municipalities.	No formal changes in settlement model, but displaced persons from Ukraine were formally transitioned to the municipality after 1 year of residence.	No, but displaced persons from Ukraine were not subject to national distribution system between states (which took place during asylum stage).	No	Residence requirements extended for displaced persons from Ukraine that needed public assistance.	Special rules for new Afghan visa scheme. Displaced persons from Ukraine settled through special hosting schemes.

## 8.1 Settlement models before 2015

### 8.1.1 Restrictions on self-settlement?

The first main question when assessing a country's settlement model is whether the protection holder may settle freely wherever they want in the host country or whether their rights are restricted to living in a particular location, e.g., region or municipality. It is important to emphasise that residence constraints in this context are not to be mistaken with restrictions to freely move across the country or to travel internationally but concern the region/municipality where they live and the provision of public rights and services. Table 8.1 shows that six out of the eight countries allowed self-settlement after being granted protection, without any major restriction.

Norway and Denmark stand out by restricting rights to free settlement after being granted protection (similar to their restrictions on finding one's own accommodation during the application process (see chapter 7.2). In both countries, the main rule was that persons who were granted protection could settle freely in the country, but only if they forfeited their right to financial assistance and integration measures. However, if the person needed public assistance during the initial period (which was the case for the majority), they had to be settled through the countries' respective public settlement systems. Further, their right to move freely – meaning without losing rights to financial assistance and integration measures - was restricted during the period where they participated in the introduction programme, usually two years in Norway and up to three years in Denmark.

### 8.1.2 Central allocation or local decisions for public distribution?

The second main question when assessing a country's settlement model is how persons who do *not* find their own accommodation are distributed among regions and concerns central-local government relations (Hernes 2017). Simply put, do the national governments simply allocate protection holders to the regions/municipalities, or do the lower levels of government have a say in the matter? It is important to emphasise that in these situations of public distribution, the protection seekers or holders normally do not have a choice concerning where they are settled.

Table 8.1 shows that the countries were split between the two main principles for public settlement. The first principle – represented by Denmark, Sweden after 2016, Austria and Germany – is that the central government allocates the protection seekers/beneficiaries to municipalities (Denmark or Sweden) or states (Austria and Germany), based on defined distribution criteria. In Germany, after the distribution to the states, the states then further distribute to municipalities. These models emphasise central steering and distribution as important principles (Hernes 2021).

The second principle – practised in Norway, Sweden before 2016, Finland and the UK – involves a model whereby municipalities may enter into agreements with the central government to settle protection seekers/holders. In some countries, this model has been justified by emphasising local autonomy as an important principle. Municipalities that agree to settle protection seekers are most often obligated to help with or provide housing, integration measures and financial assistance, but often receive additional national funding for taking on this responsibility (Hernes 2017). However, in the case of the UK, this approach has been widely criticised as a shifting of responsibility from central government onto local authorities, in the context of severe austerity measures, which have resulted in increasingly

and significantly reduced local budgets over the years. After having been granted protection, refugees could no longer stay in asylum accommodation, but had to find accommodation within 28 days of being granted refugee status. Concerns have also been raised about no choice dispersal for asylum seekers and local authorities' lack of power to refuse provider requests for asylum accommodation in their areas.

In Poland, there was no public settlement model. Protection holders could settle wherever they wanted and contact the local government for assistance if needed, and they would still be entitled to integration measures and financial support.

### 8.1.3 When does the distribution take place?

Another important difference between the countries is whether the distribution process happens before or after the protection seeker is granted a residence permit. In Austria, Germany and the UK, the distribution happened *before* being granted protection (but after registration). In the other countries, distribution and formal settlement in a municipality happened *after* granted protection.

### 8.1.4 Dispersal strategies and criteria

The countries may operate with different distribution criteria, which is the case for the four countries which distributed through central allocation. In Denmark, the distribution formula calculating municipal quotas was mainly based on the share of “non-Western immigrants”, more specifically, immigrants from outside the Nordic countries and EU/EEA and the number of recently arrived persons who are family reunified with refugees. After Sweden introduced a new settlement model with central allocation from 2016, the distribution criteria were as follows: Municipal population size was the absolute main criteria, but in the calculation of municipal quotas, the distribution formula also included local labour market conditions, the municipalities total reception of newly arrived and UASC, and its share of asylum seekers. Germany (who allocated asylum seekers during the application process) referred protection seekers to the state via the so-called EASY system. This computer-based system distributed asylum seekers on the basis of a distribution key. The quotas corresponded to the Königstein Key, which also regulated the division of the share of joint financing and was made up of two-thirds of the state's share of tax revenue and one-third of the population share. In Austria, the distribution also took place during the application period, and the state quotas were based on the state's population size. Within the Länder, the asylum seekers were distributed to the municipalities after they had been registered in the initial reception centres. How quickly this happened depended on available capacity, the family composition, whether special vulnerabilities have been identified and the country of origin.

In the countries that operated with central-local agreements, the national governments do not have the same possibilities to distribute based on strict criteria (as they are dependent on local volunteerism). However, their approaches do differ (and also change during times of high influxes, see below). One main difference is whether the national government operates with a whole-country approach, implying that they try to make agreements with all municipalities, or if they try to have agreements with selected municipalities that may specialise services for protection seekers/beneficiaries (integration programmes etc.). Finland has practiced a whole-country approach during the whole period of analysis. In Norway, a stated goal has been to have an active dispersal policy, however, this goal has been somewhat moderated by an aim to settle a minimum number of persons in each municipality, and an active policy to get existing settlement municipalities to accept more

settlements. Sweden followed the same strategy as Norway until they changed their settlement model in 2016. In the UK, less than half of all local authorities had agreed to become “dispersal areas”. These were places where ‘there is a greater supply of suitable accommodation’. In practice, this meant cheap or hard-to-let housing, often in deprived small towns and rural areas in decline outside London and the South East, and with few services and poor public transport.

## 8.2 Changes from 2015 to 2021

Although most countries faced housing shortages during the high influxes in 2015/16, the countries’ formal settlement models remained relatively unchanged. However, Sweden and Germany changed parts of their models, and Norway introduced several policy measures to increase the initial municipal shortage of settlements, although their main model remained unchanged.

In Sweden, the current system of voluntary central-local agreements did not provide enough settlements for those who had been granted residence permits and did not find their own accommodation. Thus, the government changed the settlement model. The right to self-settlement remained unchanged, but the new 2016 Settlement Act introduced central allocation of all protection holders who did not self-settle, thus, abandoning the previous principle of voluntary central-local agreements. In the new model, the Migration Agency decided the regional distribution, while the regional County Administrative Board negotiated with the municipalities about the local distribution, but the County Administrative Boards had the final decision. In 2020, the Swedish government also introduced a new regulation to hamper concentrated settlement in particular areas. The new legislation limited financial assistance for both protection seekers and beneficiaries who self-settled in areas which were on the Swedish Migration Agency’s list of residential areas with social and economic challenges.

Germany also introduced a larger overhaul of its settlement model in this period, restricting the previous right to free settlement after being granted protection. In August 2016, as part of the new Integration Act, a three-year residence constraint was introduced for protection seekers who were recipients of social benefits. Consequently, after being granted residence, they had to remain for three years in the place that was allocated to them as part of the distribution mechanism in the course of the asylum procedure (for more details and specifics exceptions, see country report). Resettlement and quota refugees were also subject to the residence regulation. In these cases, residence was assigned when arriving in the country.

In Norway, the main principles of the settlement model remained unchanged, and no formal legislative changes were introduced. However, the government applied and altered non-legislative measures to increase the municipal will to settle the high number of protection seekers that had arrived. Firstly, they introduced a whole-country approach, petitioning all municipalities to settle. Secondly, the government also launched a “new” settlement opportunity within the frames of the publicly steered model, the so-called “agreed self-settlement”. This opportunity allowed the individual to find their own private housing in a municipality and then apply to the respective municipality to be accepted as part of their settlement “quota”. Such “self-settlement” was an opportunity, but not a right for the individual, and the municipality could decline such a request. Thirdly, to encourage the municipal will to increase the number of settlements in their municipality, the government launched a new financial incentive: In 2015 and 2016, municipalities that agreed to more settlements than the original request from government would receive an additional financial grant. Further, in the period after 2017, when the need for settlements decreased



significantly because of the reduction of asylum seekers to Norway, the government introduced new distribution criteria, such as the municipalities' labour market conditions and their results in the introduction programme (e.g., how many participants that transition to employment).

### 8.3 Changes in 2022/23

The countries introduced a variety of different regulations and solutions as a response to the high influx of displaced persons from Ukraine in 2022/23. Due to the temporary permits for displaced persons from Ukraine, most countries have focused on temporary accommodation solutions for this group. The short period from registration to granted protection (compared to individual asylum applications) – along with the temporary perspective of their permits – also made the distinction between accommodation and housing during the application process and more durable housing after granted protection less relevant in many countries.

The main solution for housing displaced persons from Ukraine has been an increased use of private accommodation and an upscaling of different (temporary) accommodation services.

In all the countries, the civil society (including family, friends and other volunteers), NGOs and local communities played an essential role in housing displaced persons from Ukraine. For example, in Poland, housing of people fleeing Ukraine was mainly of a grass-roots character, including individuals hosting refugees in their homes. Emergency reception centres were organised by local government or voivods in the facilities like schools or sport halls. In addition, NGOs and religious charity organisations provided different forms of accommodation and other kinds of assistance. The UK visa schemes for Ukrainians also largely built on private sponsorships, where either family or other volunteers (private persons, local communities, NGOs, etc.) take on a sponsorship commitment. In Germany, private accommodation as an alternative was structured and "institutionalised" through the emergence of online matching platforms.

In Finland and Sweden, they introduced increased responsibilities for the municipalities. In May 2022, The Finnish Immigration Service introduced a new municipality model for the accommodation of temporary protection holders, although it was voluntary for the municipalities. The model compensated the participating municipalities for the costs of accommodation and guidance services for applicants and beneficiaries of temporary protection via an existing reception centre. Thanks to this model, displaced persons from Ukraine settled in municipalities across the country, including numerous smaller, rural municipalities that had vacant rental apartments available.

Sweden increased the municipal responsibility for finding housing for displaced persons from Ukraine, even though the overall responsibility for the group remained with the national Swedish Migration Agency. This mode of municipal housing was implemented in July 2022. The new legislation gave the Migration Agency the authority to allocate persons to municipalities, and the municipality had one month to arrange accommodation after the individual allocations were made.

Denmark also changed aspects of the settlement procedure for displaced persons from Ukraine. Firstly, the transition from a reception centre until the municipality took over the responsibility was reduced from a maximum 60 days to four working days. For the municipalities to be able to provide housing in such a short amount of time, municipalities offered emergency accommodation in unused schools, refurbished sports facilities and welfare facilities. Secondly, and perhaps the largest change compared to the traditional Danish settlement model, was a change in the dispersal criteria for displaced persons from

Ukraine. For displaced persons from Ukraine, the distribution criteria were calculated based on the municipalities' total population, and not the existing criteria which was the share of "non-Western residents". Thus, municipalities were able to settle displaced persons from Ukraine even though they already had a high number of non-Western residences, while this was not possible with other groups of protection holders.

In Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine were not subject to the regular national distribution system between states (which takes place during the asylum stage). In Germany, the residence constraint introduced in 2016 was extended to protection seekers under the temporary protection directive. Thus, displaced persons from Ukraine who required assistance to find accommodation were also subjected to the residence assigned to them in the state they were assigned. At the same time, new exceptions were introduced, lifting the residence constraint in cases where an integration course, a language course, a training or qualification programme was to be pursued. In addition, those having income securing livelihood covering at least 51 percent of the individual needs could also get exceptions to the constraint. Specifically, displaced persons from Ukraine who had already found accommodation through private means were allowed to stay in this same accommodation and would not be subjected to the distribution mechanism. However, due to the high number of arrivals in the summer and fall of 2022, up to 12 federal states temporarily ceased participation in the distribution system and rejected protection seekers from other states, arguing that they had reached the limits of their reception capacity.

As in 2015, the Norwegian settlement model did not undergo any legislative changes in 2022, but the Norwegian government used other strategies to ensure enough settlements. With the large increase in displaced persons from Ukraine, the Norwegian government (again) introduced the whole-country strategy, where all municipalities were asked to settle protection beneficiaries. The government also reintroduced the financial incentive urging municipalities to agree to more settlements – a per capita bonus for every person they settle above the number that they were petitioned by the government. However, a major difference from 2015 was an increased use of the new system of so-called "agreed self-settlement". This opportunity was introduced already in 2015, but it was rarely used. However, as many displaced persons from Ukraine to a much larger extent than previous protection seekers lived with family and other networks before being granted protection (at least the initial arrivals), the practice of "agreed self-settlement" increased. The increased use of "agreed self-settlement" was, however, not due to an active national policy change, but a change in practice. More displaced persons from Ukraine contacted the municipalities for help to settle (often through their Norwegian network), and the municipalities accepted more self-settlements than was previously the case.

## 8.4 Summary

The first main question when assessing a country's settlement model is whether the protection seekers/beneficiaries may settle freely wherever they want in the host country or whether their rights are restricted to living in a particular location, e.g., region or municipality. Six out of the eight countries allowed self-settlement after being granted protection, without any major restriction. Norway and Denmark are the exceptions, as they imposed restrictions on the right to financial assistance and integration measures during the initial years if those granted protection did not settle through the public distribution model.

The second main question is how the public distribution of those who do *not* find their own housing is decided: do the national government allocate protection holders to the regions/municipalities, or does the distribution happen through central-local voluntary

agreements? The countries were split in this regard. In half of the countries, the central government allocated the protection holders to municipalities (Denmark and Sweden after 2016) or states (Austria and Germany). In Norway, Sweden (before 2016), Finland and the UK, the central government and municipalities entered into voluntary agreements to settle protection seekers/holders. Poland is the only country that did not have a public settlement model for distribution. Those who are granted protection in Poland could settle wherever they wanted in the country, and still be entitled to integration measures and financial support from the municipality they chose to settle in.

The countries were also split concerning *when* the distribution process happened. In Austria, Germany and the UK, the distribution happened *before* being granted protection (but after registration), but in the Nordic countries, the distribution happened *after* granted protection.

Concerning the dispersal strategies and criteria, the four countries which distributed through central allocation operated with different formula calculating state level or municipal quotas, including population size (Austria), share of “non-Western immigrants” (Denmark), or more mixed distribution criteria taking into account several factors (Sweden and Germany). In the countries that operated with central-local agreements, the national governments did not have the same possibilities to distribute based on strict criteria, but they chose different approaches. Finland had a whole-country approach, while Norway (and Sweden until 2016) had goals of dispersed settlement with an aim to settle a minimum of number of persons in each municipality. In the UK, less than half of all local authorities had agreed to become ‘dispersal areas’, often in deprived small towns and rural areas in decline.

Although most countries faced housing shortages during the high influxes in 2015/16, most of the countries’ formal settlement models remained relatively unchanged, with a few exceptions. In 2016, Sweden kept their main principle of self-settlement but changed their public settlement model from being based on voluntary central-local agreements to being based on central distribution. Germany also introduced a larger overhaul of its settlement model, restricting the previous right to free settlement after being granted protection, including a three-year residence constraint for protection seekers who were recipients of social benefits. Norway introduced several policy measures to increase the initial municipal shortage of settlements, although their main model remained unchanged.

The countries introduced a variety of different regulations and solutions as a response to the high influx of displaced persons from Ukraine in 2022/23. Due to the temporary permits for displaced persons from Ukraine, the main focus (so far) has been on immediate and temporary accommodation and housing solutions for this group. Civil society (including family, friends and other volunteers), NGOs and local communities played an essential role in housing displaced persons from Ukraine in all the countries. Sweden and Finland also introduced new legislation that gave the municipalities more responsibilities for finding (temporary) housing options. In Germany, the residence constraint introduced in 2016 was extended to displaced persons from Ukraine, but with specific exceptions. In Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine were not subject to the regular national distribution system between states (which takes place during the asylum stage). Denmark changed several aspects of the settlement procedure particularly for displaced persons from Ukraine, including faster settlement from reception centres to the municipalities and new distribution criteria. The Norwegian settlement model did not undergo any legislative changes in 2022/23, but there was a large change in practice of so-called “agreed self-settlements” for this group.

Overall, the analysis shows that the countries’ settlement models have remained relatively stable during the period of analysis. Related to the situation in 2015/16, only two countries

made substantial changes in their settlement models. Sweden increased national steering and Germany introduced a restriction for persons who relied on financial assistance. In 2022, however, the countries introduced a variety of different regulations and solutions to (temporarily) accommodate the high influx of displaced persons from Ukraine.

## 9 Permanent residency

What requirements must be fulfilled to obtain a permanent residence permit? Have there been any changes in the requirements after the 2015 influx of protection seekers and after the Russian full-scale invasion? Do the permanent residence requirements differ between protection statuses and across countries?

Protection holders usually receive a temporary protection status when their application has been approved (see chapter 5 for more details). In this chapter, we describe and compare the requirements protection holders must fulfil to achieve a permanent residency permit and whether these have changed during the period of analysis. It is important to note that the comparison is limited to cover main requirements and changes and does not account for particular exceptions from the main rules. Further, in this analysis, we focus on permanent residency requirements that apply for different groups of protection holders, and not necessarily all immigrants. Although the rules are similar for all immigrants in most countries, some countries operate with different rules for various immigration streams (e.g., work immigrants/students).

Table 9.1 presents the four categories of requirements that we analyse: residence requirements, language requirements, economic requirements, and civics courses/tests.

Table 9.1: Permanent residency requirements for protection holders, 2015–June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS</b>	Before 2015: 3 years 2020: 5 years	Before 2015: 5 years 2015: 8 years (with fulfilment of 2/4 integration requirements) or 4 years (with fulfilment of 4/4 integration requirements)	Before 2015: None 2015: 3 years (but possible fast track if employed).	4 years	5 years	5 years	Before 2015: Refugees: 3 years Other categories: 7 years. 2016: 5 years for all groups, but duration of asylum procedure included (and 3 years if outstanding integration).	Before 2015: Mostly 5 years, but some specific rules for selected protection schemes. 2022: separate requirements for 2 groups of refugees: Group 1: 5 years Group 2: 10 years
<b>LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS</b>	Before 2015: Participation in 550 h Norwegian course 2016: test A1 2021: test A2	Before 2015: A1 After 2015: A2	None	None	A2 For Residence Permit EU only: B1.	Before 2015: None From 2017: B1 for those applying long - term resident of EU	SP and “ban on deportation”: B1 2016: A2 for refugees	None
<b>ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS</b>	Before 2015: None After 2017: Minimum income and no use of means-tested welfare.	Before 2015: Part-time employment or education lasting 3 / 5 years. Self-sufficient last 3 years. After 2015: Full time employment 3.5 / 4 years, self-sufficient 3 / 4 years. Education no longer counts.	Before 2015: None After 2015: 2-year fast-track if employed 2021: New income requirement	None	Self-sufficiency and must be entitled to adequate accommodation and full social insurance rights.	2022: Humanitarian visa holders must prove stable and regular income 3 years prior to submitting application.	From 2015: SP and “ban on deportation”: secured livelihood, sufficient living space, and contribute 60 months to the pension system. From 2016: Refugees must also ensure “mostly secured livelihood”.	None
<b>CIVICS COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>	Before 2015: Attend civics course. After 2016: Pass civics test.	After 2015: Passed civics test (1/4 integration requirements).	None	None	After 2017: Pass civics tests, incorporated in German language test.	None	After 2015: Prove basic knowledge in German law- and-order.	None

## 9.1 Residence requirements

For the eight countries in this study, residence time is the most frequently used requirement to obtain permanent residency. All countries have at some point introduced requirements stating how long a protection holder must have stayed in the country to achieve permanent residency. Before 2015, all eight countries, except for Sweden, had introduced residence requirements. UK, Austria, Poland, and Denmark required that refugees had to live in the country for a minimum of five years (but the UK also has some ad hoc rules for specific protection schemes, see country report). Germany and Norway required three years, while Finland required four years. In Finland, one needed to stay in the country for four years with a continuous residence permit (type A). In Poland, for refugees or subsidiary protection holders, the duration of the stay included the duration of the procedure of issuing international protection.

With Germany and the UK as an exception, all countries provided the same requirements for refugees and subsidiary protection holders. In Germany, subsidiary protection holders had a residence requirement of five years (compared the three years for those with refugee status). In Germany, however, subsidiary protection holders had a residence requirement of seven years (compared the three years for those with refugee status). In August 2015, this period was shortened to five years (but part of a longer political process and not a response to the influx in 2015). Protection holders in the UK could either be given a number of years (typically 5 or 10 years, with some exceptions) on a route to permanent settlement for most statuses or be immediately granted indefinite leave to remain. Before 2015, Sweden was the only country that provided all protection seeker groups with immediate permanent permits when granted protection.

### 9.1.1 Changes in residence requirements from 2015 to 2021

Several countries increased their residence requirements after the 2015 influx. In Sweden, as a response to the high influx, the government introduced a temporary law restricting rights for persons who sought protection (which was later extended, and most new changes became permanent law in 2021). Protection statuses for both UN Convention refugees and subsidiary protection became temporary. To obtain permanent residency, they now had to fulfil a residence requirement of three years (unless they were employed and qualified for the fast-track programme). Persons resettled through the UNHCR were exempted and still got permanent residency immediately.

Denmark also increased their residence requirement. They removed the previous exception for persons who had shown 'willingness to integrate' after 8 years. Protection holders now had to fulfil two out of four integration requirements (civics test or 1-year voluntary work, income requirements, employment and language tests) to be able to receive a permanent residency after eight years. However, if they fulfilled all four requirements, they would be able to receive a residence permit after four years.

In Germany, the Integration Act that came into force in August 2016 made the right to permanent residence more difficult. For persons granted asylum, refugee status, as well as for resettled refugees, a regular residence of five years (previously 3) was now required. The time of the asylum procedure was – in contrast to the past - now taken into account. Similar to Sweden and Denmark, Germany also introduced ways of shortening the residence requirements. Refugees who demonstrate “outstanding integration” could obtain permanent residence already after three years. This included a proof of German language proficiency at

C1 level, a “predominantly secured” livelihood and other requirements, e.g., sufficient living space. For subsidiary protection holders or those on “deportation ban” permits, the residence requirements were only eased in so far that the time of the asylum procedures was taken into account.

Norway also altered the residence requirements for protection seekers in 2021, increasing the residence requirement from three to five years (the change was only made for protection holders and persons who were reunited with the former, and not for other immigrants who still had a three-year residence requirement).

### 9.1.2 Changes in residence requirements after 2022

After 2022, only the UK has changed their residence requirements.

In 2022, the UK made several changes in the rights accorded to different groups of refugees, dividing them into two main groups (see chapter 5). Group 1 are now granted asylum with a minimum of five years’ leave (permission to stay in the UK) after which they may apply for permanent residence. By comparison, group 2 are granted a minimum of 30 months but are only able to apply for permanent residence after 10 years. The schemes for specific groups (e.g., Syrians, Afghans, Hong Kongers, Ukrainians) each have distinct rules pertaining to each scheme (see UK country report).

In all countries, a collective temporary protection does not count as residence time when applying for permanent residency. Similarly, there is currently no route to settlement for people on the Ukraine specific visas in the UK. The EU (or Norway and Denmark) has still not decided what will happen if/when the Temporary Protection Directive no longer applies. Neither have any country-specific policies been made regarding this question on what happens when the temporary protection for Ukrainians expires (as of June 2023).

In Poland, temporary residence permits for holders of humanitarian visas were introduced in 2022. This legal framework was foreseen to address the situation of Belarusian holders of humanitarian visas that were issued since late 2020. The period of stay on humanitarian visas could also be summed up in a 5-year period necessary to apply for an EU long-term residence permit.

## 9.2 Language requirements

The UK, Finland and Sweden did not have any language requirements for permanent residency, nor have they made any changes during the period of analysis.

Before 2015, Norway, Denmark and Austria were the only countries who included language requirements for those with refugee status. Norway only required *participation* in a 550-hour Norwegian course, Denmark required language level A1. In Austria, third-country nationals had to successfully complete German language courses within two years, but the level required differed depending on the type of permanent residence permit they were applying for (either A2 or B1).

In Germany, those who had a refugee status did not have to fulfil language requirements to obtain permanent residency, but subsidiary protection holders and those with a “ban on deportation” permit were required to attend an integration course and prove German language skills at the B1 level.



## 9.2.1 Changes in language requirements

Norway, Denmark, Germany and Poland introduced more restrictive language requirements after 2015. In Norway, from 2016, it was no longer sufficient for the applicant to *participate* in language courses and tests, but s/he had to *pass* a Norwegian language test at level A1 (which was raised to level A2 in 2022). In Denmark, applicants for permanent residency had to pass a language level at A2 (previously A1). When the German Integration Act came into force in August 2016, those with a refugee status also had to pass a German language level test of A2. In 2017, Poland amended the Act on Foreigners and introduced a Polish language proficiency requirement at B1 level for people applying for a long-term EU residency.

## 9.3 Economic requirements

The UK and Finland did not operate with financial requirements for obtaining permanent residency for refugees, nor have they made any changes during the period of analysis. However, application fees are considerable in the UK.

Before 2015, Austria, Denmark and Germany were the only countries requiring protection beneficiaries to be self-sufficient in order to achieve permanent residency. In Denmark, for three out of the last five years, the applicant had to have had minimum part-time employment or been enrolled in education. S/he also had to be self-sufficient for the last three years. There was one exception from the requirements: if the applicant had shown 'willingness to integrate', they could be exempted from the requirements after eight years of residence.

In Austria, applicants had to be self-sufficient, meaning they must have had a fixed minimum income which was mandated and regulated in the general social insurance law. In addition, they had to be entitled to adequate accommodation and have full social insurance rights.

Germany did not have economic requirements for those with refugee status, but those with subsidiary protection and the "ban on deportation" permit had to have had a secured livelihood, sufficient living space, and a proof of contributing for at least 60 months to the pension system.

### 9.3.1 Changes in economic requirements

After the refugee influx of 2015, Denmark increased their economic requirements. For protection seekers to fulfil the demands for permanent residency, they needed to have had full-time employment the last 3.5 out of 4 years (raised from part-time employment the last three out of five years). Enrolment in education no longer counted. Refugees also needed to provide an income above a certain level.

From 2016, Germany also implemented economic requirements for those with refugee status, who now needed to ensure "mostly secured livelihood", which corresponded to a less demanding level than for other protection holders (subsidiary protection or deportation ban). From 2017, Norway implemented an income requirement for protection beneficiaries to have a minimum income with no means-tested welfare. In 2021, Sweden changed their rules for obtaining permanent residency including a self-sufficiency requirement (only including personal income/means).

In Poland from 2022, if holders of humanitarian visas intend to apply for an EU long-term resident permit after five years of uninterrupted stay, the confirmation of a stable and regular income source was required for the three years prior to submitting the relevant application.

## 9.4 Civics courses/tests

Pre 2015, Norway was the only country requiring *participation* in civics courses for protection beneficiaries to obtain permanent residency. In Germany, subsidiary protection beneficiaries and person with a humanitarian ban title had to prove a basic knowledge in German law-and-social order if they were to be entitled to permanent residency.

A few countries introduced or altered the requirements concerning civics tests. From 2017, protection holders in Norway not only had to participate in civics courses, but also had to pass a civics test. From 2016, protection holders in Denmark also needed to pass a civics test (one of the four requirements to obtain permanent residency) or have conducted one year of voluntary work. In 2017, Austria introduced compulsory civics courses that had to be successfully completed within two years. The civics courses were normally incorporated into the language test. In Germany, since August 2016, persons with a refugee status or a resettlement permit also had to prove a basic knowledge in German law-and-social order if they were to be entitled to permanent residency.

## 9.5 Summary

Permanent residence permit rules are often more generally applied, and less likely than some other regulations we examine to differ for specific sub-groups of immigrants or protection permit holders. Some countries do, however, have slightly different rules for subsidiary protection holders and different groups of refugees (Germany and the UK). In some cases, integration requirements might apply to protection holders that do not similarly apply to other groups of migrants.

The most common requirement for permanent residence was a certain minimum residence period, and in some countries, this remained the main criterion for passage from a temporary to permanent residence permit (Finland, the UK and partly Sweden). In five of the eight countries, minimum residence periods were extended during the period under study. In some cases, this happened as a response to the 2015 influx, most notably in Sweden where protection holders received an immediate permanent residence permit prior to 2015. They were an outlier in this regard, and they introduced a three-year wait in 2015. Denmark and Germany both extended residence periods for refugees, though with possibilities of faster access provided if certain integration related requirements were met. Sweden also introduced such a fast-track. Norway and the United Kingdom also extended residence periods for refugees in 2020 and 2022 respectively, as part of policy processes not directly tied to the large influxes under study.

With the exception of Finland and the United Kingdom, the other states apply integration requirements that take the form of economic, language or civics related requirements. There have been restrictions in these across the board. Five of the eight states had language requirements for permanent residence (Norway, Denmark, Germany, Austria, UK), and with the exception of Austria, all tightened these during the period we examine (both as a response to 2015 and not). Half of the countries introduced civics tests during the time period.

The economic requirements, currently applied in six of the eight countries, are the most complex and also the ones that most often differentiate between groups of protection seekers. Only three states had any such requirements for protection seekers *before* 2015 (Denmark and Austria; Germany only for subsidiary protection and humanitarian ban holders). As part of their 2015 response, Germany extended the requirements to also apply

to refugees, and Norway and Sweden introduced such requirements (in Sweden, it was framed in a more positive light as a fast-track for those who succeeded in finding employment rapidly). Sweden tightened these rules in 2021, and Poland introduced such a requirement for humanitarian visa holders in 2022. While we have not compared application fees in detail, it should be noted that the application fees for permanent residency can be prohibitive, which is the case in the UK.

The general trend from the period under study, then, is one toward restrictions. A number of these arose as part of the response to 2015, but there were also reforms in the interim period that did not relate directly.

At the time of writing, there is no telling whether the Ukraine response will involve changes to permanent residence rules, and there have not been new restrictive changes made in response to it. This could be because it is largely irrelevant at the time of writing: collective, temporary protection as it is currently applied does not count toward permanent residence at all. In theory, displaced persons from Ukraine would “restart the clock” at zero if they transition to another form of permit, making for a very long route to permanent residence or citizenship for this group compared to other groups. Whether this will be the policy once the three-year period of temporary protection ends, or whether one might envisage reclassifying this time if the protection needs turn out not to be temporary, remains to be seen.

## 10 Family reunification

Were protection holders exempted from regular requirements, or subject to specific restrictions when applying for family reunification? Were there differences between protection statuses and development over time?

European countries have detailed national regulations concerning requirements for both immigrants and native citizens when applying for family reunification, including different scopes of what is defined as family, different rules for pre- and post-flight reunification, requirements connected to the reference person (income, housing, etc.) and pre-arrival integration requirements for the person who seeks to move to the host-country. It has been outside the scope of this project to map and systematically compare all requirements and exceptions for family reunification. However, in most countries, (subgroups of) protection holders may be exempted from such general requirements or subject to specific restrictions.

In this chapter – summarised in table 10.1 –, we first describe whether the (subgroups of) protection holders were exempted from general family reunification requirements. Further, we compare restrictions in rights to apply for family reunification that particularly subsidiary protection holders have been subject to, and how this has developed during the period of analysis.

Table 10.1: Rights and restrictions to family reunification for protection holders, 2015–June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>EXEMPTION IF APPLIED WITHIN TIME LIMIT</b>	Apply within 6 months for exemption.	Apply within 3 months for exemption.	Apply within 3 months for exemption.	Apply within 3 months for exemption.	Apply within 3 months for exemption.	Apply within 6 months for exemption.	Apply within 3 months for exemption, but: Before 2015: only for refugees. 2016: SP included 2018: SP removed	Differences in case conditions were not related to time of application.
<b>RESTRICTED/ SUSPENDED RIGHT TO APPLY FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION</b>	None	For SP only: Before 2015: no restrictions 2015: 1 year suspension (later increased to 2 year) Temporary law in 2016-2019: 3-year suspension	Temporary suspension for SP holders in 2016-2019.	From 2016: For those with SP and humanitarian protection, the sponsor was required to have a secure means of support from sources other than benefits paid by society.	For SP only: Before 2015: 1 year suspension After 2015: 3 years suspension 2016: yearly maximum quotas.	None	Temporary suspension for SP holders in 2016-July 2018, since then a monthly quota of maximum 1000 persons.	Restricted right to apply in some cases (see paragraph below).

## 10.1 Exemptions from general requirements for protection seekers?

In most countries, protection holders get exemptions from general requirements for family reunification if they apply within a specific time limit, but they differ concerning 1) the deadline, and 2) whether there are different rules for subgroups of protection holders.

Firstly, in Norway and Poland, the applicants must submit the application for family reunification within 6 months after granted protection to be exempted from general requirements. For Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Austria, and Germany, the application must have been submitted within 3 months.

Secondly, Germany has had separate rules for those with refugee status and those with subsidiary protection. Before 2015, only those with refugee status had exemptions from general rules if they applied within 3 months. In August 2015, however, subsidiary protection holders and resettled refugees obtained the same right to simplified family reunification as persons with refugee status (as part of the 2013 political coalition agreement). However, only a few months later, subsidiary protection holders right to family reunification was suspended for two years (see next point, chapter 10.2).

Existing differences in conditions applied in the UK case were not related to the time of application. For both refugees and subsidiary protection holders, applicants did not have to satisfy preconditions such as financial, accommodation, English language, or civics knowledge requirements. Additional requirements, however, did apply to reunification with *other* family members (e.g., 'post-flight' partners, adult dependents, or adult relatives of minors holding refugee or humanitarian protection status). Such conditions include the sponsor's ability to support the family member until they find work or become eligible for access to public funds. With regards to other protection statuses, 'leave to remain under family or private life rules' was normally subject to a condition of no recourse to public funds, unless there were exceptional circumstances (e.g., the applicant is destitute, or there are compelling reasons relating to the welfare of a child).

## 10.2 Suspensions and restrictions for subsidiary protection holders

Some countries have introduced rules for suspending or restricting the right to family reunification for subsidiary protection holders.

Before 2015, Austria was the only country that had a one-year waiting period for subsidiary protection holders. Sweden and Germany have generally not had a waiting period for protection seekers, but after 2015, both countries temporarily suspended the right for family reunification for subsidiary protection holders, from 2016-2019 in Sweden, and from 2016-2018 (July) in Germany. Denmark also had a temporary three-year suspension from 2016. Further, Denmark has also gradually introduced more restrictive (general) waiting periods for subsidiary protection holders. From 2015, a one-year suspension applied to subsidiary protection holders, which was later increased to two years.

In July 2016, Finland made a distinction between refugee status and persons who have received subsidiary or temporary protection. The change in the Aliens Act introduced an income requirement for those protection holders who had a residence permit based on subsidiary, humanitarian, or temporary protection. This meant that to be able to bring one's

family to Finland, the sponsor was required to have a secure means of support from sources other than benefits paid by society. Those with refugee status were exempted from this requirement if the application was submitted within three months after receiving asylum.

Austria and Germany have introduced a general reduction in rights by operating with national quotas for how many persons will be eligible for family reunification for certain permits. In Germany, from August 2018, subsidiary protection holders had the possibility – but not the right – to family reunification. The government also put in place a maximum quota of up to 1000 subsidiary protection holders per month that could be eligible for family reunification (no similar restrictions applied to persons with refugee status). In this procedure, humanitarian hardship cases were given privileged treatment. In the coalition agreement of 2021, the “Ampel” government announced that it would reverse the restrictions on family reunification for persons with subsidiary protection. However, due to the high influx of protection seekers from Ukraine and other countries of origin, the government has refrained from doing so. In 2016, Austria also introduced yearly quotas for family reunification (which had already existed for other third-country nationals). If the quota for a year had already been reached, family reunification would have to be applied for again the following year. There was a special exception for parents of an unaccompanied minor refugee, where these extra requirements were seen as being met.

In the UK, family reunification rules were not changed, but the Home Office’s withdrawal of commissioned and funded DNA testing in 2014 appears to have been a major cause of the increase in first-time refusals for certain nationalities. Poor procedural practices also led to significant delays for some applicants (see UK country report for details).

### 10.3 Summary

Family reunification rules are complex and have undergone various changes and restrictions in the countries under study over the past decade. Which relatives count as “family” in this context also varies between countries. Various policy instruments were employed, and different countries applied different combinations of the requirements. In most countries, excluding the UK, those with refugee status were exempted from such requirements if they applied within a certain time frame following application (3-6 months). This kind of favourable access to family reunification for those with refugee status was also proscribed by the EU Family Reunification Directive.

Some forms of restrictions were seen in several European countries following the 2015 influx. In particular, several countries began distinguishing between family reunification rights for those with a refugee status and those holding subsidiary protection permits. Subsidiary protection holders in some states saw their access to family reunification temporarily suspended; a policy previously only applied in Austria. Suspensions ranged from one to three years. Norway and Poland maintained the same rules for both groups, but Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Finland and Austria postponed and restricted access for those with subsidiary protection. Germany and Austria also stand out in the application of maximum yearly quotas for family reunification for subsidiary protection holders.

While there was a general trend in Europe toward more restrictive family reunification policies, these have not been salient in the 2022 situation and concerning displaced persons from Ukraine. Collective, temporary protection permits would also be available to most family members, so that families could in effect reunify themselves (but barring possible non-Ukrainian family members falling outside of the scope of the EU directive or national eligibility rules).

# 11 Integration measures

Did the countries have national integration policies, and how were these funded and implemented? Were protection seekers allowed to work, or were they restricted by specific requirements? What rights and obligations to integration measures did protection seekers have before and after being granted protection? Have these rights and obligations changed since 2015, and did they apply to different protection statuses differently?

It is important to emphasise that local and regional governments, local communities, NGOs, private companies and civil society very often play an important role in providing different integration measures and activities for protection seekers, and particularly during times of high influxes of protection seekers. Depending on the role and scope of integration measures regulated by national governments, these actors may either supplement national regulated integration measures or be the substitute in cases where such national measures or policies do not exist. It has been outside the scope of this project to map different regional and local practices within each country. Thus, the continuing analysis mainly focuses on the development and implementation of national policies and responses, and on the protection seekers' rights and obligations according to these national regulations.

It is debated whether national regulation of integration measures is positive or negative (Hernes 2021; Koikkalainen 2021). However, national regulation of protection seekers' rights and obligation to different integration measures are relevant because it relates to questions of governance and equal treatment. When protection seekers get legislative rights (e.g., rights to free language courses), the public sector is also obligated to provide those services, and the multilevel governance of this responsibility is one focus in our analysis. National regulations are (at least in principle) a way to ensure equal treatment of the target group irrespective of where the individual is settled in the country. Although initiatives from the local communities, government and civil society are essential, they often vary considerably between locations. Without national regulations, there may be large differences between the integration measures protection seekers get depending on where they settle (Hernes 2021; Koikkalainen 2021).

We start the chapter by documenting if integration measures are nationally regulated or not, and the governance structure of the policy development, implementation and funding of such regulation. Secondly, we analyse protection seekers' rights to work or not during the application period (before they are granted protection). Thirdly, we analyse and compare rights and obligations to different integration measures before and after being granted protection.

## 11.1 The multilevel responsibilities for integration

Historically, integration was mostly a local concern, but as immigration and integration became more prominent political issues, many European countries have introduced national integration policies. However, the distribution of responsibilities for policy development, implementation and funding across government levels differs.

Table 11.1 shows the distribution of main responsibility for the development, implementation and funding of integration measures in the eight countries.



Table 11.1: Main responsibility for the service provision of integration measures, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>NATIONALLY REGULATED INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES / LANGUAGE COURSES</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No national integration policies.
<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Municipalities. 2021: Regions were delegated selected assignments.	Municipalities	National agency responsible for integration programme. Municipalities responsible for language and civics training.	Municipalities	State level and municipalities responsible language training.	Municipalities	The national level approved private or public service providers.	(Voluntary) responsibility at lower levels of government (devolved nations of the UK; Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships; local authorities).
<b>FUNDING</b>	National funding	National funding	National funding	National funding	National and EU funding	National, local and EU funding	National funding	National, ODA, devolved nations, local communities (differential funding allocation across groups of protection holders). Discontinued EU funding.

Except for the UK, all countries had national integration policies that regulated rights and/or obligations to integration measures for protection seekers and holders. Temporary structures for integration existed in the UK under the 1997-2010 Labour government but was discontinued in 2011 after a change of government. There is currently no formal national integration policy in the UK, but some national level integration measures have been introduced exclusively under some resettlement schemes targeting specific groups of people. There have been measures at subnational level (e.g., Scotland and Wales), and local level (with varying degrees of local authority participation across settings). This has resulted in patchy and uneven implementation and distribution of services, producing experiences which are therefore not easily generalisable (for more details, see the UK country report).

In the other seven countries, the national government was responsible for policy development, however, the implementation was executed by lower levels of government, or through non-public actors.

The countries were divided concerning whether implementation of integration measures was 1) a sole municipal responsibility (Norway before 2021, Denmark, Finland, Poland), 2) divided between different government levels (Norway from 2021, Sweden, and Austria) or 3) contracted out to both public and private service providers (Germany).

In the first group, local governments were delegated the responsibility for implementing the nationally regulated integration programme. It was within the local governments' autonomy to decide how to provide these services. It is important to emphasise that in the countries where the municipalities had the overall responsibility for implementation, the actual service provision could be contracted out to NGO or private service providers locally, in addition to direct public service provision by the municipality.

The second group of countries divided the responsibilities between different levels of government. In Sweden, the national agency, The Swedish Public Employment Service, was responsible for the integration programmes, while the municipalities were responsible for language and civics training. In Austria, language courses were a shared responsibility between the states and the municipalities. In Norway, until 2021, the responsibility for the implementation of integration measures was a local responsibility, however, with the new Integration Act in 2021, the County Councils received new formal responsibilities in the integration process. The County Councils were to develop regional integration and qualification plans, to offer career guidance to the target group for the introductory programme, and to provide Norwegian language training to participants in the introductory programme who attend full-time upper secondary education.

Lastly, in Germany, the national government approved and funded private or public providers for the integration and language courses according to fixed criteria.

It has not been within the scope of this project to compare the actual coverage of funding to lower levels of government across countries, because the funding schemes differ considerably in type and scope. However, in all countries, the national level (partly) funded nationally regulated integration programmes and/or language courses, but the actual coverage of the national funding could differ considerably. In Austria and Poland, funding for language courses was also partly provided through EU funds.

## 11.2 Right to work before being granted protection

After being granted protection, all countries provided the protection holder with access to the labour market. However, rights to work before being granted protection were subject to different rules and restrictions (see Table 11.2).

Table 11.2: Rights and restrictions to work before being granted protection, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>RIGHT TO WORK BEFORE GRANTED PROTECTION</b>	Only through application if specific requirements were met.	Only through application if specific requirements were met.	Only through application if specific requirements were met.	Right to work after 3 (with biometric passport) or 6 months (without biometric passport) after asylum application.	Generally, no, but possibility to do volunteer work, and seasonal work (with work permit) in tourism, agriculture or forestry for max. 6 months.	Right to work for asylum seekers after 6 months.	Employment-ban the first 3 months and during obligatory stay at reception centre (if longer than 3 months) and assessment of employment by national agency.  From 2016: Change in assessment criteria for employment (after 3-month ban). From 2019: Longer stays in accommodation centres (which included employment ban).	Employment-ban for the first 12 months for most asylum seekers. Possibility to apply for right to work after at least 12 months as asylum seekers (i.e., outside resettlement schemes).
<b>SPECIFIC REGULATIONS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE?</b>	Applications for work permits will not be processed (due to short application process for displaced persons from Ukraine).	Yes, right to work after registered application.	No	Yes, right to work after registered application.	Yes, right to work after registered application.	Yes, right to work after a registered application; within 14 days a notification of assignment of work to a Ukrainian citizen should be given to authorities.	No employment ban. Right to work included in their residence permit (even fictional certificate). Not subjected to the approval of the Federal Employment Agency.	Those on Ukrainian visa schemes had the right to work when they entered the country.

Before being granted protection, the countries split into two main groups concerning whether they 1) operated with applications for work permits during the asylum procedures if certain criteria were met, or 2) had employment-bans for an initial specified time period.

In the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Denmark and Sweden), asylum seekers were normally not allowed to work before being granted protection and a legal residence permit. However, the applicants could apply for a temporary work permit if they fulfilled certain criteria (e.g., having undergone the asylum interview, having a biometric passport or no unclarities about the applicant's identity, and having solid reasons for asylum). Austria had a similar general no-work ban during the application phase, but there was an exception for seasonal work (with work permit) in tourism, agriculture or forestry for a maximum of 6 months.

The other countries operated with employment bans in an initial period (which varied from 3-12 months).

In two countries, additional requirements applied. In Finland, the employment-ban period depended on whether the applicant had a biometric passport (3 months) or not (6 months). In Germany, there was generally a three-month employment-ban. After the three-month holdback, employment remained subjected to the approval of the Federal Employment Agency. Prior to 2016, the Agency proceeded with two assessments. Firstly, it conducted a so-called "priority review", which included an examination of whether privileged domestic or equivalent applicants were available for the specific employment (including German applicants, EU and EEA citizens and third-country nationals with unrestricted access to the labour market). A second examination included an evaluation of the conditions of employment in order to assure that the protection seekers were treated equally compared to other workers. As of 2016, the priority review was suspended for a period of three years and completely abolished in 2019. Further, since August 2019, asylum seekers who were obligated to live in a reception centre (up to 18 months) were not allowed to work (for families with children, this was a maximum of six months). However, after nine months, if the asylum procedure had not been completed, adults without children were also allowed to work. Asylum seekers from safe countries of origin were excluded.

### 11.2.1 Special rules for displaced persons from Ukraine?

In the majority of the analysed countries (Finland, Denmark, Austria, Poland and Germany), displaced persons from Ukraine were exempted from the regular restriction for either application requirements or time-limited employment bans, and they had the right to work after they had registered their application. For example, in Denmark, it became possible for displaced persons from Ukraine to work from the time the person applied for protection and fingerprints were obtained, and in Finland, immediately after the application was registered with the police or the border guard. Germany exempted displaced persons from Ukraine from the 3-months waiting period before accessing the job market and from the regular rules of getting additional employment approval by the Federal Employment Agency.

In Sweden and Norway, however, the right to work first started after a permit for collective temporary protection was granted. In Norway, the applicant could in principle apply for a work permit, but due to short processing periods for displaced persons from Ukraine and overloaded capacity at the national Norwegian Immigration Agency, applications for work permits during the application period would not be processed.

In the UK, individuals entering the country through one of the Ukraine schemes had the right to work from the day they entered the country.

### 11.3 Integration measures *before* granted protection

Normally, the application process for protection may be lengthy, and some countries include rights and obligations to particularly civics and language training during this period (see Table 11.3).

Table 11.3: Rights and obligations to integration measures before being granted protection, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>RIGHTS AND OBLIGATION TO LANGUAGE AND CIVICS TRAINING (BEFORE GRANTED PROTECTION)</b>	Before 2015: Right to language courses 2018: Right and obligation to both language and civics courses.	Right and obligation to civics and language courses. Financial sanctions if non-participation.	Obligatory civics course. No rights or obligation to language training, but often provided by local and non-public actors.	Obligatory work and study activities in reception centres, and financial sanctions if non-participation. The activities included language courses.	No right to language course except through voluntary NGOs/local governments (not financed).	No obligatory requirements. Right to language courses. No right to civics courses, but in some cases non-obligatory civics courses were available.	No rights or obligation before 2015. After 2015, access to language training and integration courses granted to applicants with “good prospect to remain” (but implementation challenges).	Not applicable; no national regulation.
<b>EXEMPTIONS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE</b>	Yes, exempted from right and obligation.	Yes, exempted from right and obligation unless their stay in the reception centre exceeded 3 months.	Yes, exempted from obligatory civics course.	No, have the same obligation if they stayed at a reception centre. Exempted if they find worked or studied elsewhere.	No, displaced persons from Ukraine had the right to language courses.	Yes, exempted from right to language training.	No, displaced persons from Ukraine also got access (but no right).	Not applicable; no national regulation.

Table 11.3 shows cross-national differences in rights and obligation to language and civics training during the application phase.

Concerning language training, Denmark, Finland and Norway (from 2018) were the only two countries who had obligatory language training for protection seekers during the application period. In Austria and Poland, the applicants had a right to language training, but no obligation. In Germany, asylum seekers with “good prospect to remain” got access to the language and civics training, but the access depended on the available places. Due to the particular increase of incoming protection seekers in 2015, the implementation was rather challenging, as there was a lack of resources and of coordination at different levels (state, regional, civil society). In Sweden and the UK, protection applicants did not have a right to language courses during the application phase.

Concerning civics training, the Nordic countries had or introduced obligatory civics training (although format and scope varied). In Denmark, participants who did not participate in these courses could be financially sanctioned (reduction in pocket money). In Finland the reception centres arranged work and study activities, which were *de facto* compulsory, as non-participation will reduce the reception allowance. Austria, Poland and Germany had no rights or obligations for asylum seekers to participate in civics courses. In Germany, protection seekers were allowed access to such courses, but just as with access to language courses, access depended on capacity. The UK did not provide formal civics courses.

### 11.3.1 Exemptions for displaced persons from Ukraine?

For most displaced persons from Ukraine, the time from registration to a decision or permit was usually very short (often within a few days or weeks from registration to decision). Further, due to capacity challenges, many countries made exemptions from the general rules for displaced persons from Ukraine concerning rights and obligations to language and civics training before being granted protection.

In Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Poland, displaced persons from Ukraine were exempted from the general rules and did not have the right and obligation to language courses and civics classes during the application period. In Finland, they are obligated to participate in work and study activities if living in a reception centre. In Austria and Germany, the same rules applied to displaced persons from Ukraine and other protection seekers. In the UK, which had no national regulation for such policies, no special policies were made for displaced persons from Ukraine who came through the different Ukraine visa schemes.

## 11.4 Integration measures after granted protection

Rights to targeted integration programmes, language and civics courses and other integration measures were originally often a local responsibility. Over the last 25 years, more countries have adopted national regulations – both rights and obligations – for language and civics training, and other integration measures. Many countries operated with nationally regulated integration programmes, but the scope, content and duration of these programmes varied considerably: they could only include language and civics training or include detailed regulations concerning other types of content and specific measures for particular subgroups of protection seekers.



Table 11.4: Rights and obligations to integration measures after being granted protection, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>INTEGRATION PROGRAMME</b>	<p>Before 2021: 2-year integration programmes with language and civics training and education/employment measures.</p> <p>From 2021: Programme period varied between 3 months and 4 years depending on age and prior education.</p>	<p>Before 2016: 3-year introduction programme with language training and education/employment measures.</p> <p>New Integration Act in 2016: 1-year programmes with intensified focus on rapid employment.</p>	<p>2-year integration programmes with language and civics training and education/employment measures.</p>	<p>Integration services included an initial assessment, employment-promoting services, personalised integration plan and integration training. The programme was not only for protection seekers, as the law also applied to other immigrants.</p>	<p>No specific integration programme. From 2017, compulsory A2 course within 2 years and voluntary secondary courses for refugees only.</p> <p>SP holders: No right and obligation initially, but right to language course in 2017.</p>	<p>1-year integration programme.</p>	<p>Integration programme with three modules – two language components of 300 hours each, and an orientation course of 60 hours.</p>	<p>No national integration programme, but integration measures for some resettlement schemes targeting specific groups.</p>
<b>LANGUAGE TRAINING</b>	<p>Right and obligation.</p>	<p>Right and obligation.</p>	<p>Right, formally not an obligation.</p>	<p>Part of integration training.</p>	<p>For refugees: right and obligation (from 2017).</p> <p>For SP holders: only right from 2017.</p>	<p>Part of the integration programme. Obligatory (if needed).</p>	<p>Obligatory if: 1) no sufficient level of German, 2) receives social benefits, 3) particular need of integration.</p>	<p>Only right for selected protection holders under specific schemes/statuses.</p>

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>CIVICS TRAINING</b>	Right and obligation.	Integrated in language training.	Right	Part of integration training.	Compulsory exam within two years from 2017.	No obligation but right.	Same as language training.	Not applicable.
<b>EXEMPTIONS/ ADJUSTMENTS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE?</b>	Adjustments. Right to integration programmes and language (not civics) training, but with adjustments.	Similar rights and obligations.	No right to integration programmes or language and civics training.	Displaced persons from Ukraine were entitled to initial assessment, employment-promoting services, integration plan and training.	German courses available for free (but not obligatory). No right or obligation to civics training.	No right or obligation to integration programmes or language and civics training.	No right, but obligation may apply if social benefits are received.	Integration support for only 1 of 3 Ukrainian protection schemes.

### 11.4.1 Integration programmes and measures after granted protection

Except for Austria and the UK, all the countries had national regulations for integration programmes and/or language and civics courses prior to 2015. Not including exemptions for displaced persons from Ukraine, Austria and the UK were also the only countries after 2015 that distinguished rights depending on different protection statuses.

In Austria, different states and municipalities had different approaches and offers, and there were very few centralised and coordinated integration measures prior to 2015. However, the new Integration Act in 2017 mandated that once residency permits had been granted, migrants and refugees had two years to successfully complete language (level A2, in some cases B1) and civics courses. Voluntarily, refugees could participate in secondary courses which specialised in topics like labour market, culture, health or gender equality. However, the new law distinguished between rights and obligation for those with refugee status and those with subsidiary protection. Those with subsidiary protection initially had no right or obligation, but in 2017, they got the right to participate (but no obligation).

In the UK, after the government abandoned the national integration strategy in 2011, there were no government-provided integration programmes for persons who have been through the asylum system. The approach adopted by the coalition government of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in 2010-2015 was to explicitly treat integration as a transition that did not require central government support. Instead, the onus for integration was placed on refugees themselves and civil society. Along with the different protection schemes introduced in 2014 and 2016, some rights to integration measures were introduced for those arriving through selected resettlement schemes. Meanwhile, new legislation in 2023 sought to create a 'two-tiered system' for refugees. Refugees in the UK would either go through the asylum process after arrival in the UK, or they would be brought to the UK directly from another country through one of the government-led resettlement schemes. Those refugees who arrived through a resettlement route were provided with accommodation and received support to access services and certain integration measures. For refugees who went through the asylum system, there was no such support. Key support for fostering integration and independence, including support with writing CVs, converting qualifications awarded in other countries, the translation of acquired skills, and training to help refugees to update or add to their existing skills, was provided by civil society organisations 'filling the gaps'.

The six other countries all had nationally regulated integration programmes prior to 2015. Most programmes were ideally meant to be individually tailored to the participants' prior qualifications and needs and include language and civics training (either as a separate course, or as an integrated part of the language training), and qualification and/or employment measures. In all countries, participation was obligatory if the protection holder received financial assistance.

Most national regulations for integration programmes remained unchanged after the 2015 influx, however, Denmark (along with Austria, see above), overhauled its integration programme, by revising its scope, length, and content in July 2016. The new Danish Integration Act of July 2016 intensify the employment focus from day one. The initial programme period was reduced from three years to one year (but with the possibility of extension up to five years, if the participant had not yet obtained employment or education or passed a Danish language test). The new legislation explicitly prioritises job training and stated that the aim was to get participants employed within the one-year programme period. Municipalities were obligated to start integration measures within one month of arrival, and the time period between different active labour market policy measures was limited to six

weeks. The Danish government also introduced a new integration measure in 2016, the “Employment-oriented integration efforts” (IGU). IGU aimed to combine employment and qualification measures in a two-year ‘programme’, where the participant could work for an employer at a reduced salary. The employment relationship was arranged directly between employer and participant, with minimum involvement from local public agencies; however, the participant received an education benefit during the weeks of obligatory qualification measures. From 2019, Denmark also renamed the introduction programme for refugees the ‘self-sufficiency and repatriation programme’ (for other immigrants, the programme retained the name “introduction programme”).

During the situation in 2015/16, Sweden and Norway also aimed to intensify the work-focus of the integration programme. Although Sweden and Norway did not alter the regulations for the programmes significantly, they also worked to ensure so-called “fast-tracks to employment”, with intensified integration tracks for those who already had higher qualifications.

#### 11.4.2 Only a right, or also an obligation?

The countries differed concerning whether participation in integration measures was a right only, or also an obligation. In the majority of countries, participation in language courses was obligatory, with some exceptions. In the UK, participation in language classes was not obligatory; funding for language classes was very restricted and piece-meal, which meant there was a lack of provision and long waiting lists. In Sweden, participation was formally not obligatory, but financial assistance was conditional on programme participation, so the difference between for example Sweden and Norway was not that different in practice. In Finland, the immigrant must adhere to their personal integration plan, regularly attend a Finnish or Swedish course and participate in other measures and services agreed as part of the plan on a regular basis, or their right to unemployment benefits or basic social assistance may be curtailed. In Germany, protection holders and other foreigners could be obligated to attend an integration course if they could not demonstrate sufficient language skills, were receiving social benefits or if authorities identified special integration needs. Persons who were obligated to participate but did not attend an integration course could be subject to negative sanctions, such as financial sanctions and the non-extension of the residence permit (from 2016).

There were larger differences concerning whether civics training and exams were obligatory (it is worth mentioning that not all countries had separate civics courses, but that civics training could be an integrated part of the language or integration courses, e.g., in Denmark and Germany). In Norway, Denmark and Austria, participation in civics training was obligatory. In Austria (after 2017), the protection holders had to pass a compulsory exam within two years. In Poland and the UK, there were no national rights or obligations for civics training. In the UK, there was no provision for formal civics training, but there was often some citizenship element in language classes. In Sweden, they had obligatory civics training included during the reception phase before being granted protection (see chapter 11.3), and they had no further obligatory civics training afterwards.

#### 11.4.3 Limited integration rights and exceptions for displaced persons from Ukraine

The countries had very different approaches to whether displaced persons from Ukraine had rights and obligations to regular integration measures.

Norway, Denmark and Finland were the only countries that included displaced persons from Ukraine in the regular integration programmes, although in some moderated form in Norway. In Denmark, after being granted protection, displaced persons from Ukraine had the same rights and obligation to participate in integration programmes as other protection holders. In Norway, displaced persons from Ukraine had the right to integration programmes, but a Special Act in 2022 included some adjustments. Overall, the amendments included somewhat shorter and more limited rights to certain measures, but with more flexible options for displaced persons from Ukraine than for other groups. The introduction programme should still contain language and work-oriented elements, but the language training was briefer for displaced persons from Ukraine (only one year, consistent with the duration of their initial permit). Displaced persons from Ukraine had neither the right nor the obligation to attend civics classes, nor did they have to take the otherwise compulsory “empowerment course”. Unlike the case for other introduction programme participants, they could complete the introduction programme on a part-time basis; and if they left the programme, they did not lose the right to return to the programme. Despite these adjustments, compared to other countries, displaced persons from Ukraine still got a relative comprehensive right to integration measures in Norway.

In Finland, The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration applied to all persons with a valid residence permit in Finland. Municipalities, employment and economic development offices and other authorities were to provide immigrants with appropriate guidance and advice concerning measures and services promoting integration and working life. Beneficiaries of temporary protection were, therefore, also entitled to employment and employment-promoting services by the ELY Centre/TE Office, including an initial assessment and integration plan. They could also participate in integration training. If they found employment on their own, it was no longer necessary to participate in these integration activities. Once the temporary protection holders became residents of a municipality (after 1 year), they received more services that were like the services provided to all other residents.

In Sweden, Poland, Germany and Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine did not have general rights and obligation to integration measures. They could be offered some courses, but this often depended on non-public efforts or availability and local capacity.

In Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine did not fall under the Integration Agreement, so they had no obligation to reach a certain language level or partake in civics courses. They could, however, take German classes voluntarily. To that end, the Austrian Integration Fund funded an additional 35,000 places in German courses in June 2022. In Germany, displaced persons from Ukraine did not enjoy a direct entitlement to integration programmes, but it could be granted upon application, depending on the places available. In Sweden, displaced persons from Ukraine continued on asylum seeker rights and were not entitled to regular integration measures. In Poland, displaced persons from Ukraine had no rights or obligation to participate in integration measures.

It is important to emphasise that in the absence of national regulation providing rights for integration measures for displaced persons from Ukraine, local governments and non-public actors stepped up to fill the gap in many situations. For example, in Poland, NGO-run language training and job counselling were available for displaced persons from Ukraine, funded mainly internationally, and sometimes facilitated by local governments. In Austria, in addition to extra funding for voluntary German classes, (mobile) Service Points were established, which offered orientation and a centralised access point to information in Ukrainian about various topics of relevance, such as entry into the labour market and the education system as well as information about offers like German courses. Other offers, such as a buddy programme funded by the Austrian Integration Fund, also existed for displaced

persons from Ukraine between the ages of 12 and 35. Similarly, many Swedish regions and non-public actors provided local language courses to displaced persons from Ukraine.

In the UK, as with other protection statuses, rights to integration support depended on the specific permit the protection holder was covered by. Unlike in EU countries, Ukrainian citizens seeking to enter the UK needed to apply for a visa in advance. To get a visa, they needed either a UK family connection, i.e., family members who were either British citizens or settled residents, or a sponsorship, i.e., they needed a resident in the UK to act as a sponsor. The government provided funding to local authorities per person settled through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme) in the first year to enable them to support them and help them integrate into the community. The financial assistance for local authorities, hosts, and newly arrived Ukrainians was only available under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, which was an important limitation, as the needs of those on the other Ukraine schemes were similar and often even more acute.

## 11.5 Summary

The analysis shows that the countries have different governance solutions and distribution of responsibilities for integration policy development, implementation and funding across government levels. In all the countries (except for the UK), the national government was mainly responsible for the policy development of integration policies concerning integration programmes and language courses, but the implementation was executed by lower levels of government, or through non-public actors. In all countries, the national level (partly) funded integration programmes and/or language courses. However, the actual coverage of the national funding could differ considerably. In Austria and Poland, funding for language courses was also partly funded through EU funds.

After being granted protection, all countries provided the protection holder with access to the labour market. However, before being granted protection, the countries split into two main groups concerning whether they 1) operated with applications for work permits during the asylum procedures if certain criteria were met (the Scandinavian countries), or 2) had employment-bans (between three to twelve months) for an initial specified time period (the other countries). Germany was the only country that made general changes to these rules during the period of analysis. However, most countries made special amendments for displaced persons from Ukraine. In most countries, displaced persons from Ukraine were exempted from the regular employment restrictions (either application requirements or time-limited employment bans) and had the right to work after they had registered their application.

The application process for protection may be lengthy, and some countries include rights and obligations to particularly civics and language training during this period. Denmark, Finland and Norway were the only countries who had obligatory language training for protection seekers during the application period, while Austria and Poland provided applicants with the right (but no obligation) to language training. Germany provided access to language and civics training, but only if there were available places. In Sweden and the UK, protection applicants did not have a right to language courses during the application phase. Concerning civics training, the Nordic countries had or introduced obligatory civics training during the application period. For most displaced persons from Ukraine, the time from registration to a decision or permit was usually very short. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Poland exempted displaced persons from Ukraine from the general rules, implying that they did not have a right and/or obligation to language courses and/or civics classes during the application period. In

Finland the same work and study activities offered to other protection seekers were obligatory for also displaced persons from Ukraine if they lived in a reception centre.

Concerning rights to integration measures after protection was granted, all the countries had national regulations for integration programmes and/or language and civics courses prior to 2015, except for Austria and the UK. Most programmes were to include language and some form of civics training, and qualification and/or employment measures. In these countries, participation was obligatory if the protection holder received financial assistance. Most national regulations for integration programmes remained unchanged after the 2015 influx, with two exceptions. Denmark overhauled its national integration programme, introducing an intensified job-first focus and shorter programmes. Further, Austria introduced obligatory language courses for those granted refugees status in 2017, and a right (not an obligation) for those with subsidiary protection.

The countries had very different approaches to whether displaced persons from Ukraine had rights and obligations to regular integration measures. Norway, Finland and Denmark included displaced persons from Ukraine in the regular integration programmes, although in some moderated form in Norway. In Sweden, Poland, Germany and Austria, displaced persons from Ukraine did not have rights to integration measures. They could be offered some courses, but this often depended on non-public efforts or availability and local capacity.

The UK has not had government-provided integration programmes or policies since 2011. However, along with the different protection schemes introduced in 2014 and 2016, some rights to integration measures were introduced for those arriving through selected resettlement schemes. New legislation in 2023 sought to further a 'two-tiered system', where refugees who arrive through a resettlement route were provided with accommodation and received support to access services and certain integration measures. For refugees who went through the asylum system, there was no such nationally regulated support (but help was provided by civil society organisations trying to 'fill the gaps'). For the specific visa schemes for displaced persons from Ukraine, only one of the three available schemes included funding to local authorities to provide support and integration measures during the first year.

## 12 Financial assistance to the protection seeker

What type of financial benefits were protection seekers entitled to in the host country? Did they get specific, targeted benefits or were they included into the country's regular social benefits scheme? Did the countries provide selective rights to different protection statuses? Has the financial benefits system changed during the period of analysis?

A direct cross-national comparison of the *level* of financial assistance to protection seekers would be extremely challenging, as it may depend on fluctuating currencies and large differences in national and local living costs (Hernes & Tronstad 2014). Furthermore, *the services or products* one may receive differ across countries, and there may be conditional criteria that provide protection seekers with different rights within the same country (e.g., whether one self-settles or settles through the public system). Further, the countries have very different welfare systems (see chapter 2.1), which could result in differences that are not directly connected to the protection seekers' rights, but general cross-national differences in rights to social benefits between countries. Consequently, in this chapter, we do not aim to compare the *absolute* level of the financial benefits that protection beneficiaries receive across countries. However, we map different *types* of financial assistance used (means-tested, fixed benefits, etc.), and the *relative level compared to the general population*, meaning whether it is higher, lower or equal to the social benefits the general population are entitled to.

It is outside the scope of this project to map financial benefits given to persons who have had their protection application rejected and irregular immigrants.

In the first part, we document the financial assistance that protection seekers were entitled to during the application period – from when they had registered an application for protection and before they were granted a decision. We map differences between those who received accommodation through public assistance and those who self-settled (lived privately or found their own accommodation).

In the second part, we focus on the rights of those who have been granted protection and a legal residence permit. We classify whether the countries had specialised integration benefits or provided regular social benefits, if the benefits were means-tested or not, and if the countries operated using different financial rights depending on protection statuses (particularly for displaced persons from Ukraine).

### 12.1 Financial assistance during the application process



Table 12.1: Financial assistance to protection seekers during the application process, 2015–June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WHEN ACCOMMODATED WITH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE</b>	National fixed rates for pocket money to cover costs (depending on age, family situation, food in reception centre).	National fixed rates for pocket money to cover costs (depending on age, family situation, food in reception centre).	National fixed rates for pocket money to cover costs (depending on age, family situation, food in reception centre).	National fixed rates for pocket money to cover costs (depending on age, family situation, food in reception centre).	All applicants got a specialised subsidy called “Basic Welfare Support”. Applicants in public accommodation received pocket money, but service providers should cover specific services and products.	National fixed rates for pocket money to cover costs (depending on age, family situation, food in reception centre).	Combination of in-kind benefits and cash benefits, varying between types of accommodation and regions. Overall amount depended on family situation and age. After 15 months, access to regular social benefits even if application process was not decided.	Asylum system applicants: National fixed rates for subsistence. Pocket money only for those accommodated in hotels. Distinct rules for specific schemes.
<b>SPECIAL CONDITIONS WHEN SELF-SETTLED?</b>	Applicants who self-settle forfeited the right to pocket money and other financial assistance. May apply for exemptions, but applicability was subject to strict criteria.	Applicants who lived with other friends/family retain the right to certain financial support, but not those who lived alone or with spouse.	Similar rights to pocket money but had to cover their own accommodation.	Similar rights to pocket money but had to cover their own accommodation.	Those who self-settled received Basic Welfare Support. They were not entitled to receive pocket money, but got a contribution for rent, calculated as a fixed sum.	Applicants got a fixed rate per day (level depending on number of household members). The rate was higher than pocket money for applicants who lived in reception centres but should also cover accommodation.	Applicants got a monthly payment (depending on family situation and age) to cover necessary needs.	Asylum system applicants: Self-settled only entitled to subsistence support. Distinct rules for specific schemes.
<b>CHANGES FROM 2015 TO 2021</b>	20% reduction of pocket money for all protection seekers.	New "jewellery law" and 10% reduction in pocket money.	No change	No change	Increase in monthly care expenses (between 7-19%) and rent subsidies for those who self-settle (25%).	Minor adjustments in levels.	Increased use of in-kind benefits (instead of cash benefits) and reduced financial assistance for personal needs by about 5.5%.	Altered calculation system for financial benefits from differentiated system with different rates to one rate for all.
<b>CHANGE FROM 2022</b>	50% raise in pocket money for all protection seekers.	No change	No change	No change	Increased to adjust for inflation.	Minor adjustments in levels.	Increased to adjust for inflation.	No, but distinct rules for specific schemes.

Table 12.1 shows that if the applicant lived in the reception centre or through other accommodation systems provided by the public (e.g., the UK does not have reception centres), all countries operated with nationally fixed rates for pocket money in some format. The rates normally varied depending on the applicants' age, family situation and whether the reception centre serves food or not. There were some differences in what expenses the pocket money was meant to cover, and whether the applicant could apply for additional funds for specific needs. In Norway, the pocket money was supposed to cover almost all expenses, and there were very few arrangements for applying for additional assistance for specific extra expenses. In Austria, the applicant received pocket money, but the service provider for the reception centres had to provide clothing, transport costs, education services and education material, etc. In Finland, it was possible to apply for supplementary reception allowance to cover special needs, such as medication or provisions for children. In Sweden, the applicant could apply for extra services such as emergency dental care and winter clothes. In Poland, the protection seeker would also have rights to get necessary transport covered (to participate in the asylum procedure, to receive medical treatment or on other special grounds).

The countries differed whether the fixed financial grants for protection seekers were automatically index regulated, or that the level was fixed in regulations that need active decisions to adjust rates. For example, in Finland, the fixed grants were index regulated, so the level of the allowance was adjusted automatically in response to the economic situation. However, in Sweden, Germany, Austria, Norway and Poland, the level of the daily allowance had a stable fixed rate (not index regulated), implying that the government had to make active decisions if they were to keep up with inflation, and often implying a de facto decrease compared to living costs. In the UK, they increased the pocket money annually, however, the raises did not keep up with the rate of inflation.

In all countries, the financial benefits for protection seekers before being granted protection were set at a lower level than general social benefits would normally include.

### 12.1.1 Conditional financial rights when living privately?

The countries had very different financial arrangements for applicants who lived privately or arranged their own accommodation during the application process.

In Sweden and Finland, applicants who self-settled had the same rights to pocket money and financial assistance, but they had to cover their own accommodation expenses.

Norway and Denmark restricted financial rights if the applicant lived outside of the public reception system. In Norway, asylum-seekers normally forfeited their access to free accommodation and pocket money if they opted out of the public reception system. However, there was an exception, a system called 'alternative reception placement' (AMOT), where the asylum seeker could apply to live outside of the regular reception system without losing rights to financial aid. However, there were very strict criteria for application, and it was not widely applied for. Under the AMOT system, the applicant would be able to get necessary financial benefits, but the assistance was not nationally regulated and would be based on a means-tested evaluation. In Denmark, living privately also had consequences for financial allowances, and it depended on the applicants' living arrangements. Applicants who lived alone or with their spouses did not have rights to financial assistance. Applicants who settled with other family or friends retained rights to certain financial support.

Contrary to the Norwegian and Danish examples, in Poland, applicants who self-settled were entitled to higher financial assistance than those living through public assistance, through

fixed-rate pocket money per day (level depending on how many lived in the household). Although this pocket money was considerably higher than the level an applicant would get if they lived in reception centres, this pocket money would naturally also cover accommodation costs.

Other countries restricted some financial assistance when people self-settled, while also providing specific assistance to cover other expenses. In Austria, persons who self-settled were entitled to most of the financial assistance other protection seekers had, but they did not receive pocket money. Contrary to many other countries, applicants in Austria who self-settled were, however, entitled to a contribution towards rent, calculated as a fixed sum subsidy.

In Germany, applicants who lived privately got a monthly payment (depending on family situation and age) to cover necessary needs. In the UK, applicants could apply for a special subsistence-only support if self-settled.

### 12.1.2 Restrictions in 2015/16 and raised levels in 2022/23

In 2015, Denmark, Norway and Germany restricted the rights to or level of financial benefits. The Danish government introduced one of the most controversial regulations in 2015 – which was criticised by national and international actors – namely the “jewellery regulation” which gave the police authority to confiscate protection seekers’ jewellery and other valuables exceeding €1340 (there were some exceptions for items that had ‘sentimental value’, e.g., wedding rings etc.). Further, the Danish government also reduced the cash allowances for asylum seekers by 10% in order to make it less attractive to be an asylum seeker in Denmark. In Norway, in a large cross-partisan compromise, the pocket money provided to asylum seekers was reduced by 20%, to “ensure that the level of benefits for asylum seekers does not make Norway appear economically attractive in relation to comparable European countries” (Asylforliket 2015). In 2015, Germany increased the use of in-kind benefits instead of cash benefits, and in 2016, the financial assistance for personal needs was reduced by approximately 5,5%.

As a contrast to these reductions, Austria stands out as the only country that increased the financial benefits given to the target group during this period. Those who self-settled got an 25% increase in rent subsidies and an increase in the monthly care expenses.

In the UK, the calculation system for financial benefits was changed in 2015. The differentiated system providing different rates depending on characteristics such as age or household type was replaced with a single flat rate payment for all destitute asylum seekers.

As a contrast to the examples of reduced financial benefits in 2015/16 (with Austria as an exception), many countries increased the financial subsidies for protection seekers in 2022/23. As mentioned, Norway reduced the pocket money given to protection seekers by 20% in 2015. During the spring and summer of 2022, several new articles (focusing on displaced persons from Ukraine) raised the question of the low financial benefits given to protection seekers during the application process. As part of the general 2023 budget process, the government raised the financial benefit for protection seekers by 50%. This raise in financial benefits did, however, cover all protection seekers, not only displaced persons from Ukraine. Germany and Austria also raised the level for some financial arrangements as a response to inflation.

In most countries, displaced persons from Ukraine had the same rights as other protection applicants before they were granted a residence permit. However, in all countries, the

registration and/or application process for most displaced persons from Ukraine was relatively short, thus, the analysis of the financial assistance given to this group is mainly relevant when comparing the rights of those who have been granted a residence permit, which is analysed in the next section.

## 12.2 Financial assistance after granted protection

Table 12.2 describes the rights to financial assistance for persons who have been granted protection (or a type of visa scheme). We present how the eight countries differed concerning the financial assistance they provided to protection holders concerning 1) whether they provided specialised or regular financial assistance, and 2) whether this was a fixed-rate individual benefit or means-tested, and 3) if there have been changes to these regulations during the period of analysis, 4) whether financial assistance differed between protection statuses (and particularly for displaced persons from Ukraine),

Table 12.2: Financial assistance given to protection holders, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF FINANCIAL BENEFITS</b>	Introduction programme participants received an individual and specialised financial benefit linked to programme participation.	Introduction programme participants received a means-tested benefits, but at lower levels than regular social benefits (as of 2015).	Introduction programme participants received an individual and specialised financial benefit linked to programme participation.	Protection holders got regular means-tested social benefits.	Financial assistance varied depending on 1) protection status and 2) regional practices (either specialised "Basic Welfare Support" or regular means-tested benefits).	Persons receiving a 1-year integration programme got monthly cash transfer (higher than regular social benefits). Regular social assistance afterwards available for all.	Protection holders got regular means-tested social benefits.	Protection holders generally got regular means-tested social benefits, but some protection holders were entitled to specialised one-year integration benefits.
<b>MEANS-TESTED OR NOT?</b>	Individual integration benefit during introduction programme (thereafter means-tested)	Means-tested	Individual integration benefit during introduction programme (thereafter means-tested)	Means-tested	Means-tested	Integration programme benefit not means-tested (fixed rate depending on a family size). Other assistance means-tested.	Means-tested	Means-tested (but individual for some statuses).
<b>SPECIALISED INTEGRATION BENEFIT OR REGULAR SOCIAL BENEFITS</b>	Specialised integration benefit during programme participation, then regular benefits.	Specialised integration benefit if not residence in Denmark last 7 out of 8 years.	Specialised integration benefit during programme participation, then regular benefits.	Regular social benefits.	Depending on region and protection status.	Specialised integration benefit during programme participation, then regular benefits.	Regular social benefits.	Both. Different rights for different statuses.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>CHANGES FROM 2015-2021</b>	2016 and 2019: No changes in introduction benefit, but restrictions in access to other social benefits.	2015: Reduced the level of integration benefits. Restrictions in access to other social benefits.	No	No	2017: Financial assistance conditioned on participation in integration measures. Restricted rights for some statuses in selected regions.	No	No	No
<b>DIFFERENT RIGHTS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE AFTER 2022</b>	No	No	Yes, displaced persons from Ukraine continued on asylum seeker benefits after granted protection (at lower levels than other protection holders).	Yes, displaced persons from Ukraine continued on asylum seeker benefits the first year of residence (lower levels than other protection holders).	Yes, displaced persons from Ukraine continued on asylum seekers benefits (lower levels than other protection holders).	Displaced persons from Ukraine did not have access to integration programmes/benefits, but mainly to regular social benefits system.	No	Displaced persons from Ukraine were included in the regular social benefits system.

## 12.2.1 Specialised or regular, means-tested or fixed level benefits?

Financial benefits to those who had been granted protection differed concerning 1) whether they were means-tested or an individual right, and 2) whether the country operated with a specialised integration benefit or if the protection holder was streamlined into the regular social benefits system.

In Finland, Germany and Denmark, the financial rights were means-tested. Protection holders in Finland and Germany were included in the regular welfare system and were entitled to the same means-tested benefits as the general population. In Denmark, however, compared to other residents, the *level* of the financial assistance for refugees and their families have been subject to constant changes since 1999, with periods where protection holders have received about 35-50% lower levels than regular social benefits. This reduced “integration benefit” has been subject to political disagreement over the years and was removed by the left-wing government in office in 2011-2015. However, it was reintroduced when the new centre-right government took office in June 2015 (and remained since).

Norway, Sweden and Poland operated with an individual integration benefit which was given the first initial year(s), and which was conditional on participation in an integration programme. These integration benefits were given at fixed rates and were often higher than regular social benefits. In Norway and Sweden, this specialised integration benefit was given irrespective of the participant’s or the participant’s family’s financial situation, and it was exclusively linked to participation in the integration programme. The justification for this individual financial benefit has been to increase the participation of women in integration programmes (programmes that mainly aim to enable labour market participation) (Hernes and Tronstad 2014). In Poland, persons who received the one-year integration programme were entitled to a monthly cash transfer that was higher than regular social benefits. For those who don’t participate in this programme (and after the first year), regular means-tested social assistance applied.

The UK is split, as they provided specialised integration benefits for protection holders under some protection schemes, while the others got general means-tested social assistance similar to the general population. Contrary to Norway, Sweden and Poland, the specialised integration benefits in the UK were not higher than regular social benefits.

In Austria, financial assistance to protection holders was means-tested, but also varied depending on 1) protection status and 2) different regional rules and practices for support (see Austrian Country Report for details and examples).

## 12.2.2 Changes from 2015 to 2021

Three countries introduced new restrictions of the protection seekers’ right to financial assistance after the high influx of protection seekers in 2015: Denmark, Norway and Austria.

Along with the reductions mentioned above in financial rights for asylum seekers, both Norway and Denmark introduced restrictions for protection holders’ access to other social benefits.

In 2016, Norway introduced a five-year residence requirement for parents to receive cash benefits for their 1–2-year-olds (*kontantstøtten*), naturally excluding newly arrived protection holders during their initial years of residence. In the 2016 policy process, several other restrictions were proposed, but not implemented. However, most of these restrictions were later introduced in 2019 (see Norwegian country report for details about the policy process).

Previously, protection holders had exceptions from minimum residence requirements to receive benefits such as pensions, permanent disability benefits, employment verification allowance, and other particular benefits, based on their needs and the particular situation of protection seekers. With the new changes, those who were previously eligible for those benefits now had to apply for a means-tested supplementary benefit scheme, which involved more frequent applications, restrictions on stays abroad, and would often imply a generally lower level of support. The government also tightened the residence requirement from three to five years for old-age pension, disability benefit, employment verification allowance, benefits for surviving spouse, child pension and allowance for single parents.

In 2015, Denmark also removed an existing clause that exempted refugees from normal residence requirements to be eligible to receive pensions and different child benefits. Further, the new centre-right Danish government reintroduced the 'integration benefit' – a lower financial assistance for persons that had not lived the last seven out of eight years in Denmark, with the explicit intention of targeting immigrants and refugees. The reduction involved up to 50% less than ordinary social benefits.

In Austria, in 2015, new restrictions to receive regular means-tested social benefits were introduced, but again, it differed between regions and protection statuses. In Upper Austria, refugees with the initial three-year permit and subsidiary protection holders were denied access to the regular social benefits system and continued on the lower-level Basic Welfare Support. Upper Austria also introduced an "integration bonus" on top of this lower assistance, but it was made conditional on proof of integration. Lower Austria excluded subsidiary protection holders from regular means-tested benefits. On the national level, the Integration Act of 2017 rendered participation to integration courses a necessary condition to receive financial assistance across all states.

### 12.2.3 Changes in 2022 for displaced persons from Ukraine

The eight countries had very different rules concerning financial assistance for displaced persons from Ukraine who had been granted protection (or a permit through a special visa scheme in the UK). They differ concerning whether they: 1) got included into the regular social benefits system (similar to the general population), 2) had similar rights as other protection seekers that had been granted protection, 3) continued to receive financial assistance equal to other asylum seekers, and lastly, 4) received customised arrangements.

Firstly, in the UK and Germany, displaced persons from Ukraine were entitled to regular social benefits (if eligible), similar to the general population and other protection seekers that had been granted protection.

Secondly, in Denmark and Norway, displaced persons from Ukraine were covered by the same rules as for other protection statuses, implying an individualised integration benefit in Norway and a means-tested integration benefit in Denmark.

Thirdly, in Sweden, Austria and Finland, those granted temporary protection continued to be covered by the same financial assistance as asylum seekers were subject to. However, in Finland, displaced persons from Ukraine would transition to get rights to regular social benefits after one year of residence.

Fourthly, in Poland, displaced persons from Ukraine received a small one-time allowance from the central government programme, but the amount was rather insignificant. Additionally, since Poland has received a disproportionately high share of protection seekers in 2022/23, UNHCR also provided special cash programmes for selected groups of people in



difficult financial situations. In the first year after the full-scale invasion, displaced persons from Ukraine were eligible for regular social benefits, however, new restrictive measures were introduced from May 2023 for people housed in mass accommodation centres. The new rules introduced maximum limits to how much assistance a person could receive after 120 and 180 days. 120 days after first entry, the person had to cover 50% of the costs of assistance provided to him/her in the mass accommodation centre, and 75% after 180 days. Poland also had a special financial arrangement for non-Ukrainian citizens covered by the temporary protection directive (third country nationals according to the TPD) (see Polish country report for details).

#### 12.2.4 Different financial rights depending on protection statuses?

Holding displaced persons from Ukraine out of the equation (see description of their rights above), Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Finland and Germany provided similar rights to financial assistance across other protection statuses. The UK and Austria, however, had special regulations for different statuses.

The UK operated with multiple types of protection schemes, and these protection schemes were linked to different rights and entitlements (see country report for details). As mentioned above, this also applied to financial rights, as protection holders under some schemes were entitled to specialised integration benefits.

As mentioned, in Austria, financial assistance to protection holders varied depending on 1) protection status and 2) different regional rules and practices for support. For example, those with subsidiary protection and humanitarian protection could be eligible for different types of social assistance and lower levels than those with refugee status. Further, different regions could apply different schemes to different groups, and generally had varying levels for means-tested benefits (see Austrian country report for details and examples).

### 12.3 Summary

The eight countries differed concerning the rights to financial assistance that they provided 1) to protection seekers during the application process, and 2) to protection holders after protection (or a visa) was granted.

Concerning rights during the application process (before protection was granted), the analysis shows that some countries differentiated rights related to whether the applicant lived in reception centres or in other accommodation systems provided by the public sector, or whether they found their own accommodation during the application period. Firstly, for those who got accommodation with public assistance, all countries operated with nationally fixed rates for pocket money in some format. The rates normally varied depending on the applicants' age, family situation and whether the reception centre served food or not. There were cross-national differences in what expenses the pocket money was meant to cover, and whether the applicant could apply for additional funds for specific needs. Secondly, the right to financial assistance to those who found their own accommodation during the application process differed. Most countries provided some sort of financial assistance when settled, but Denmark and Norway had the most restrictive criteria to be eligible for such financial assistance.

The countries differed on whether the fixed financial grants for protection seekers were index-regulated automatically, or whether the level was fixed in regulations that need active

decisions to adjust rates. Generally, the financial benefits for protection seekers before being granted protection were also set at lower levels than the level of general social benefits.

As a response to the situation in 2015/16, Denmark, Norway and Germany restricted the rights to or level of the financial benefits, for example, by reducing the amount of pocket money. As a contrast to these reductions, Austria stands out as the only country that increased (once) the financial benefits given to the target group during this period (to partially adjust for inflation and raise a low benefit). In contrast to the examples of reduced financial benefits in 2015/16 (with Austria as an exception), some countries increased the financial subsidies for protection seekers in 2022/23. Norway increased the pocket money given to protection seekers by 50%, and Germany and Austria also raised the level of some financial arrangements as a response to inflation.

Concerning financial benefits for those who had been granted protection (or a visa), the countries differed concerning 1) whether the financial assistance was means-tested or an individual right, and 2) whether the country operated with a specialised integration benefit or if the protection holder was streamlined into the regular social benefits system.

In Finland, Germany and Denmark, the financial rights were means-tested. Protection holders in Finland and Germany were included in the regular welfare system and were entitled to the same means-tested benefits as the general population, but Denmark introduced a lower means-tested benefit than for the general population in 2015. Norway, Sweden and Poland operated with an individual integration benefit which was given during the first year(s) and which was conditional on participation in an integration programme. These integration benefits were given at fixed rates and were often higher than regular social benefits. The UK was split, as they provided specialised integration benefits for protection holders under some protection schemes, while the others got general means-tested social assistance similar to the general population. In Austria, financial assistance given to protection holders was means-tested, but also varied depending on 1) protection status and 2) different regional rules and practices for support. After 2015 and until 2021, three countries introduced new restrictions of the protection seekers' right to financial assistance (Denmark, Norway and Austria).

However, the eight countries introduced very different rules concerning financial assistance for displaced persons from Ukraine who had been granted protection or a visa. Four different solutions were introduced, concerning whether displaced persons from Ukraine: 1) were included into the regular social benefits system, similar to the general population (UK and Germany), 2) had similar rights as other protection seekers that had been granted protection (Denmark and Norway), 3) continued to receive financial assistance equal to other asylum seekers even after granted protection (Sweden, Austria and Finland during the first year of residence), and lastly, 4) received customised arrangements (in addition to being included in the regular welfare system) (Poland).

Summarised, the analysis shows that in several countries, displaced persons from Ukraine receive fewer rights to or lower levels of financial support compared to other protection holders that have been granted a residence permit. If we hold displaced persons from Ukraine out of the equation, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Finland and Germany provided similar rights to financial assistance across other protection statuses. The UK and Austria, however, differentiated rights depending on status.

## 13 Healthcare services

Did the countries differ concerning what type of health care services protection applicants and holders were entitled to? Were these rights different before (during the application process) and after being granted protection, and did they differ depending on the type of protection status?

Different international regulations address protection seekers and beneficiaries' access to healthcare in host countries. For example, the 1951 Refugee Convention states that refugees should have access to the same or similar healthcare as host populations, and the TPD states that medical care should be provided to displaced persons from Ukraine, but that the full scope of coverage depends on the decision of national authorities (European Commission 2022).

The eight countries analysed generally have different healthcare systems and rights for the general population, e.g., concerning the level of public universal healthcare coverage. Thus, the comparative analysis does not aim to compare absolute rights and coverage but focuses on whether the protection applicants and holders have equal access – or restricted rights – to healthcare services compared to other residents in the country.

It is outside the scope of this project to analyse rights for persons who have had their application for protection rejected and for irregular migrants. Further, although many countries experienced capacity challenges during the high influxes of protection seekers, we do not compare such challenges, but only document (changes in) rights to health care (but some country reports address these challenges).

In this chapter, we present a comparative analysis of rights 1) before being granted protection (during the application process) and 2) after being granted protection. Table 13.1 describes the healthcare rights of protection applicants *during* the application process, while Table 13.2 describes the healthcare rights of protection applicants *after* being granted protection.

Table 13.1: Access to healthcare during application process, 2015-June 2023.

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>EMERGENCY</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>PRIMARY AND SPECIALIST</b>	No, only for minors.	No, only for minors.	No, only for minors.	Yes, in urgent and necessary cases.	Yes	Yes, with minor modifications.	No, but regular access after 15 months (prolonged to 18 months from 2019).	Yes

Table 13.2: Access to healthcare after granted protection, 2015-June 2023

	<b>NORWAY</b>	<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>
<b>EMERGENCY</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>PRIMARY AND SPECIALIST</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes, however adult displaced persons from Ukraine do not get access (only minors).	Yes	Yes	Yes, with minor modifications.	Yes	Yes

## 13.1 Access to health care before being granted protection

After registration and during the application process, all protection seekers had the right to emergency healthcare in all countries, and the countries operated with certain exceptions (e.g., access to services related to childbirth, etc., see country reports for details). However, they differ concerning whether the applicants also have the right to primary and specialist healthcare in this initial period.

In the three Scandinavian countries, adult protection seekers do not have access to primary and specialist healthcare before they are granted a permit. However, children have the same rights as other residents, implying that they have full access to primary and specialist healthcare during the application process. In Finland, asylum seekers are entitled to initial health check-ups, screening examinations for infectious diseases, vaccinations and urgent and necessary medical care, which could also cover primary and specialist health care. The reception centres had nurses who could refer the clients onwards in the system.

In Poland, the UK and Austria, all groups of protection seekers had the right to primary and specialist healthcare also during the application process (Poland only has minor restrictions concerning access to so-called “spa treatment”).

In Germany, protection seekers only had access to emergency care, but after 15 months of stay in Germany – if the asylum-procedure was still pending – access to the regular health scheme was granted. In 2019, the period in which protection-seekers had the right to reduced services was extended from 15 to 18 months.

There have been no changes in these rights in the period analysed (except for the minor change described in the German case in 2019), and there are no differences between different groups of protection applicants.

## 13.2 Access to health care after granted protection

After being granted protection, all countries provided the protection holder with full access to both primary and specialist healthcare, more or less on par with other residents. There were some examples of minor restrictions in rights compared to other residents. For example, in Poland, protection beneficiaries did not have the same rights to spa treatments, health treatment abroad, and reimbursement for health treatment abroad based on 'transborder' directives, but all in all, they had access to the primary and specialist healthcare services.

The only major exception was Sweden's restricted rights for displaced persons from Ukraine. Displaced persons from Ukraine in Sweden continued to be covered by asylum-seeker rights even after they were granted protection, meaning that they did not transition to get the rights that other groups of protection seekers get after a positive decision on their application. Thus, contrary to the other countries, adult displaced persons from Ukraine in Sweden were only entitled to emergency healthcare even after they were granted temporary protection.

Except for the Swedish exception with restricted rights for displaced persons from Ukraine, the countries offer similar healthcare rights to all groups of protection holders. Otherwise, healthcare rights have remained unchanged in the period from 2015-2023.

### 13.3 Summary

In all countries, all protection seekers were entitled to emergency healthcare during the application period, but minors also had full access to primary and specialist healthcare services. Poland, the UK and Austria also provided full rights to primary and specialist health care for adults during the application period, but the Scandinavian countries did not (and only partly Finland). In Germany, protection seekers only had access to emergency care, but after 15 months (18 months from 2019) of stay in Germany – if the asylum-procedure was still pending – access to the regular health scheme was granted.

After being granted protection, all countries provided legal residence permits holders with full access to both primary and specialist healthcare, more or less on par with other residents (with some minor exceptions). There were no major changes in healthcare rights for protection seekers during the period of analysis. The only was Sweden's restricted rights for displaced persons from Ukraine, who were only entitled to emergency healthcare even after they were granted protection.

It is important to emphasise that this analysis only documented the rights and access to healthcare services and did not assess whether these rights had been fulfilled in practice (which have been a challenge in several countries, particularly during situations of high influxes).

## 14 Pre-school and mandatory schooling for minors

What rights did protection applicants and holders who are minors have to pre-school and mandatory schooling? What alterations have the countries made to accommodate education for minors in times of high influxes?

Children in European countries have the right and obligation to education, but the scope and details may vary. For example, the countries differ concerning what general rights children have to pre-school, for example, if it is partly mandatory or not, state subsidies and funding schemes, etc. Further, the age range and number of years of mandatory schooling differs cross-nationally. In this context we use the term “pre-school” to refer to early childhood education i.e., day care/kindergarten and “mandatory school” to the primary (and secondary) school which is the standard in each of the eight countries (see country reports for more details).

In this comparative chapter, we do not compare protection-seeking minors’ *absolute* rights across countries, because such differences may just reflect general cross-national differences in the education system. Instead, the comparative analysis compares if protection-seeking minors have similar rights and obligations to participate in the host-country’s school system compared to other children residing in the country.

In the first part of this chapter, we map and compare the rights protection-seeking minors had to pre-school and mandatory schooling. In the second part, we present examples of how the countries have adjusted existing regulations and introduced new solutions to accommodate for a high increase of new pupils during the situations in 2015/16 and 2022/23.

### 14.1 Access to pre-school and mandatory school

Table 14.1 shows whether minors had rights to preschool and mandatory education on par with the general population, focusing on whether these rights were given already during the application process, or whether these rights started after protection was granted.

Table 14.1: Rights to preschool and mandatory schooling (compared to the general population), 2015-June 2023

	NORWAY	DENMARK	SWEDEN	FINLAND	AUSTRIA	POLAND	GERMANY	UNITED KINGDOM
<b>RIGHTS TO PRE-SCHOOL</b>	After granted protection	After granted protection	Yes	Not to all before granted protection, but some exceptions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>RIGHTS TO MANDATORY SCHOOLING</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 14.1 shows that the majority of the countries – Sweden, UK, Germany, Poland and Austria – provided similar rights to pre-school as other residents already during the application stage. In Finland, the municipalities were not generally obligated to provide preschool to all minors awaiting their application decision but were obligated to arrange

preschool if the child's parent or guardian was employed or enrolled in studies, or if attending kindergarten was deemed vital for the child. In Norway and Denmark, protection applicants did not have the right to attend preschool before they were granted a residence permit, but the municipalities could provide these services voluntarily. After a protection permit was granted, however, Norway and Denmark provided protection holders with equal rights to preschool as the general population. The rights to preschool were similar across different protection categories in all countries and have remained unchanged during the period of analysis.

## 14.2 Access to mandatory education

In all the countries, minors who had been granted a protection and residence permit had the same rights and obligations to participate in the mandatory school system as other children in the host country.

As table 14.1 shows, in all of the countries, these rights and obligations started already during the application process. However, in Germany, children have the right, but are not obligated to attend a school if they still live in an initial reception centre in most regions. These equal rights to schooling have not changed after 2015 and do not distinguish between different groups of protection seekers (but see some exceptions in the *format* of education for displaced persons from Ukraine in chapter 14.3.2).

The countries differed concerning who provided the education and regulations concerning the organisation of schooling for newly arrived children. Normally, the municipalities were responsible for providing primary education even during the application phase, but in Denmark and Poland, children who resided at reception/detention centres got schooling at the centres.

Many countries also operated with the possibility of using reception or welcome classes for newly arrived minors. In Norway and Denmark, pupils could be in such reception classes for an initial period where the student does not speak the host-country language adequately, and for a maximum of up to two years. Similar arrangements were introduced in Poland in 2016, where Polish schools were given the possibility to organise preparatory classes for foreign pupils who do not know the Polish language to a sufficient degree. Austria introduced special, separate "German remedial classes" in 2018/19 for children who could not follow classes held in German, where only subjects like music or sports were taught with the other students in the regular school system. In Finland, the Finnish National Agency for Education issued guidelines in 2015 detailing the principles for the instruction preparing for basic education. The municipalities should – in dialogue with the school and parents – plan how to provide initial education as a path to the "regular" Finnish education system, e.g., by offering language courses and special assistance.

Poland had also introduced additional support for all non-Polish speaking children. They are entitled to minimum two hours of additional free Polish language classes per week, compensatory classes, and assistance from a teacher's assistant who knows the mother tongue of a child, for maximum twelve months. Compensatory classes allowed pupils to get six hours of Polish language classes per week and to catch up on curriculum.



## 14.3 Government responses to tackle the sudden rise in protection-seeking minors in the education system

Although the countries have not made any major alternations concerning the right and obligations to education for children before and after being granted protection status, they have introduced several amendments and measures to tackle capacity challenges caused by the sudden increase in newcomers entering the education system during the high influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23.

The following sections exemplify alternative amendments or measures in the education system that the countries have introduced to tackle the high increases of newly arrived children. It has not been within the scope of this project to conduct a systematic comparison of all measures within the education system (also because these measures are often initiated at the local level). The following examples are therefore not meant as a complete list or comparison between countries, but rather illustrative examples of different amendments and solutions.

### 14.3.1 Easing standards or requirements in existing regulations

Faced with a high increase in children that were entitled to mandatory education, several countries made amendments to the existing regulations concerning requirements or minimum standards in the provision of education for newly arrived children.

Firstly, some countries have amended regulations concerning reception/welcome classes. For example, Denmark increased the maximum class size for reception classes and age range within the same class both in 2015 and 2022. Further, Denmark made it possible to organise reception classes across municipal borders. Sweden also issued regulations on the organisational level of introductory classes and changed regulations for the number of classes or teaching hours for students. In Norway, the general rule was that participation in a reception class required consent from either the students themselves or the student's legal guardian. However, in 2022 a temporary legislative change allowed municipalities to place students in such reception classes, if necessary, without the consent of the student or legal guardian.

Secondly, as an expansion of the above-mentioned reception classes, in 2016, Denmark allowed municipalities to establish special primary schools for bilingual children who required specific language support and therefore couldn't participate in regular classes. These special primary schools could be created as an alternative or a supplement to reception classes. Municipalities were granted significant liberty to organise education according to local priorities and needs, including class sizes, instructional hours, and teacher qualifications. However, students were only to attend these special schools for a maximum of two years, and the goal was for students to transfer to regular classes as quickly as possible.

Thirdly, another strategy to be able to increase capacity has been to ease regulations concerning the housing standard regulations for (pre-)schools: In Poland, to be able to better provide kindergarten for children from Ukraine, preschool institutions could be exceptionally created in areas that do not completely fulfil regular housing conditions. Denmark also granted a temporary provision to deviate from area and ventilation requirements in pre-school and primary school facilities.

Fourthly, Norway eased the deadline for when the municipalities were obligated to provide education to newcomers. Prior to 2015, the current legislation obligated the municipalities to

ensure that newly arrived children receive adequate education from the day after they arrived in the country (a requirement that was rarely met and more of an ideal than actual practice). The high influx in 2015 highlighted this unrealistic deadline, and in 2017, this municipal obligation was extended to provide schooling “as soon as possible and no later than within one month after arrival”. In 2022, a temporary amendment further extended this deadline to three months.

### 14.3.2 Special amendments and solutions for minors from Ukraine with temporary protection

As the influx in 2022/23 included a higher number of minors compared to earlier influxes – in addition to the temporary aspect of the permits for displaced children from Ukraine –, several countries introduced new solutions to accommodate schooling for minors from Ukraine.

First of all, some countries made arrangements for Ukrainian children to follow Ukrainian online schooling. In Austria, online-courses were offered both from the Ukrainian schooling system as well as the Austrian government. Germany also allowed Ukrainian online schooling and accommodated for students to take test to access universities in Ukraine. In Poland, parents or a guardian could submit a declaration to the local authorities stating that a minor could continue online studies in the Ukrainian school system, which meant that a pupil did not have to attend a Polish school. It was reported in May 2023 that only around 44% of Ukrainian pupils residing in Poland attended Polish schools. Some Ukrainian pupils only attended Polish schools; some combined online classes through the Ukrainian schooling system in addition to, or instead of, Polish schooling.

Denmark granted permission to use Ukrainian or English as the language of instruction (except for the Danish subject), and to make use of remote learning, including remote education offered by Ukrainian educational authorities. In August 2022, an act was adopted granting Danish municipalities the authority to establish separate primary schools for children and youth from Ukraine who have been granted temporary residence. The arrangement was structured similarly to the Act on special schools from 2016 (see above) and shares many similarities. The difference was that special schools under the new act were reserved for Ukrainian children and had a specific focus on maintaining their connection to Ukrainian language and culture. In terms of academic content, the instruction should have equivalent learning objectives as regular schools and similarly qualify students for further education. Parents could choose to let their children stay in special schools for Ukrainians even after they were ready to transfer to ordinary primary schools. Additionally, if desired, parents could choose to enrol their child in a regular primary school instead of a special school (freedom of school choice). Denmark also made amendments to the Childcare Act, allowing municipalities to establish special childcare facilities for Ukrainian children. Such special facilities were to be reserved for children from Ukraine and may have Ukrainian as the primary language and were exempted from the general requirements of the educational curriculum (but while also introducing the children to Danish language and society).

Secondly, some countries have eased formal requirements to be able to hire Ukrainian speaking teachers and assistants. In Austria, the introduction of "German remedial classes", integrated Ukrainian-language elements to supplement classes, for example through Ukrainian teachers or teaching associates. To hire Ukrainian speaking teachers and assistants, they made it possible to lower the German speaking requirements or have them provide proof at a later date. Germany also introduced lowered requirements to employ short-term and provisory Ukrainian teaching personnel (qualifications and clearance

certificate could be declaration-based). Poland introduced a new law that enabled the employment of Ukrainian teachers who know Polish language to support minors.

Thirdly, some countries prepared for future amendments – allowing for exceptions in existing regulations: In Denmark, the Special Act contains a regulatory provision granting the Minister for Immigration and Integration the authority to establish temporary rules which also includes laws on education. It would be applicable only in highly exceptional situations where important functions and tasks were under pressure. The temporary rules could only be established for a specified period and had to be repealed as soon as there was no longer a basis for maintaining the exemptions. In Norway, a temporary provision was adopted which authorises administrative authorities to adopt regulation which further extends the time-limit to provide education to newly arrived immigrants. Such an extension could only be adopted in extraordinary situations due to the number of displaced children from Ukraine proving to be very high. This regulatory provision had not yet been utilised as of June 2023.

## 14.4 Summary

Concerning rights to attend pre-school, all countries provided similar rights to pre-school for children who had been granted protection. Most countries also offered similar rights to pre-school during the application process for protection-seeking minors, but in Norway and Denmark, pre-school was not a right until after protection was granted. In Finland, pre-school was generally not a right before protection was granted, but specific conditions could lead to such an entitlement.

In all the countries, protection seeking minors had the same rights and obligations to participate in the mandatory school system as other children in the host country. In Germany, children had the right, but were not obligated to participate during the first three months if they lived in a reception centre. These equal rights to schooling did not change after 2015 and did not distinguish between different groups of protection seekers. However, the countries had different practices concerning whether the municipalities were responsible for providing primary education, or if children who resided at reception/detention centres got schooling at the centres (Denmark and Poland). Many countries also operated with the possibility of using reception or welcome classes for newly arrived minors.

Although the countries did not make any major alternations concerning the right and obligations to education for children, they introduced several amendments and measures to tackle capacity challenges caused by the sudden increase in newcomers entering the education system during the high influxes in 2015/16 and 2022/23.

Some countries made amendments to the existing regulations concerning requirements or minimum standards in the provision of education for newly arrived children. These amendments included 1) adjusting regulations concerning reception/welcome classes (e.g., Norway, Sweden and Denmark), 2) establishing special primary schools or pre-schools for bilingual children who required specific language support (Denmark), 3) easing regulations concerning the housing standard for pre-schools and schools (Denmark and Poland) and extending deadlines for when municipalities were obligated to provide education to newcomers (Norway).

As the influx in 2022/23 included a higher number of minors compared to earlier influxes – in addition to the temporary aspect of temporary permits for displaced persons (and minors) from Ukraine –, many new solutions were introduced to accommodate schooling for these minors. Some countries arranged for Ukrainian children to follow Ukrainian online schooling (Poland, Germany, Austria and Denmark). Denmark also granted permission to use

Ukrainian or English as the language of instruction in special classes for Ukrainian children. Further, some countries eased formal requirements to be able to hire Ukrainian speaking teachers and assistants (Germany, Poland and Austria).

Overall, there have been no restrictive policies concerning the rights to pre-school or school for newly arrived minors during the period of analysis, but new temporary amendments were introduced to tackle the high increase of minors entitled to (pre-)school. However, due to the temporary permits of Ukrainian children, some countries made specific amendments for this group.

## 15 Overall trends: towards more restrictive, selective and temporary policies

What were the main trends in asylum, immigration and integration policy developments across the eight European countries and over time?

We want to emphasise that the project's limited timeframe (of only seven months from start-up to finalisation) has limited us in conducting thorough analyses of overall trends. Nevertheless, in this final chapter, we try to synthesise findings across the topics covered in order to identify the main patterns related to the three dimensions presented in the introduction (see chapter 1.2.1): Are integration policies in European countries becoming more 1) liberal/generous or restrictive, 2) selective or universal, and 3) temporary or permanent?

We want to emphasise that the aim of this chapter is not to provide a summary of the whole report (see the section "Summary" at the start of this report for that), but rather to discuss relevant findings for the three analytical dimensions.

### 15.1 More restrictive policies, but a dual approach towards displaced persons from Ukraine

#### 15.1.1 A clear restrictive turn after the high influx in 2015

After the high influxes of protection seekers in 2015/16, all the countries (except Poland which did not experience an increase during this period) introduced different types of restrictive policies. The countries differed in the exact policies and regulations they changed, but overall, there were different types of restrictions within a wide range of policy areas, including protection statuses, duration of permits, legal aid during the application process, permanent residency, family reunification, and financial assistance.

Almost all the studied countries introduced more restrictive policies related to protection statuses after 2015. There were mainly two types of restrictions, namely 1) more restrictive criteria or practice to be eligible for certain protection statuses (Norway, Finland, Sweden and Germany), and 2) introduction of temporary and/or shortened duration of initial protection permits (Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark).

Concerning requirements for obtaining permanent residency, the UK and Finland were the only countries that did not operate with some sort of integration requirements for obtaining permanent residency (e.g., language and civics tests, employment or income requirements, etc.). The other six countries either introduced or tightened existing integration requirements during the years following the 2015 influx. During this period, half of the countries (Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria) also suspended and/or restricted the right to family reunification for those granted subsidiary protection permits. Some countries also reduced the level of financial benefits or restricted access to certain social benefits for protection seekers and beneficiaries (Norway, Denmark, Germany and Austria). In Austria, mobility for those who received financial assistance was restricted, obligating them to live in the state which was in charge of the provision. There were fewer changes related to integration programmes and rights to language and civics courses, but Norway and Germany made civics (Norway) and language (Germany) courses obligatory.

Although there are large cross-national differences in the exact areas and scope of restrictions in this period, all countries moved in a restrictive direction after the high influx in 2015, both as a direct response to the situation in 2015/16 and as part of general policy processes. The rights and access to healthcare, pre-school and mandatory school for children were the only two areas in this analysis where rights and access were not restricted in any of the countries.

### 15.1.2 A mixture of more liberal or more restrictive policies for displaced persons from Ukraine

Several actors in European countries have voiced concern and criticism that displaced persons from Ukraine have been treated differently – and most often better – than other protection seekers (Carrera et al. 2022; Esposito 2022; Haase et al. 2023; Klaus and Jarosz 2023; Klaus, Szulecka 2022; Reilly & Flynn 2022; Zamore 2022; Xhardez & Soennecken 2023). The introduction of collective, temporary permits was in itself an easing of requirements, and made the path to granted protection shorter and less extensive, as it did not require an individual assessment. Although this decision to a large degree was a temporary solution for the European countries to tackle the exceptionally large influxes, the experienced contrast could be stark for other asylum seekers who had to go through a lengthy and often demanding asylum procedure with great uncertainty about the final outcome, and with restricted access to rights until a positive decision had been made.

Although displaced persons from Ukraine in most cases got an easier access and path to granted protection, there were great cross-national differences in their rights and restrictions in the host country after granted protection. The comparative analysis shows the introduction of both more liberal (and/or generous) and more restrictive policies for this group, but it differs across countries and across different policy areas.

In some countries, displaced persons from Ukraine got exemptions from existing restrictive policies or were provided with more liberal rights, for example, regulations related to accommodation and settlement, temporary return, and access to work.

Firstly, several countries introduced more liberal policies for displaced persons from Ukraine related to settlement and intra-national distribution. In Norway and Denmark, regular restrictive requirements or practices for finding one's own accommodation (without losing rights to financial assistance) were eased for this specific group. Other countries excluded this group from the regular distribution system for most asylum seekers (a system that normally (but not for all) imposes restrictions on where the individual could settle in the host country) (Germany and Austria) or introduced specific distribution criteria for this group (Denmark). Whereas other protection seekers are sent to whichever reception centre has places available, the new municipal model in Finland allowed displaced persons fleeing Ukraine to settle where they first arrived, granted that the municipality was willing to make an agreement with an existing reception centre. Thus, although several countries have also had an emphasis on intra-national distribution for this group, the policies have been less intrusive for the individual autonomy to freely decide where to settle, and there has often been a greater possibility for displaced persons to settle near their existing network.

Secondly, in all the countries (except Finland), protection beneficiaries are normally subject to restrictions concerning temporary travels back to their home country, as this may involve a risk of cessation of their protection status. The countries have made exceptions from this restriction for displaced persons from Ukraine, and those who were granted residence

permits were allowed to visit Ukraine without losing their protection status or permit in the host country.

Thirdly, displaced persons from Ukraine have also been granted rapid access to the host country's labour market. Generally, all the countries operated with employment bans during an initial residency period (3-12 months), or other restrictions on protection seekers' right to work before a protection permit was granted. For displaced persons from Ukraine, most countries made exceptions from the regular rules, allowing them to work immediately after registration.

All these exemptions or adjustments provided displaced persons from Ukraine with more rights and access compared to existing rules for other groups of protection seekers and beneficiaries.

In other areas, the comparative analysis shows that displaced persons from Ukraine receive fewer rights and more restricted access to certain services, including a path to permanent residency, integration measures, financial assistance, and healthcare services.

Firstly, although the procedure for being granted collective, temporary protection is less extensive and often considerably shorter than the regular asylum/protection procedure, it is also important to highlight that this permit does not qualify for permanent residency, and residence time spent on this permit does not accrue toward the minimum residence periods required for permanent residence. This restriction implies that displaced persons from Ukraine currently have a permit with more restrictive access to a permanent and secure legal status in the host countries, compared to most other protection statuses.

The temporary perspective of these permits also permeated displaced persons from Ukraine's rights to regular integration measures in several countries. Norway, Finland and Denmark have been the only countries that included displaced persons from Ukraine in the target group for regular integration programmes and language courses targeted at protection beneficiaries, although in some moderated and reduced form in Norway. The other countries have not provided displaced persons from Ukraine with the same rights to integration measures as other groups of protection beneficiaries. In many countries, displaced persons from Ukraine may have some access to language courses and integration measures, but it is not an entitlement as it is for most other groups, and provision is often dependent on non-public efforts or availability, and/or local capacity.

Further, the eight countries had very different approaches to what type (and level) of financial assistance that was given to displaced persons from Ukraine. About half of the countries have given displaced persons from Ukraine similar rights to means-tested social benefits (if eligible) as the general population (Germany, UK and Poland) or included them in the national financial schemes applicable to all protection beneficiaries (Denmark and Norway). The other half provided more restrictive financial rights to displaced persons from Ukraine, compared to both the general population and/or other groups of protection seekers. In Sweden, Austria and Finland, those granted temporary protection continued to be covered by the same financial assistance scheme as asylum seekers (although in Finland, they transition to get regular mean-tested social benefits after one year). In Poland, the first year after the full-scale Russian invasion, displaced persons from Ukraine were eligible for regular social benefits, however, new restrictive measures were introduced from May 2023 for those staying in mass accommodation centres, including maximum limits to how much assistance a person could receive after 120 and 180 days.

Lastly, although almost all countries have provided displaced persons from Ukraine with similar rights and access to healthcare services and pre-school and kindergartens, Sweden

constitutes an exception. In Sweden, displaced persons from Ukraine mostly continue on the minimum rights for protection seekers, and do not transition to get the rights that other protection beneficiaries who have been granted protection are entitled to. Thus, Sweden is the only country where displaced adults (not minors) from Ukraine continued to only have access to emergency healthcare, even after they had received collective, temporary protection.

To summarise, although the European response to the high influx of displaced persons from Ukraine was more unified in 2022 than in 2015 with the introduction of collective temporary protection (with the UK as an exception), the comparative analysis shows that there were still great cross-national differences in the rights and restrictions for this group. This applies also to the definition of who were covered by temporary protection, as some countries adopted a wider and some more restrictive implementations of the EU directive. In some areas and countries, there was a trend of more liberal policies for this group, but in other areas and countries, displaced persons from Ukraine got more restrictive rights or access to services than other groups of protection seekers and beneficiaries.

## 15.2 Increased selectivity between subgroups depending on type of permit

The analysis above clearly shows that most countries have introduced selective policies for displaced persons from Ukraine – in a liberal and/or restrictive direction, depending on policy area and country. Consequently, for this group, there is a clear pattern of increased selective policies concerning rights and restrictions. However, this selective trend is not a new phenomenon for just this group, as several countries already before and after 2015 have introduced differentiated rights and restrictions for various subgroups, depending on type of protection status (or resettlement/visa schemes in the UK case).

The comparative analysis shows that in some policy areas, policies are generally more universal, meaning that different subgroups of protection seekers and beneficiaries have similar rights and access. Except for displaced persons from Ukraine (as described above), the countries generally did not distinguish between rights related to healthcare services, pre-school, mandatory school, and accommodation, settlement and intra-national distribution. However, for policies regulating the duration of first-time permits, family reunification, permanent residency, and rights and obligations to integration measures, most countries have introduced selective rights and restrictions for different subgroups.

All countries, except Norway, have distinguished between rights for those granted refugee status and those granted subsidiary protection.

Firstly, some countries – Poland, Germany and Austria and the UK – already had different duration on first-time protection permits based on the type of protection status granted, where those granted refugee status usually got longer first-time permits than those granted subsidiary protection. After 2015, Sweden and Denmark also introduced such differentiated first-time permits for these two categories.

After 2015, family reunification policy was also an area where several countries introduced selective policies for those granted subsidiary protection, with more restrictive access to family reunification. Half of the countries restricted subsidiary protection holders' access to family reunification, either by a temporary suspension (Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and Germany), by establishing maximum yearly quotas for family reunification for such sponsors (Austria, and Germany) or introducing an income requirement (Finland).



Austria and the UK also differentiated regulations for some integration measures. In Austria, those with refugee status had a right and obligation to take language courses, while this was only a right for those granted subsidiary protection. In the UK, some types of permits or resettlement or visa schemes included rights to some integration measures, while others did not.

There were also some country-specific differentiated rights and restrictions. For example, Poland had some selective policies for protection seekers from Belarus, and a specific regulation for displaced persons from Ukraine of Polish origin. Further, although the border control policies are outside the scope of this analysis, it is important to highlight the differential border control policies in Poland, which included push-backs of asylum seekers from specific countries, compared to the more open policies towards protection seekers from Belarus and Ukraine. In Germany, the increased usage of "safe countries of origin" is another example, where protection-seekers from "safe" countries faced a number of restrictions (e.g., excluded from labour-market and integration opportunities).

Lastly, the UK's asylum and refugee policies could be described as fragmented and selective throughout, and the selectivity in policies have increased over the period analysed, with ad hoc schemes devised to respond to particular crises; this has been described as 'besokism' (Tomlinson 2022). The UK differentiated rights and restrictions for different groups of protection seekers with regards to duration of first-time permits, paths to permanent residence, entitlements to introduction measures, financial assistance, and rules for family reunifications. Further, the UK also differentiated rights related to its many different resettlement and visa schemes targeting specific countries of origin (Syrians, MENA countries, Afghans, Ukrainians), and most recently, based on mode of arrival with the new Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

### 15.3 Increased usage of temporary policies and permits

The introduction of collective temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine was a solution to – as the name of the permit directly states – quickly and *temporarily* provide protection for this large group. However, our analysis illustrates how the enforcement of the EU TPD (and similar national legislations for displaced persons from Ukraine) could more correctly be described as a continuation of an already ongoing temporary trend in many European countries' asylum, immigration and integration policies. The trend already started from 2015, when several of the countries introduced policies with a more temporary perspective in different policy areas.

In 2015/16, Sweden and Austria (the latter for those granted refugee status only) moved from granting permanent first-time permits to introducing temporary first-time permits. Further, Denmark and Austria also reduced the period for such first-time permits for some groups.

More restrictive requirements for obtaining permanent residency also intensified this temporary turn, as such requirements often will make the path to a (more) secure legal status in the host country longer – or for some individuals, unachievable. In the period after 2015, six out of the eight countries introduced more restrictive integration requirements for obtaining a permanent residency. While the level of these requirements differed substantially between countries (e.g., the required language level, the required number of months/years of self-sufficiency or specific income threshold), the overall trend was that all countries, except the UK and Finland, have introduced or tightened some of these requirements. After 2015, Denmark stands out by introducing what has been referred to as a "paradigm shift", where

the general policies for all persons granted protection should have a temporary perspective, affecting many policy areas, including their integration policies.

Although there has been a general pattern towards a more temporary perspective for all protection seekers in most countries, there has been an even stronger temporary turn in the policies for those granted collective, temporary protection. The most obvious is the temporary permits themselves, and that these permits do not qualify for permanent residency. However, the temporary perspective also permeated other policy areas. As mentioned, in most countries, displaced persons from Ukraine have been granted fewer rights (and obligations) to integration measures, such as integration programmes and language courses. These changes may be interpreted into a more temporary perspective, because such integration measures are often part of a more long-term integration strategy for the target group.

Adjustments in regulations related to mandatory schooling for minors is also an example of a stronger temporary focus for this group, where a planned return permeates policies and practices in some countries. Although none of the countries introduced any restrictions to minors' rights to mandatory schooling, several countries (e.g., Poland, Austria and Germany) have accommodated for Ukrainian minors to follow online Ukrainian schooling, both as a supplement and/or as a substitute for schooling in the host country. Denmark also allowed the municipalities to establish separate primary schools for children and youth from Ukraine, with a specific focus on maintaining their connection to the Ukrainian language and culture.

In this regard, Sweden particularly stands out in this comparison, where displaced persons from Ukraine who have been granted collective, temporary protection continued on rights equal to those of asylum seekers, concerning financial assistance, and with limited access to healthcare services and integration measures (compared to other groups that are granted protection).

To conclude, the analysis shows an overall trend of increased temporariness already from 2015 and the years after. However, this trend has intensified with the temporary perspective and permits for displaced persons from Ukraine. An important question going forward – both politically and academically – is how this increased temporary focus will affect more long-term integration if the protection beneficiaries actually turn out to remain in the host country, as earlier studies have shown that it may be challenging to combine policy and ambitions for both integration and return at the same time (Brekke et al. 2020; Brekke 2001).

## 15.4 Preliminary conclusions in times of uncertainty and continuous policy developments

The overall analysis shows that most of the analysed countries have moved towards more restrictive, selective and temporary policies for protection seekers and beneficiaries since 2015 and up until June 2023. However, there are large differences between the countries concerning both the degree and scope of these overall trends, and in which policy areas they have made such changes.

Two limitations are worth mentioning (in addition to the limitation in the project scope presented in the introduction in chapter 1.3). Firstly, the scope of this project has not included policies for border control, citizenship, protection seekers' rights to legal assistance, policies for irregular migrants and those who had their applications for protection rejected, or policies for detentions and deportations as ways of dealing with these populations. In many countries, it was particularly these policy areas that were subject to changes during the period

analysed. Thus, further studies are needed to provide a more thorough assessment of overall trends in European countries' asylum, reception and immigration policies.

Secondly, the cut-off of the analysis in this project has been policies as of June 2023. In most countries, there were ongoing policy processes and political debates concerning different groups of protection seekers and beneficiaries' rights and obligations during the time of writing of this report. Thus, the analyses of policy developments as a response to the increased influx of both displaced persons from Ukraine – and the general rise in asylum seekers from other countries in 2022 and 2023 – should be read as preliminary conclusions as of June 2023. It will be particularly important to monitor what happens in this policy field, and with those who were under temporary protection in different European countries, after March 2025, when the current extension of the temporary protection mechanism expires.

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