



Providing schooling and language support for refugee children arriving in Member States from Ukraine: recommendations to national authorities

English version

The invasion of Ukraine is causing the exodus of hundreds of thousands of people, including families with school-age children. It is important that Member States make special provision for these children in their reception arrangements. The school environment can provide children with new and reassuring points of reference and will help them to form new social relationships.

In the light of these considerations, all Member States receiving refugee children are urged to pay special attention to their integration into their education systems. In particular, it is crucial that educational authorities should:

- identify those children who are already attending school in their home country, or who are of school age;
- Find out what opportunities for online learning are being made available by the Ukrainian authorities and enable refugee children to take advantage of these;
- In addition to these opportunities for continuing their schooling in Ukrainian, invite parents to enrol their children in local schools as quickly as possible to ensure that they have the opportunity to learn and socialise with children from the host community in school hours or after school;
- where feasible, use linguistic and cultural mediators, especially during the welcome phase;
- place Ukrainian children attending school in classes that are appropriate for their age group;
- make specific course time available for them to learn the language of schooling (Polish in Poland, Romanian in Romania, etc.). For the course hours dedicated to language support, refugee children should be given tuition in the new language in separate groups, preferably by experienced language teachers;
- devote these hours to helping them acquire the language of the new context which they need for everyday social relations (including within the school), and to participate in lessons on school subjects;
- inform the entire educational community about the arrival of these new students and the arrangements being made for them
- set up means of familiarising refugee parents with the educational culture in the new context using brochures and other means of dissemination;
- offer parents language training together with their children, organised for example by voluntary associations outside of school, and involving refugees who have already learned the language themselves.

Member states which are receiving a sudden influx of refugee children from Ukraine will find it advantageous to consult with and learn from the experience of member states which have established effective systems for welcoming migrants and providing schooling for migrant children.



Member states should make arrangement to enable teachers of all subjects to:

1. pay particular attention to opportunities to bolster the confidence of refugee children by finding out what subjects they like and by involving them in courses where the language dimension is relatively secondary, such as music, art and physical education;
2. familiarize themselves with existing teaching resources, especially those developed by states which have already gained experience in providing language support for newly arriving learners;
3. at least in the early stages of schooling, make use of aids to automatic translation (after having checked their general reliability), and allow Ukrainian children to do so;
4. take advantage of all the linguistic resources these learners bring with them, especially the foreign languages they have already learned or started to learn;
5. Take advantage, where possible, of the links between Slavic languages;
6. form durable pairs of children comprising a recently arrived child and another from the host community in order to create good conditions for mutual learning and companionship
7. keep formal assessment of refugee children to a minimum.

Linguistic adaptation and integration in a new school system is a complex process. It is important to support children and their parents, as well as teachers, through the process and to ensure that they are not in any way stigmatised.