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Ad-Hoc Query on 2022.40 Supporting measures for Ukrainians wishing to go back to Ukraine in voluntary basis

Requested by EMN NCP Estonia on 29 August 2022

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden (24 in Total)

Disclaimer:

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The Estonian Ministry of Culture in collaboration with other Estonian Ministries are establishing a programme to support Ukrainian Citizens who wish to go back on a voluntary basis to Ukraine. Namely, they are planning to set up a programme which consists of three parts:

1. Establishing a programme to support Ukrainian citizens who wish to go back on a voluntary basis to Ukraine;
2. Establishing possibilities to keep in contact with their language and cultural environment;
3. Supporting re-building areas which have been hit or destroyed by the war.

This has been set as one of the activities in Estonian new government's coalition agreement and hence has high political priority. Therefore, the Ministry would like to know if other EU Member States have implemented or are planning on implementing similar support measures for Ukrainians wishing to go back on a voluntary basis to Ukraine.

**NOTE:** Some of the same information is collected through other networks, however this information is collected at the request of the Estonian government and the ad-hoc query is launched under article 5 (5) c) of the EMN Council Decision.

The deadline is of 6 weeks as some Member States will be on holidays until 15 September 2022.

We would like to ask the following questions:

1. Is your Member State providing any support measures to Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back to Ukraine on a voluntary basis? YES/NO. If yes, please elaborate which kind of measures your MS is providing (e.g. financial assistance, counselling etc).
2. If your MS is currently not providing support measures to Ukrainians wishing to go back voluntarily to Ukraine, are there any plans to implement support measures? YES/NO. If yes, please elaborate.
3. Is your MS planning to develop long-term support measures/programmes for Ukrainian citizens who wish to go back to Ukraine on a voluntary basis (e.g. making use of the reintegration programmes after the end of the war)? Yes/NO. If yes, please elaborate.



We would very much appreciate your responses by 26 September 2022.

## 2. RESPONSES

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		Wider Dissemination <sup>2</sup>	
	EMN NCP Austria	Yes	<p>1. No, currently, Ukrainian citizens in Austria do not receive return assistance when they travel back to their country of origin. Other third country nationals who have fled Ukraine are supported by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU) together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in order to continue their journey to their countries of origin. (Source: <a href="https://www.returnfromaustria.at/ukraine/ukraine_english.html">https://www.returnfromaustria.at/ukraine/ukraine_english.html</a>; <a href="https://www.bbu.gv.at/thirdcountrynationals">https://www.bbu.gv.at/thirdcountrynationals</a>) Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>2. There are currently no specific plans to implement support measures for Ukrainian citizens. A reassessment of the situation will take place when the situation changes. Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>3. See question 2. In general it is in Austria's interests that a common European approach is pursued on this issue. Source: Ministry of the Interior</p>
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	<p>1. Return to Ukraine is possible for Ukrainians who decide to return to their country of origin and for third-country nationals with legal residence in Ukraine who decide to return to Ukraine. The Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers (Fedasil) currently only supports return via bus. At present, the following cities are accessible: Kiev, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Ternopil, Zhytomyr, Mukachevo, Novohrad-Volynskyi, Uman, Rivne, Stryi, Uzhhorod, Vinnytsia.</p>

<sup>1</sup> If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

<sup>2</sup> A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."




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			<p>After approval of an application, Fedasil will pay for the bus trip between Belgium and Ukraine and a return bonus will be provided in cash (adult €50 / child €25). This money can be spent, for example, on food or on further transport from the bus's final stop to the ultimate destination.</p> <p>For returnees with certain vulnerabilities, limited reintegration support may be provided locally in Ukraine. For each application, an individual assessment will be made to determine whether this is possible and what support can be provided. This involves material and practical support provided by the local partner of Caritas International, for example, to start a business, rent or renovate a home and pay medical expenses.</p> <p>For applications to be supervised on the return journey (e.g. for people with disabilities or unaccompanied minors), Fedasil will consider whether supervision is necessary and possible. An escort is only possible up to the border and not into Ukraine itself.</p> <p>2. NA</p> <p>3. Currently under discussion.</p>
	EMN NCP Bulgaria	Yes	<p>1. No. Currently support measures to Ukrainian citizens wishing to return to Ukraine voluntarily are not provided.</p> <p>2. Not at the moment.</p> <p>3. There is no such information at the moment.</p>
	EMN NCP Croatia	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. No at the moment</p> <p>3. No, there is no such information at the moment.</p>
	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. No.</p>


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			<p>2. No, not as long as they enjoy temporary protection in Cyprus.</p> <p>3. No. However, after the end of the war they may be eligible for reintegration support, the same way all TCNs currently are.</p>
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	Yes	<p>1. NO.</p> <p>2. NO.</p> <p>3. NO. Given the continuing conflict in Ukraine this issue has not been discussed yet.</p>
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	<p>1. No, not at the moment.</p> <p>2. Yes, provision of financial aid and counselling are in the planning stage for Ukrainians wishing to go voluntarily back to Ukraine.</p> <p>3. No, not at the moment.</p>
	EMN NCP Finland	Yes	<p>1. No. At the moment, support measures (financial assistance, counselling etc.) are not provided to Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back to Ukraine on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>The assisted voluntary return programme in Finland is operated by IOM. Currently, IOM is not providing assisted voluntary return to Ukraine due to the conflict in the country, as the conditions for safe and dignified assisted return are not in place. However, IOM states that limited local assistance including transport may be offered to mitigate protection risks in specific border situations. In addition, movements in and out of Ukraine may exceptionally take place for protection-related reasons (e.g., family reunification, rescue of a child left behind due to migration prior to war). Such protection related movements are approved internally on a case-by-case basis upon comprehensive assessment of the case and related protection risks and do not represent an organizational approach or position on the wider issue of refugee returns to Ukraine.</p>


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			<p>2. No. Due to the high influx of Ukrainians arriving to Finland, planning of support measures for Ukrainians returning voluntarily has not been a major focus. However, it is likely that this will be discussed later on in 2022 or in 2023, depending on how the situation in Ukraine and the situation of Ukrainians in Finland evolve.</p> <p>3. No. At the moment there are not any plans for this, due to Finland waiting to see how the situation is evolving in Ukraine. Additionally, it is of importance in Finland to see if and how EU/Frontex might respond, i.e. provide support to travel arrangements, reintegration assistance etc.</p>
	EMN NCP France	Yes	<p>1. Assisted voluntary return as provided for by the French Code for the entry and stay of foreign nationals and the right of asylum (CESEDA) and distributed by the OFII is intended only for irregular foreigners. Article L.711-2 of the CESEDA provides that 'a foreign national who is the subject of a decision requiring him to leave French territory may apply for assistance in returning to his country of origin'.</p> <p>With the objective of supporting dignified return, 'assisted voluntary return' provided by the OFII may include administrative and material assistance in preparing the journey to the country of return or financial assistance paid to the foreign national in a single operation at the time of departure.</p> <p>Displaced persons from Ukraine and beneficiaries of temporary protection are excluded from assisted voluntary return as they do not fulfil the conditions for granting them.</p> <p>The only thing the OFII has done is to open up the possibility of the ARV to Ukrainian dual nationals who wish to return to the other country (other than Ukraine).</p> <p>However, Article 21 of Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons provides that 'Member States shall take the necessary measures to make possible the voluntary return of persons enjoying temporary protection or whose temporary protection has ended. The Member States shall ensure that the provisions governing voluntary return of persons enjoying temporary protection facilitate their return with respect for human dignity. '.</p> <p>In this context, the grant of free travel tickets by the French public railway company, SNCF, to Ukrainian people enjoying temporary protection is a facilitation of return since this aid extends to travel to countries bordering France. Other European railway companies have put in place the same mechanism. As a result, displaced persons from Ukraine, benefiting from free transport, can organise their return by their own means.</p> <p>In total, more than 42,000 free travel tickets have been granted by SNCF since the introduction of this aid from France.</p>





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			<p>2. We are not aware of such measures</p> <p>3. We are not aware of such measures</p>
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<p>1. Due to the war and the associated difficult security situation in Ukraine, assisted voluntary return through Germany's main AVVR programs REAG/GARP and StarthilfePlus is currently not supported as IOM does not support travel to certain countries due to the tensions in these countries. The situation is continuously monitored and checked in order to be able to react to current developments.</p> <p>At the federal state level (Länder), most of them are still in the coordination process whether assistance on an individual basis can be granted. Up to now, a few persons have received individual based assistance from the Länder. This assistance includes mainly travel costs and money for the journey.</p> <p>Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back voluntarily to Ukraine can receive counselling in Germany.</p> <p>However, the Federal Republic of Germany assists third country nationals who want to migrate on to another third country through the REAG/GARP program in general. To be found eligible for supported migration to another host country, applicants must have a valid residence permit for this country. This assistance is also available to (non-)Ukrainian nationals who have fled Ukraine. Assistance includes a flight or bus ticket, money for the journey, medical support, if required as well as in some cases a one-time support (GARP-Starthilfe). Please note that only nationals (not destination country) of certain countries[1] can receive a one time-support (GARP-Starthilfe). Apart from that, persons with a protection status of all REAG/GARP-eligible countries (including Ukraine) can receive a one-time support.</p> <p>[1] Afghanistan, Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, China, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Kongo, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Cameroon, Kenia, Columbia, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Mongolia, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Vietnam</p> <p>2. General deliberations for support measures of voluntary return and reintegration to UKR are taking place, even though there is no concrete plan as of now. It is our understanding that it would be advantageous to channel the measures through the appropriate EU organizations (e.g.: Frontex) and finance them with EU funding instruments (e.g.: AMIF).</p>

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			3. See answer 2. There are currently no concrete plans.
	EMN NCP Greece	Yes	<p>1. No. Currently, there is full suspension in place regarding the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR), as the conditions are not conducive for safe and dignified assisted return to Ukraine. International Organisation for Migration (IOM) assesses the situation continually and the suspension will be lifted when/where possible.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Hungary	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. No programmes are in development for the time being</p>
	EMN NCP Ireland	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. Yes, it is envisaged that Ukrainians wishing to voluntarily return to Ukraine when Temporary Protection comes to an end will be supported to do so. However, the details as to what supports will be available and how they will operate have yet to be decided.</p> <p>3. Yes, as above.</p>
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<p>1. There are currently no specific support measures for Ukrainian citizens wishing to benefit from AVR.</p> <p>2. NO</p>




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			3. NO
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. No. There was discussion between ministries on such measures, but there is no agreement or any roadmap yet.</p> <p>3. No. At this moment no.</p>
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. YES The Ministry of Transportation contributes financially to the private sector initiatives to offer free transportation from Lithuania to Ukraine. According to the information provided by Kautra UAB, since May 2022, the bus company, in cooperation with public enterprise Stiprūs Kartu and the Ministry of Transportation, helped more than 1600 Ukrainian nationals to return home free of charge. The company runs buses from Kaunas to Lviv once a week.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No information is available at this point. IOM Vilnius Office provides assistance for voluntary returns. However, AVRs to Ukraine are currently suspended due to the ongoing military conflict.</p>
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. No. At the moment, Luxembourg is not providing support measures to Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back to Ukraine, as the war in Ukraine still going on and the temporary protection mechanism is still activated. Also, IOM, which manages the AVRR-L is not providing return and reintegration assistance pour citizens of countries of origin at war.</p> <p>2. No. At the moment, there are no indicators that the war in Ukraine will finish any time soon and that the temporary</p>




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			<p>protection mechanism will not be extended.</p> <p>3. No. Not at the moment for the reasons indicated in the answering of Q1 and Q2.</p>
	EMN NCP Netherlands	Yes	<p>1. Yes, the Netherlands provides support measures to Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back to Ukraine on a voluntary basis. The Dutch Repatriation and Departure Service (Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek - DT&amp;V) offers tailor made support to Ukrainian nationals who voluntarily want to return permanently to Ukraine.<sup>[1]</sup> Third country nationals who have fled Ukraine and want to travel to a non-EU country, excluding Ukraine, are referred to the Netherlands' office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM Netherlands). For relocation within the EU, no support is offered.<sup>[2]</sup> Furthermore, the DT&amp;V does not offer support to Ukrainians who have fled the Ukraine and who want to temporarily return to Ukraine.<sup>[3]</sup></p> <p>The support that is offered, is tailor made and meets the individual needs of the returnee. One general support measure is an intake interview where the reasons for return are discussed and the returnee is informed on the possible risks of return. More tacit general measures are the arrangement of transport and financial support for realising the return. In principle, transport is arranged to the Polish-Ukrainian border, however, the destination may vary. Transport to the Polish-Ukrainian border, in general, will be arranged by bus, but in exceptional cases a flight (to Poland) can be organised and paid for.<sup>[4]</sup> After arrival in Poland, the remainder of the journey has to be arranged individually, but local NGOs are present at the border to further assist those who are returning to Ukraine.<sup>[5]</sup></p> <p>When a person wants to receive the support of the DT&amp;V for returning to Ukraine, they need to deregister from the municipality. Another condition is that the procedure for Temporary Protection with the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst - IND) has to be halted by filling out the 'Declaration of Voluntary Return' form. Finally, a statement has to be signed that the returnee is returning voluntarily.<sup>[6]</sup></p> <p><sup>[1]</sup> DT&amp;V, 'Assistance for those returning to Ukraine', <a href="https://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/latest/news/2022/07/01/assistance-for-those-returning-to-ukraine">https://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/latest/news/2022/07/01/assistance-for-those-returning-to-ukraine</a>, last accessed 31 August 2022.</p> <p><sup>[2]</sup> DT&amp;V, 'Infographic terugkeer vluchtelingen uit Oekraïne', <a href="https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/04/25/infographic-terugkeer-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-voor-gemeenten">https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/04/25/infographic-terugkeer-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-voor-gemeenten</a>, last accessed 31 August 2022.</p> <p><sup>[3]</sup> DT&amp;V, 'Hulp bij terugkeer naar Oekraïne', <a href="https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/06/20/terugkeer-naar-oekraïne">https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/06/20/terugkeer-naar-oekraïne</a>, last accessed 31 August 2022.</p>



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			<p>[4] Ibid.</p> <p>[5] DT&amp;V, 'Eerste busreis DT&amp;V naar Medyka (Polen)', <a href="https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/08/03/eerste-busreis-dtv-naar-medyka-polen">https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/08/03/eerste-busreis-dtv-naar-medyka-polen</a>, last accessed 31 August 2022.</p> <p>[6] DT&amp;V, 'Assistance for those returning to Ukraine', <a href="https://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/latest/news/2022/07/01/assistance-for-those-returning-to-ukraine">https://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/latest/news/2022/07/01/assistance-for-those-returning-to-ukraine</a>, last accessed 31 August 2022.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No, presently, options to develop a long-term support programme for Ukrainian citizens who wish to voluntarily return to Ukraine have not yet been mapped out.</p>
	EMN NCP Poland	Yes	<p>1. No, PL do not have any programs to support Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back to Ukraine on voluntary basis. Border traffic takes place normally, citizens of Ukraine can freely enter Ukraine.</p> <p>2. No, we do not have such plans for now.</p> <p>3. No</p>
	EMN NCP Portugal	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. Not to our best knowledge.</p> <p>3. Not to our best knowledge.</p>
	EMN NCP	Yes	<p>1. If a Ukrainian citizen wants to return back to Ukraine he/she is allowed to do so. As for the assisted voluntary return</p>


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	Slovakia		<p>programme this is in Slovakia implemented by IOM. Currently IOM is not providing assisted voluntary return to Ukraine as the conditions for safe and dignified assisted return to Ukraine are not yet in place, but limited local assistance including transport may be offered to mitigate protection risks in specific border situations. In addition, movement in and out of Ukraine may take place for protection-related reasons (e.g., family reunification, rescue of a child left behind due to migration prior to war) in specific cases. Such protection related movements are approved internally on a case-by-case basis and do not represent an organizational approach or position on the wider issue of refugee returns to Ukraine.</p> <p>No state institution is providing reintegration assistance to Ukrainian citizens returning back to Ukraine at the moment.</p> <p>2. See response to question 1. IOM 's approach depends on the assessment of security situation in UA.</p> <p>3. See response to question 1 and 2.</p>
	EMN NCP Slovenia	Yes	<p>1. In accordance with national legislation regarding temporary protection, the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants provides support to Ukrainian citizens wishing to go back to Ukraine on a voluntary basis, after the end of the status for temporary protection.</p> <p>2. Republic of Slovenia is planning to prepare support measures (for Ukrainians wishing to return to Ukraine voluntarily), which are already determined in our national legislation regarding temporary protection. We will be able to support Ukrainians by gathering information concerning the state of play in Ukraine by organizing informative visits to Ukraine and by preparing a plan for voluntary return to Ukraine.</p> <p>3. Considering that Ukraine is still at war, Slovenia has not yet elaborated the implementation acts, which are already determined in our national law, regarding long term support measures for Ukrainians. We are familiar with the possibility of reintegration programmes and material support.</p>
	EMN NCP Spain	Yes	<p>1. Voluntary return programmes make it a basic priority that return be carried out in conditions of absolute safety for returnees; thus, as long as the conflict zone is not stabilized in such a way as to provide such a guarantee of security, <u>it is not possible to return to that country.</u></p>

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			2. See answer 1 3. No information available
	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	1. No 2. No information at this point in time 3. No information at this point in time

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