

43rd SESSION

Report
CG(2022)43-14final
25 October 2022

Reception of women and children refugees in Europe's cities and regions

Current Affairs Committee

Rapporteurs:¹ Annika VAIKLA, Estonia (L, ILDG)
Bernd VÖHRINGER, Germany (L, EPP/CCE)

Resolution 487	2
Recommendation 481	4
Explanatory memorandum (for information)	6

Summary

This report focusses on the reception and protection of women and children refugees at local and regional level. It outlines the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and children refugees and provides good practices for local and regional authorities regarding housing, education, healthcare and education, with a view to ensuring the safe reception of women and children on the run and respect for their human rights. It highlights the need for support to receiving cities and regions and the added value of increased multilevel cooperation and involvement of civil society organisations. To gather insights for this report, a Congress delegation carried out a visit to Poland on 4 and 5 July 2022.

In a resolution, the Congress calls on local and regional authorities to develop gender-sensitive and child-friendly reception policies, including via relevant policy fields such as education and housing, and to protect women and children refugees from violence by developing screening mechanisms to identify victims. It encourages local and regional authorities to cooperate with other levels of governance, civil society organisations, in particular women and children's organisations, and networks of cities and regions.

In a recommendation, the Congress calls on governments of the member States to establish, in cooperation with local and regional authorities and their associations, a reception policy that integrates a gender and child-rights perspective, to set up clear and transparent funding mechanisms that allow local and regional authorities to provide quality reception for women and children refugees and asylum-seekers, and to facilitate the collection and sharing of relevant data regarding arriving refugees.

1 L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions.
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress.
SOC/G/PD: Group of Socialists, Greens and Progressive Democrats.
ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group.
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group.
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

RESOLUTION 487²

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe refers to:

- a. its Resolution 411(2017), outlining the key role local and regional authorities play in the reception and integration of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers;
- b. the explanatory memorandum on the reception of women and children refugees in Europe's towns and regions (CG 2022)43-14) which follows a visit that took place in Poland on 4 and 5 July 2022;
- c. the UN Global Compact on Refugees, which underlines that local authorities and other local actors are often first responders to large-scale refugee situations, and among the actors that experience the most significant impact over the medium term;
- d. the United Nations Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 5 "Gender equality", SDG 10 "Reduced inequalities" and its target 10.7 "Facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration", as well as SDG 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutions" and its target 16.2 "End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children";
- e. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 of the Committee of Ministers on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls, stating that "additional efforts should be made to assess the prevention and protection gaps that arise from insufficient implementation, information about and monitoring of existing laws and policies as regards migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls";
- f. the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025) and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027);
- g. the reports by the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees of her fact-finding missions to the Slovak Republic (SG/Inf(2022)24), to the Czech Republic (SG/Inf(2022)25), to Poland (SG/Inf(2022)30) and to the Republic of Moldova (SG/Inf(2022)33).

2. The Congress notes with concern that:

- a. women and children face additional situations of vulnerability during the migration experience which should be addressed as an essential component of human rights protection;
- b. women and children refugees and asylum-seekers are at increased risk of gender-based and other violence, trafficking and discrimination both in their country of origin and in the receiving country, as well as on their journey;
- c. mass reception accommodations, while sometimes indispensable in times of crisis, are often not appropriate for nor adapted to the needs of women and children refugees;
- d. women and children refugees and asylum-seekers have specific needs with regard to education, healthcare, housing and employment that are not always sufficiently taken into account due to a lack of awareness and consideration of the gender and child-rights perspective when developing relevant policies;
- e. local and regional authorities alone do not have the capacity to ensure the long-term protection of women and children refugees and asylum-seekers and that increased multilevel cooperation and involvement of civil society organisations are crucial for the protection of their human rights.

3. The Congress calls on local and regional authorities in member States to:

- a. assess and take into account the specific and individual vulnerabilities and needs of women and children refugees and asylum-seekers through an intersectional lens when developing reception and integration policies;

² Debated and adopted by the Congress on 25 October 2022, 1st sitting (see document CG(2022 43-14, explanatory memorandum, co-rapporteurs Annika VAIKLA, Estonia (L, ILDG) ; Bernd VÖHRINGER, Germany (L, EPP/CCE)

- b.* cooperate with central governments to develop the necessary legal framework, funding and capacities to address the risks women and children refugees and asylum-seekers face;
 - c.* work with national associations of local and regional authorities, as well as international networks of cities and regions to share good practices on the reception of women and children, to develop burden-sharing mechanisms and for advocacy purposes;
 - d.* recognise civil society organisations as valuable actors in developing gender-sensitive and child-friendly reception policies and create appropriate platforms with local stakeholders involved in the reception and service delivery to women and children refugees and asylum-seekers;
 - e.* protect women and children refugees and asylum-seekers from violence, exploitation and trafficking by providing information and helplines and by developing screening mechanisms to identify victims, in cooperation with national authorities and civil society organisations;
 - f.* ensure that, when absolutely necessary, the stay of women and children in mass accommodation is kept as short as possible, providing avenues for their participation in the daily operations of reception centres they reside in and access to staff trained in human rights, gender equality and gender-based violence;
 - g.* develop criteria for the allocation of refugees and asylum-seekers to types of accommodations considering vulnerability, demographic structure and health conditions and develop mechanisms to moderate between refugees and asylum-seekers, landlords and neighbours;
 - h.* provide women and children refugees and asylum-seekers with effective access to quality, age- and gender-sensitive health services, encompassing in particular mental, sexual and reproductive health care;
 - i.* ensure that children are offered education and extra-curricular activities, planning information and training for educational staff in this regard and provide avenues for children who have been outside of the educational system to receive further, age-appropriate education or training.
4. The Congress commits to supporting the implementation of this resolution and the protection of women and children refugees and asylum-seekers through its co-operation activities within the framework of the relevant Council of Europe Action Plans.

RECOMMENDATION 481³

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe refers to:

a. its Resolution 411(2017), outlining the key role local and regional authorities play in the reception and integration of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers;

b. the explanatory memorandum on the reception of women and children refugees in Europe's towns and regions (CG- (2022)43-14) which follows a visit that took place in Poland on 4 and 5 July 2022;

c. the UN Global Compact on Refugees, which underlines that local authorities and other local actors are often first responders to large-scale refugee situations, and among the actors that experience the most significant impact over the medium term;

d. the United Nations Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 5 "Gender equality", SDG 10 "Reduced inequalities" and its target 10.7 "Facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration", as well as SDG 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutions" and its target 16.2 "End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children";

e. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 of the Committee of Ministers on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls, stating that "additional efforts should be made to assess the prevention and protection gaps that arise from insufficient implementation, information about and monitoring of existing laws and policies as regards migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls";

f. the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025) and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027);

g. the reports by the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees of her fact-finding missions to the Slovak Republic (SG/Inf(2022)24), to the Czech Republic (SG/Inf(2022)25), to Poland (SG/Inf(2022)30) and to the Republic of Moldova (SG/Inf(2022)33).

2. The Congress notes with concern that:

a. women and children face additional situations of vulnerability during the migration experience which should be addressed as an essential component of human rights protection;

b. in particular in times of mass arrival, local and regional authorities are in need of significant additional resources to respond to the needs and vulnerabilities of women and children refugees and asylum-seekers while also continuing to carry out the responsibilities they have toward their local community;

c. better collection of disaggregated and gendered data and the sharing of such data between different levels of government is needed to understand general trends in migration and to identify individual vulnerabilities from an intersectional perspective. This will also enable receiving authorities to anticipate and adapt their reception infrastructure to the specific needs of women and children refugees;

d. relocation of refugees and asylum-seekers away from over-burdened urban centres to rural areas may impact women refugees and asylum-seekers disproportionately, in particular in areas with limited access to housing, employment and public transportation.

3. The Congress calls on the Committee of Ministers to invite the respective national authorities of the member States to the Council of Europe to:

a. cooperate with local and regional authorities and their associations to establish a coherent reception policy that integrates a gender and child-rights perspective and to develop the necessary legal framework, funding and capacities to address the situations of vulnerability women and children refugees and asylum-seekers face;

³ See footnote 2.

b. set up clear and transparent funding mechanisms that allow local and regional authorities to provide quality reception, accommodation, education and healthcare for women and children refugees and asylum-seekers;

c. cooperate with local and regional authorities for the collection and sharing of disaggregated data regarding women and children refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in their communities in order for the necessary protection measures and adaptations to be made in a timely manner;

d. facilitate the sustainable distribution of migrants and refugees across their territory, by continuing to support the development of rural and peri-urban areas, in particular with regard to transport, housing and employment, and in line with Congress Recommendations 448(2020) on developing urban-rural interplay and 481(2022) on the future of rural youth.

4. The Congress calls on the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to take account of this recommendation and the explanatory memorandum contained in document CG(2022)43-14 in their activities on this issue relating to Council of Europe member States.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	7
2. Women and children refugees – facts and figures	9
3. Specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and children refugees	10
3.1 Determining vulnerability through an intersectional lense	11
3.2 Women and children refugees as resilient and empowered actors	13
4. Reception of women and children refugees in cities and region	13
4.1 Protection from violence and trafficking	13
4.2 Adapting local reception and accommodation to the needs of women and children	16
4.3 Protecting women and children refugees' health	20
4.4 Access to education and extracurricular activities	23
4.5 Access to the local housing and labour market	25
4.6 Women and children refugees as a multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder issue	28
5. Conclusion	30
Appendix : Congress visit to the Republic of Poland	32

1. INTRODUCTION⁴

1. While asylum policies are shaped at the national and supra-national governance level, internationally and internally displaced persons and asylum-seeking migrants arrive in cities and regions, which must cater for their immediate needs and shape the path towards long-term integration. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (hereafter the “Congress”) has outlined this important role of local and regional authorities in the reception and integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in its Resolution 411(2017).

2. As outlined in the UN Global Compact on Refugees, local authorities are often first responders to large-scale refugee situations, and among the actors that experience the most significant impact over the medium term. As such, cities and regions, as well as NGO’s and citizens, play a key role in the reception and protection of refugees and need to be supported in carrying out this role.⁵ They stand at the frontline of the reception system and are the first contact points for arriving refugees. How they provide for reception, protection and integration significantly shapes the further life of the individual refugee, and can also change the face of the wider community. The way in which local and regional authorities respond to the challenges related to migrants’ arrival and settlement in their territory is crucial for the future of immigrant integration in Europe.⁶

3. However, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are a heterogeneous group and over the past decade, local and regional authorities have had to develop and adapt reception policies and organisation to changing realities and demographics.

4. Since the start of the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine in February 2022, cities and regions across Europe have faced a tremendous rise in the number of people seeking refuge on their territories, an estimated 90 per cent of whom are women and children. The migration experience is different for women and children, who are at risk of facing additional challenges, including gender-based and other violence, trafficking and discrimination both in their country of origin and in the receiving country, as well as on their journey.

5. They are particularly vulnerable and require targeted approaches from local and regional authorities. In view of their powers and responsibilities, in particular with regard to the provision of services such as first reception, counselling, social inclusion, housing, education and healthcare, local and regional authorities play a key role in protecting women and children refugees’ best interests, from reception to integration.

6. With this report, focused on the reception of women and children refugees in European cities and regions, the rapporteurs hope to provide clarity to towns, cities and regions about the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and children refugees and their role in responding to these needs and provide good practices, with a view of ensuring the safe reception and respect for the human rights of women and children on the run.

7. In this report, the term “refugee” is used as an inclusive term for refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers, both for ease of reading and to highlight that forced migration and vulnerability resulting thereof can occur in any stadium of forced migration, and irrespective of the protection status. The term “refugee” in this report should not be read as only persons who are legally recognised as refugees under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees as amended by its 1967 Protocol. It also includes those who currently benefit from any alternative form of international or European humanitarian, subsidiary, or temporary protection, or those who have applied for such protection. Furthermore, under the term “refugee” this report also refers to individuals on the move who are not included in the prior categories. This can be the case because they did not apply for a protection status, as is sometimes the case in the recent example of Ukrainian women refugees. However, they

⁴ This explanatory memorandum is based on the document prepared by the Council of Europe consultant Prof. Dr. Birgit Glorius, Technische Universität Chemnitz, Germany. The written contribution is available from the Secretariat upon request.

⁵ See for example Caponio, T.; Ponzio, I.; Giannetto, L. (2019): Comparative report on the multilevel governance of the national asylum seekers’ reception systems. In *ceaseval research on the common european asylum system* (24). http://ceaseval.eu/publications/24_WP3_Comparative_Report.pdf; and H2020 funded projects WholeCOMM (<https://whole-comm.eu/>), RESPOND (<https://respondmigration.com/>)

⁶ Caponio, T. (2022): Is multilevel governance all we need? Insights on how small localities in Europe can make a difference in the reception of Ukrainians fleeing from war. WholeCOMM Blog <https://whole-comm.eu/blogs/is-multilevel-governance-all-we-need/>

are still facing the same (sometimes even higher) risks as other women and children refugees regarding marginalisation, discrimination, sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

8. The inclusionary use of the term “refugee” is also substantiated by the aim of this report, to focus on and provide guidance to local and regional authorities. As Resolution 411(2017)⁷ and the explanatory memorandum “From reception to integration: the role of local and regional authorities facing migration” point out, local authorities’ responsibility is to address the needs of human beings regardless of their status, nationality, country of origin or identity. Consequently, services should be tailored to the needs of each individual, rather than based on status.⁸

9. This report builds upon earlier reports and on the long-lasting and ongoing work of the Congress on the integration of migrants, which focuses on three pillars of action: a) the national legal framework allowing integration and participation of migrants, b) specific action at local level to facilitate their access to social rights and the labour market, and c) intercultural policies promoting a positive perception of migrants and a better mutual understanding.

10. In particular, it builds upon Resolution 411(2017) and Recommendation 394(2017) “From reception to integration: the role of local and regional authorities facing migration”, Resolution 428(2018) and Recommendation 414(2018) “Unaccompanied refugee children: the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities”, Resolution 432(2018) and Recommendation 422(2018) “Border regions facing the migration phenomenon”, and on the Congress “Human rights handbook for local and regional authorities” Vol.1.⁹

11. This report also compliments and further builds upon the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 “Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls”, the “Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025)”, the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027): “Children’s Rights in Action: from continuous implementation to joint innovation”, and relevant reports of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, including its Report “Humanitarian consequences and internal and external migration in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine” of February 2022.

12. To gather insights for this report, on 4 and 5 July 2022, a Congress delegation carried out a visit to Poland.¹⁰ The delegation visited the cities of Warsaw and Lublin and spoke to around 30 stakeholders from all relevant governance levels, NGO representatives and civil society representatives, and visited three first reception centres. The visit provided concrete examples and feedback from cities and regions facing the challenge of receiving and protecting women and children refugees and served as input to consider best practices that could be extended to provide guidance for cities and regions in all 46 member States of the Council of Europe.

13. However, the rapporteurs stress that, unfortunately, migration and flight of women and children are not new phenomena, neither will they cease to exist when the war in Ukraine comes to an end. Therefore, while this report will contain several examples from Polish cities and regions receiving women and children fleeing Ukraine, it should be read as an overall analysis of the vulnerabilities of women and children on the run, regardless of their origin or the reason of their flight. The guidance provided in this report should be taken into account in the reception process of all women and children having fled past, current and future conflicts or crises.

14. This report will first give an overview of how women and children are affected by displacement, including with specific reference to the Russian war against Ukraine. It will then outline the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and children in situations of displacement and present individual factors that should be taken into account. The report will present best practices on the reception and protection of women and children refugees at local level, including with regard to trafficking, safety, health and education. Lastly, the rapporteurs will propose a set of recommendations to national authorities and guidelines for towns, cities and regions, for the safe reception of women and children refugees.

7 Debated and adopted by the Congress on 28 March 2017, 1st sitting (see Document [CG32\(2017\)07](#), explanatory memorandum), rapporteurs: György ILLES, Hungary (L, ILDG), and Yoomi RENSTRÖM, Sweden (R, SOC).

8 Report CG32(2017)07final 28 March 2017: From reception to integration: the role of local and regional authorities facing migration, p. 9.

9 Texts available on: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/migration-and-integration>

10 See Annex 1: programme of the visit in appendix.

2. WOMEN AND CHILDREN REFUGEES – FACTS AND FIGURES

15. The number of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons worldwide has never been as high as in 2022. According to the most recent “Global Trends Report” of UNHCR, 89.3 million persons were displaced by the end of 2021, which is more than twice the number of displaced persons one decade ago.¹¹ Since then, numbers have grown further, notably since the Russian war against Ukraine. In February 2022, estimated numbers exceeded 100 million. In 2021, women and girls represented 49% of all forcibly displaced persons and children (of all sex) accounted for 41%. However, the current war against Ukraine has led to a significant increase in the number of refugees, and of the share of women and children among them.

16. According to data of 19 July 2022, an estimated one-third of Ukrainians forcibly left their homes and sought shelter either within the country or in neighbouring states. Almost six million Ukrainian refugees have been registered across Europe. The main share of arrivals was recorded in neighbouring countries of Ukraine, but Germany, the Czech Republic, Spain and Italy also received significant numbers of Ukrainian refugees.¹² Around 90% of refugees from Ukraine are women and children. They are at high risk of violence and abuse, including human trafficking, which must be taken into account in refugee reception and protection at local and regional level.

Table 1: Major European Destination Countries for Ukrainian Refugees

Country	Total Population	Share of recorded refugees from Ukraine at total population	Recorded refugees from Ukraine	Refugees from Ukraine registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes
Poland	37.9 Mio.	3.3	1,234,718	1,234,718
Republic of Moldova	2.6 Mio.	3.3	86,240	Not applicable
Slovakia	5.5 Mio.	1.6	85,964	85,771
Romania	19.2 Mio.	0.4	84,527	45,530
Hungary	9.7 Mio.	2.3	226,932	26,932
Czech Republic	10.7 Mio.	3.7	396,334	396,181
Estonia	1.3 Mio.	3.5	46,726	30,291
Germany	83.2 Mio.	1.1	893,000	670,000
Italy	59.5 Mio.	0.2	145,829	143,134
Netherlands	17.4 Mio.	0.4	68,050	68,050
Spain	47.1 Mio.	0.3	128,982	128,893

17. The recent refugee flow from Ukraine is marked by the high volatility of the situation. Most refugees from Ukraine initially fled to countries in the immediate neighborhood. However, border policies applicable to Ukrainian nationals have allowed refugees to travel throughout Europe. Thus, and contrary to the refugees who arrived in 2015 and 2016, Ukrainians were free to choose destination countries. However, many decided to stay closer to home, waiting for the security situation to improve. Others have already returned to Ukraine, at least temporarily.¹³

18. As of 19 July 2022, 3.7 million refugees from Ukraine registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes.¹⁴ This implies that a significant share of refugee population from Ukraine has not registered for temporary protection. According to the interlocutors during the July 2022 visit to Poland, one reason can be that individuals prefer to register as labour migrants because they fear that

¹¹ UNHCR 2022: Forced Displacement in 2021.

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93791#:~:text=The%20UNHCR%27s%20annual%20Global%20Trends%20Report%202021%20shows,rights%20violations%2C%20or%20events%20%E2%80%9Cseriously%20disturbing%20public%20order.%E2%80%9D;>

¹² European Parliament 2022: The EU response to the Ukraine refugee crisis. Article. 11-7-2022.;

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/expert/2022/3/story/20220324STO26151/20220324STO26151_en.pdf;](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/expert/2022/3/story/20220324STO26151/20220324STO26151_en.pdf)

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#>

¹³ Duszczuk; M., Kaczmarczyk, P. (2022): War and migration: the recent influx from Ukraine into Poland and possible scenarios for the future. CMR Spotlight 4(39). [CMR Spotlight: War and migration: the recent influx from Ukraine into Poland and possible scenarios for the future | Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami \(uw.edu.pl\)](https://www.uro.gov.pl/uro/2022/07/20220714-war-and-migration-the-recent-influx-from-ukraine-into-poland-and-possible-scenarios-for-the-future)

¹⁴ Operational Data Portal – Ukraine refugee situation. Refugees from Ukraine across Europe (as of 19 July 2022). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

the temporariness of the protection status might reduce labour market integration opportunities. As one of the interlocutors put it during the meeting with the delegation: “Who wants to stay in Poland, applies for PIC number, not for TPD”. Individuals might also hesitate to register because they fear that this might hamper further movements to other countries.

19. This results in a mismatch between the need for local, regional and national governments to obtain registration data on which to base policy decisions and the need of Ukrainian refugees to be able to react quickly to changes in the volatile and unpredictable geopolitical situation. In order to get a clear picture about the number of refugees staying on the territory of a municipality or a region, it can thus be helpful to make use of Big Data technology, such as using mobile phone data or credit card usage, in accordance with data protection rules, as was done by the City of Warsaw in 2022.

20. The volatility of the situation is also reflected by the high number of return movements to Ukraine. As of 19 July 2022, about 9.5 million departures from Ukraine and 3.9 million border crossings into Ukraine were recorded since the outbreak of the war, which can be pendular, and not necessarily indicate sustainable returns.¹⁵ It needs to be kept in mind that the vulnerability of women and children refugees is also high in this specific situation, and that close monitoring of the mobility and collaboration between state and regional authorities in neighbouring countries should be enforced to provide a clear picture of the situation and identify situations of concern.

21. The current situation in Europe may be compared with other situations of numerous arrivals in order to assess specific vulnerabilities of women and children refugees in this situation. Notably the influx of about 1.2 million refugees along the Balkan route in 2015 and the reception of refugees fleeing the post-Yugoslavian wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* during the 1990s and 2000s may be helpful in this regard.

3. SPECIFIC NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN REFUGEES

22. In order to provide adequate and adapted services, the determination of vulnerability and the assessment of the needs of an individual refugee are crucial. In its Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025), the Council of Europe defines vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum as “persons found to have special needs after individual evaluation of their situation and are entitled to call on States’ obligation to provide special protection and assistance”.¹⁶ The UN Global Compact on refugees lists women at risk, children, youth, adolescents and survivors of trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation and gender-based violence as persons with such specific needs.

23. As outlined in the UNHCR’s Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations, the concept of vulnerability is a foundational element of the human rights framework. Together with the requirement to uphold human dignity, the need to recognize and address vulnerability underpins the legal obligation of States to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. “Migrants in vulnerable situations” are thus persons who are unable effectively to enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a heightened duty of care. Children and pregnant or nursing women are identified as specifically at risk.¹⁷

24. In this sense, addressing vulnerabilities is an essential component of human rights protection. The Congress is convinced that, while a primary responsibility of national governments, local and regional authorities have a duty to protect the human rights of all persons under their authority, regardless of their migration status. As such, towns, cities and regions should take into account the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees arriving in or traveling through their territory.

25. During, but also before and after displacement, women and children are particularly vulnerable and at high risk of violation of their basic human rights. This can entail for example the individual or indirect experience of violence, including gender specific sexual violence, and torture, imprisonment, and bodily harm, but also traumatisation through the loss of relatives. In a situation of war related destructions, women, children, and other vulnerable groups disproportionately suffer from malnutrition, economic

¹⁵ Operational Data Portal – Ukraine refugee situation. Refugees from Ukraine across Europe (as of 19 July 2022). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

* All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations’ Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

¹⁶ Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025)

¹⁷ UNHCR, [Principles and Guidelines – migrants in vulnerable situations](#)

hardship, including a lack of the most basic resources of daily life, and lacking healthcare, notably in the field of sexual and reproductive health.

26. In its Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 the Committee of Ministers states that “women and girls are exposed to a continuum of violence that is specific to them because they are women, or which affects them disproportionately, and that such violence is, in this sense, gender based”. The Recommendation recognises “with grave concern that migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls may be particularly exposed to violence, trafficking in human beings, exploitation and abuse in their countries of origin, during their journey and in transit and/or destination countries” and observes that this may constitute a serious violation of their human rights, especially as they face difficulties and structural barriers in overcoming such violence, trafficking in human beings, exploitation and abuse in their diverse forms.”¹⁸

27. Women and children on the run can also face an exacerbation of already existing vulnerabilities. A rapid gender analysis of Ukraine of March 2022 takes stock of the disproportionately high poverty risk of women, especially female-headed households, already before the war against Ukraine, due to gender-related disadvantages on the labour market. The report points out that the “recent escalation of violence has led to an exponential rise in food insecurity and the disruption or failure of many essential services, particularly for women, children and specific at-risk groups. As a result, women and girls face higher risks of human rights violations and sexual exploitation and abuse, including transactional sex, survival sex and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).”¹⁹ The report calculated that during the first three months of the war against Ukraine, around 80,000 women were expected to give birth, while birth clinics were destroyed and mobility severely impaired, due to bombing in many regions of the country.

28. In a joint statement, UNICEF and UNHCR stressed that states should offer safe spaces for children and families immediately following border crossings, and link these to national child protection systems, that a rapid expansion is necessary of the capacity of emergency care arrangements with screened caregivers as well as other critical services for the protection of children, including against gender-based violence, as well as family tracing and reunification mechanisms.

29. Of specific concern in the current situation are unaccompanied refugee children, as well as the nearly 100,000 children, half of them with disabilities, who live in institutional care and boarding schools in Ukraine. Many of these children have living relatives or legal guardians, with whom they cannot unite, due to the war. Many of those institutions have already been evacuated to neighbouring countries.²⁰

3.1 Determining vulnerability through an intersectional lens

30. As outlined above, gender and age influence the vulnerability of refugees, however, to correctly adapt services to individual refugees, it is crucial to address other individual factors that may result in higher vulnerability. There is rarely one single reason for vulnerability of refugees, but rather a patchwork of factors that can result in a refugee being at increased risk of harm.

31. Aspects such as gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, education, health, and disability can strongly influence how women and children are affected or endangered in specific situations. Maintaining an intersectional perspective that recognises the interlinkages between these factors is crucial when determining vulnerability. In order to be able to address and identify these various indicators of vulnerability, it is crucial that all levels of government work together to share and collect disaggregated and gendered data.

32. For example, and as pointed out by the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights²¹, Roma women and children fleeing the war in Ukraine have suffered additional discrimination and prejudices. Consequently, there has been a high proportion of Roma among the returnees to Ukraine, among other reasons, because of discrimination they experienced in countries of refuge.²²

¹⁸ Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 “Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls” p. 8

¹⁹ Care International; UN Women of Ukraine (2022): Rapid gender analysis of Ukraine: secondary data report. 29.3.2022, p. 10.

²⁰ Unaccompanied and separated children fleeing escalating conflict in Ukraine must be protected. Joint statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, 7 March 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unaccompanied-and-separated-children-fleeing-escalating-conflict-ukraine-must-be>

²¹ [Statement](#) by the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights on International Roma Day, 7 April 2022

²² <https://www.euractiv.com/section/non-discrimination/news/faced-with-discrimination-ukrainian-roma-refugees-are-going-home/>

33. Health characteristics, such as chronic illness or disability should also be considered. When fleeing, health care or constant medication cannot be provided, so that illnesses or wounds can chronify, and already chronic illnesses can become worse. Furthermore, due to segmented responsibilities between different levels of government, refugee reception infrastructures are often not responsive to the specific needs of refugees with disabilities, while authorities and organisations working with disabled populations might lack the respective competencies regarding individuals with a refugee status.

34. If not considered and treated, the effects of violence, stress and traumatisation can lead to long-lasting post-traumatic stress disorders, which may impair the health condition and development perspective of women and children refugees. Even after arrival, there are further stress factors that can enforce vulnerability, such as the lack of social networks and feeling of isolation, or the concern about the safety of family members left behind in the country of conflict.

35. In one case, a woman from Iraq immediately after her arrival in Germany in 2015 had to hospitalized her children who suffered from extreme exhaustion and malnutrition, despite not yet having registered for asylum, to save their lives. During their flight with four children, the family experienced numerous hardships while trying to cross from Türkiye to Bulgaria, such as push-backs, hiding in the forest without food and shelter, and imprisonment of the whole family, and a ten-day foot-walk over the Balkan route to Serbia. The children survived, but even seven years later, the youngest child is suffering from a weak health condition and needs special care.²³

36. Two other factors to take into account when determining vulnerabilities and the need for adapted responses are the life-course and time dimensions.

37. The life-course dimension considers the effects of forced migration regarding the specific stages in the life-course when this situation occurs, such as early childhood, school age, transformation to adulthood, family formation, transformation into old age and frail age, to understand specific needs and vulnerabilities during those stages.

38. The importance of this dimension can be highlighted by the recent refugee flow from Ukraine, largely composed by children at school age. Understanding that forced migration and displacement can severely hamper educational careers of children refugees at school age, notably secondary school age, can enforce the priority of providing a good reception and response system for language learning and educational inclusion, which is often within the remit of local and regional authorities' responsibilities.

39. The time dimension refers to the time of the migration trajectory, which in the case of Ukrainian refugees is a question of days, while in the context of 2015/16 refugee influx, it was rather a question of months or years.²⁴ A long migration trajectory means a prolongation of life-threatening and traumatizing situations, malnutrition, missed health treatment and lacking access to labour market or education.

40. The time dimension is also relevant during the reception process, which can result in migrants becoming passive bystanders, who have to take the role of client waiting for the processing of asylum claims, for the finalisation of registrations procedures, for the reunification with family members, for the approval of their educational certificates and so forth. After having mobilized an enormous amount of individual agency during the process of flight, this can have serious effects on refugees' physical and mental health condition. It is important for local and regional stakeholders to understand that the time waiting, even in secure and agreeable conditions in the reception country, can have detrimental effects for refugees' futures and should be kept as short as possible.²⁵

41. It is recommended that local and regional authorities develop a transparent communication strategy to inform refugees about the steps in the reception process and how long they may take. They should also develop a monitoring of administrative processes, including further steps in the processing of refugees' status, such as applications for work permits, or family reunification, so that they can quickly respond to delays or report to responsible national authorities.

²³ fieldwork data gathered by consultant expert Prof. Dr. Birgit GLORIUS in the context of the research project WholeCOMM, Interview G4-M8.

²⁴ <https://www.buzzfeed.com/rossalynwarren/here-is-the-long-route-many-refugees-take-to-travel-from-syr>

²⁵ Sagbakken M., Bregård I. M., Varvin S. (2020): The Past, the Present, and the Future: A Qualitative Study Exploring How Refugees' Experience of Time Influences Their Mental Health and Well-Being. *Frontiers in Sociology* 5, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00046>.

42. To determine the specific vulnerabilities of women and children – as well as other – refugees, local authorities, social workers, and other stakeholders can use existing resources, such as the IOM handbook on protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse²⁶, which provides a framework and concrete tools, such as questionnaires, for determining and addressing vulnerabilities influenced by individual or community factors, as well as family structure.

3.2 Women and children refugees as resilient and empowered actors

43. Notwithstanding the above, it is important to avoid an overrepresentation of women refugees as passive and helpless victims, hence minimising their capacities, skills, and resilience. It should be noted that women and children are not inherently vulnerable or weak. Rather, the refugee experience, in addition to possible social and cultural prejudices, places them in a situation that creates vulnerability.²⁷

44. While local and regional authorities should address the specific vulnerability of women and children refugees, they should also build upon the agency of women and children refugees to support and empower them to resettle their life after finding refuge. Women and children refugees have valuable insights and input to give, which can be used to strengthen local and regional refugee and migration policies and actions.

45. Empowering women and children refugees, also implies informing them about their rights and status. In this regard, frontline workers should be aware of how to convey this information in a child-friendly and gender sensitive manner. To this end, local and regional authorities are encouraged to provide frontline workers and volunteer with specialised tools, such as the Council of Europe's handbook "How to convey child-friendly information to children in migration".²⁸

46. With regard to children's participation, existing tools, such as the Congress' booklet for children "How to make your town a better place"²⁹, aimed at increasing children's participation in local sustainability policies, could also be used to empower refugee children and gather their view on how to develop more child-friendly reception centres and refugee housing.

4. RECEPTION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN REFUGEES IN CITIES AND REGIONS

47. In addition to identifying and addressing individual vulnerabilities of women and children refugees, local and regional authorities can diminish the risks to women and children refugees by adapting their reception and integration policies to their most common needs. In the chapter below, the rapporteurs examined and provided good practice examples of different policy areas in which women and children may have specific needs and for which, in most member States, local and regional authorities are at least partially responsible.

4.1 Protection from violence and trafficking

48. Local and regional authorities first take over responsibility when refugees are crossing national borders and are entering national territory into a certain region. They should take steps to protect women and children refugees from violence, exploitation or trafficking throughout the reception procedure. During their visit to Poland, the rapporteurs witnessed several examples of actions taken to reduce the risks of violence and exploitation, in particular in reception centres, as outlined below. However, there is a particular risk of migrant smuggling at border crossings.

49. A recent "Guidance Note on addressing the risks of trafficking in human beings related to the war in Ukraine and the ensuing humanitarian crisis" by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)³⁰ provides numerous recommendations, including with regard to the detection of potential victims, information and awareness raising, reception and vulnerable groups such as children and women.

²⁶ IOM [Handbook](#) on protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse

²⁷ "The world's biggest minority? Refugee Women and Girls in the Global Compact on Refugees", University of New South Wales

²⁸ CoE Handbook "[How to convey child-friendly information to children in migration](#)"

²⁹ Available here: <https://rm.coe.int/booklet-how-to-make-your-town-a-better-place-pdf-/1680a5ee66>

³⁰ The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the [Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties](#)

50. The Congress report on unaccompanied refugee children recommends to inform people on the flight about the risks of being trafficked for different forms of exploitation (sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, forced criminality, organ removal, illegal adoption, abuse of surrogate motherhood...). The information should be provided at all different stages of refugee routes, at borders, during registration and in accommodation centres. Good practices include the provision of online-material or the dissemination of leaflets in different languages as well as child-friendly materials to inform children about the risks of trafficking, including recruitment and exploitation online, and to help them develop skills in identifying and avoiding risks, learning how to protect themselves and knowing where to get support and report abuse.³¹

51. In cases of mass arrivals such as in 2022 or in 2015, large numbers of persons arrive in specific border regions and localities which are located at major crossing points. This poses a challenge, as large arrival numbers may make the identification of potential victims of trafficking difficult. To minimise these risks, local and regional authorities should cooperate with national institutions, NGOs, international institutions and law enforcement to ensure that front-line service providers are trained to recognise persons at risk of trafficking.

52. In 2022, Lubelskie Voivodship in the East of Poland presented a similar humanitarian frontline. During the first 30 days after the start of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, up to 80,000 refugees crossed the border each day. The Voivodship government, in cooperation with local authorities such as the cities of Chelm or Lublin, quickly responded to the situation. The Polish interlocutors met by the rapporteurs during the visit, explained that, as of 24 February 2022, 11 a.m. reception points were installed at all road and train crossings, where local and regional authorities, NGO's and civil society organisations worked hand in hand providing assistance, food, hygienic articles, information, and means of transport.³²

53. Arriving refugees at Polish reception points had the option to travel to a local reception centre, or to be transported to a prearranged accommodation. Transport was provided by a large number of private persons. While this activity was clearly framed by individual empathy, it also provoked the intrusion of criminals who were seeking for easily exploitable persons. Rapporteur's interlocutors accounted that arriving women with small children were almost harassed by people holding signs into their faces, or making "all-inclusive" offers such as a flight ticket to Istanbul, housing and job.³³ Very quickly, national and local authorities, international organisations such as the UNHCR or volunteers identified the danger of this situation and established several measures to regain control in those situations of transit.

54. It is worth stressing the ability of volunteers to mobilise a large number of people via social media, while state institutions usually are less flexible. Thus, volunteers can fill response gaps which are very important – sometimes life-saving – and should be valued for their engagement and integrated in crisis management strategies.³⁴ By working with women's organisations and professionals experienced in providing support to victims of violence, local and regional authorities can provide women and children refugees with expertise and support that they themselves may not be in a position or capacity to give.

Good practice examples

55. When visiting a reception centre run by the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Nadarzyn near Warsaw (Poland), the rapporteurs noted several informational posters in English and Ukrainian warning the residents against their increased risk of being trafficked and providing a number to contact if they felt in danger. All reception centres visited also had a reception desk registering non-residents entering the premises, which can reduce the risk of person meaning harm entering the building and create a sense of security for residence, as they know that someone will be there to welcome and protect them.

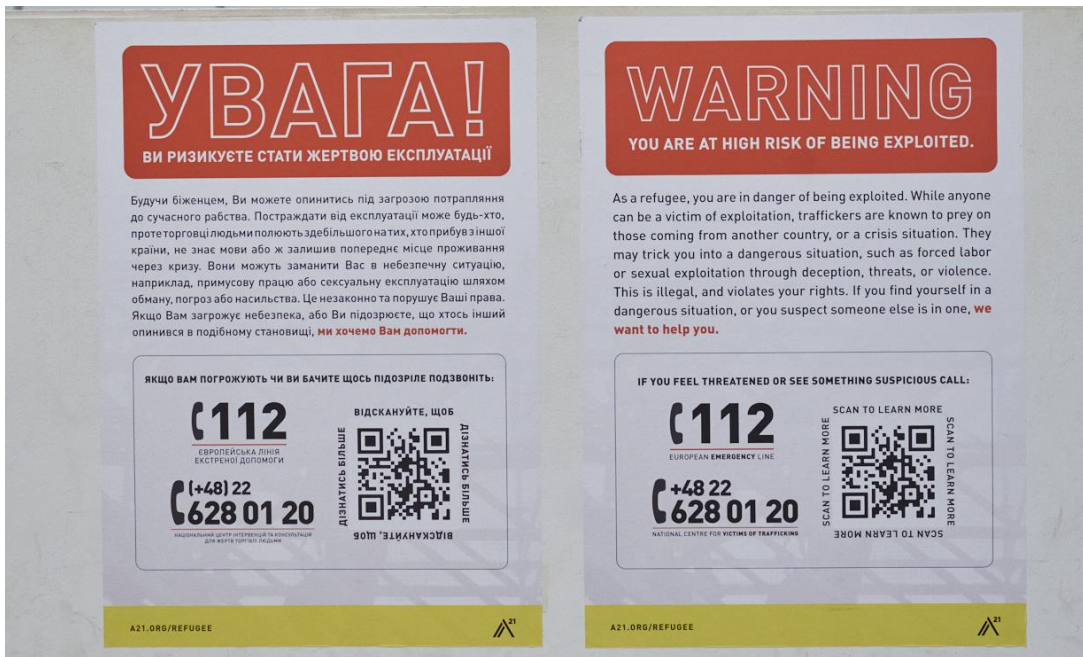
Image 1: Informational posters in a reception centre in Nadarzyn, Poland ©Council of Europe

³¹ Congress Report on Unaccompanied refugee children: the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities. 28 March 2018

³² Next visits of the CHR Office representatives on the Polish-Ukrainian border. 10.3.2022. <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/en/content/next-visits-chr-office-representatives-polish-ukrainian-border>

³³ Poland sees sign women fleeing become trafficking target. 15.3.2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-sees-signs-women-fleeing-ukraine-may-be-trafficking-target-2022-03-15/>

³⁴ Glorius, B. (2022): What can we learn from the German experience of hosting post-2015 refugees for supporting refugees from Ukraine? COPOCS Blog Article COPOCS Project » NEW COPOCS ARTICLE: What can we learn from the German experience of hosting post-2015 refugees for supporting refugees from Ukraine? By prof. Birgit Glorius



56. In the Polish border town Przemysl, Ukrainian women were recommended to take a selfie with the driver and post it in their social networks. If drivers refused, they were advised not to go with them. The city of Przemysl developed an app registering drivers and refugees who are travelling with them, which allowed authorities to track whom people are travelling with and when they arrive at their destination. Immediate border crossing areas were closed for private vehicles and meeting and transit point were installed, where only pre-registered drivers and pre-registered refugees had access.

57. In seven Romanian towns, as well as in other neighbouring countries of Ukraine, UNICEF, in cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, has established a system of Blue Dots, following the flow of children affected by the situation in Ukraine. The purpose is to develop a network of Blue Dots to ensure all children are monitored, traced, protected and will arrive safely at their destination. Blue Dots also provide a place to rest and play for children. In one of the reception centres visited by the rapporteurs, the regional authority cooperated with UNICEF, providing a Blue Dot within the centre itself.

58. In 2022, in partnership with national institutions, the Chisinau City Hall and UNHCR and UNICEF, the Moldovan women-led NGO Casa Marioarei provided health care, legal advice and psychosocial support to women and children refugees arriving from Ukraine. The organisation, which has already been providing shelter to survivors of gender-based violence in Republic of Moldova for over 20 years, provided 40% of its dormitories to women fleeing Ukraine who suffered gender-based violence.³⁵

59. Since 2022, all municipalities in the Netherlands are required to develop a policy on combatting human trafficking. Since 2019, in the Province of Zeeland, all municipalities have cooperated in a provincial working group to combat human trafficking and to provide assistance to victims and persons at risk. An appointed care coordinator centralises all cases and requests for help and identifies the most appropriate services or organisations to support potential victims, whilst accompanying the victim throughout the entire procedure.

60. In Upper Austria, police initiated the Competence and Situation Centre Migration (*Kompetenz- und Lagezentrum Migration*) in cooperation with NGOs that operated reception centres, and trained 180 police officers to be 'refugee contact officers'. They regularly visit reception centres, educate the staff on safety awareness and provide asylum seekers with information about the criminal justice system and criminal law and victim protection. Similar initiatives have been implemented in Vienna and in Västra Götaland in Sweden.³⁶

³⁵ [UNHCR - Moldovan GBV shelter offers safety and a community for refugees from Ukraine](#)

³⁶ [Good practices](#), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

4.2 Adapting local reception and accommodation to the needs of women and children

61. Upon crossing the border municipalities and regions serve as places of first reception for women and children refugees, who are in first instance often housed in group accommodation. Local and regional authorities should take into account the specific needs of women and children in such accommodation, and where possible, adapt reception centres accordingly.

62. However, for them to do so, it is crucial to know the characteristics of the persons they will receive, especially in instances where refugees are allocated to different municipalities by national authorities and it is thus not the municipalities who collect personal information.

63. During the situation of mass arrival in 2015 in Germany, First Reception Centres did not have enough capacity to accommodate all newly arriving refugees. Instead, they were immediately redistributed to counties and municipalities, which had to provide emergency accommodations. Even though municipalities are bound to cooperation with state authorities and there was also a high empathy in the population responding to the needs of arriving asylum seeking migrants, appropriate response was made difficult due to the scarcity of information flows between state and municipal authorities. For example, municipal authorities were not informed about the demographic composition of arriving refugees and could thus not prepare for their special needs such as pregnancy or disability.

64. National authorities should ensure that local and regional authorities receive the demographic information of persons allocated to them in advance, in order to be able to offer refugees the accommodation solution that is best suited to them.

65. In the first months following the start of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, the majority of refugees were initially hosted in private homes. While a great show of solidarity, accommodation in private housing can also create problematic situations, including exploitative situations and sexual harassment in the context of private accommodations.

66. Therefore, it is crucial to set up a system that ensures the safety and security of refugees also in private accommodations. GRETA recommendations stress the importance of promoting safe practices by private individuals and organisations offering assistance to refugees, and providing ongoing advice and support to private individuals who host people fleeing the war in Ukraine.³⁷

Women and children refugees in group accommodation

67. Group accommodations are not adequate places for long-term accommodation, yet they are indispensable in situations of mass arrival, as they "help to survive the peak moments", as one of the Polish interlocutors put it. However, group accommodation can also bear problematic, even dangerous effects, notably regarding the vulnerability of women and children.

68. Group accommodations are often located in segregated urban areas, such as industrial zones or former military bases, and rarely look welcoming, so that both their geographical location, physical appearance, but also the internal organisation (low standards, no internet access, concentration of people on a very limited space, intrusion into privacy, dependency on social workers, ban from work) can make them unfriendly places for women and children. This is especially the case when camps are located in geographical peripheries, such as the hotspot camps on the Greek islands, or the refugee reception camps on the Danish island of Bornholm, five ferry hours away from the Danish mainland.

69. Due to the large number and the diversity of inhabitants in refugee camps, there can be frequent conflicts between inhabitants, making it difficult to develop a sense of safety and security, notably for vulnerable groups such as women and children. Therefore, stakeholders as well as refugees usually agree that mass accommodations should only be provided for a short time, followed by a sustainable solution that also offers opportunities for self-organisation and steps towards integration.

70. However, for some groups of asylum-seeking migrants, mass accommodations are provided for a longer time, sometimes for several years. In Germany, during the legislation 2017-2021, so-called AnkER-Centres (Centres for admittance, decision and return) were introduced, which were specifically meant to segregate those groups who seemingly have few chances to receive protection, to speed up

³⁷ GRETA(2022)09, p.4

the determination process and quickly prepare them for return.³⁸ However, migrants sometimes stay in those accommodations for several years, without arriving at a durable solution or the preparation of their integration in the host country.

71. In the case of Poland, several interlocutors informed the rapporteurs that refugees crossing the Polish-Belarusian border, among them women and children, are sent to closed detention-like centres. One such example concerns a Syrian family who is in a centre since April 2022 and is obliged to stay until a decision over their asylum application is taken, which was at earliest end of September 2022. The wife was pregnant, and one of the children disabled.³⁹ According to one interlocutor, in 2021, around 1,400 women and children were living in those centres under very adverse conditions.

72. Other accounts point to families, women and children, and unaccompanied children who try to escape from those conditions or refrain from entering a mass accommodation out of fear of being detained, which can make them even more vulnerable, as there are not registered and void from support and protection.⁴⁰

73. Therefore, it is first and foremost important to identify who should not be allocated to a mass accommodation. Following the Council of Europe Recommendation “Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls”, the specific needs and safety concerns of victims of all forms of violence against women, including trafficking in human beings, and any other relevant special needs related to, for example, pregnancy, disability or specific health needs, should be taken into account when determining residential placements and access to services. Victims of violence against women, including trafficking in human beings, should be accommodated in specialised facilities.

74. In order to address the difficulties in mass accommodation and to ensure safety and security in the context of reception and first accommodation, local and regional authorities should cooperate with NGOs and national authorities, in particular on the registration and use of the data. In order to organise activities at local and regional level, such as the transfer of refugees to local accommodations or secondary places of reception, appropriate networks of all relevant actors should be developed.

75. However, as the rapporteurs experienced during their visit to Poland, with the necessary resources and political will, local authorities can actually provide safety, security and care to women and children, also in situations of mass reception and in group accommodations, as outlined in the good practice examples below.

76. Gender should be mainstreamed in the organisation of mass accommodation. To this end, authorities at all levels should cooperate to develop general plans in relation to gender equality and draw up instructions and guidelines with all partners involved in the reception of refugees in order to integrate a gender dimension in their policy.⁴¹

77. Specific measures aimed at adapting mass accommodation to women’s need can include the organisation of activities geared towards women, including recreational and educational activities, ensuring that women have sufficient autonomy, for example by providing means of transportation to reach shops, by providing vocational training and supporting them in their search for employment, and by ensuring that shared spaces are not dominated by infrastructure traditionally geared towards men, such as biljart or table football.⁴²

78. As mentioned in the previous chapter, efforts should be made to actively include women residing in mass accommodation in the daily operations of the centre, and to promote their participation in decision-making and community life where possible. As the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 suggests, this could include participation in local, cultural or women’s associations, sports clubs, youth clubs and other organisations.

³⁸ Beinhorn, J.; Gasch, S.; Glorius, B.; Kintz, M.; Schneider, H. (2019): National report on the governance of the asylum reception system in Germany. In *Ceaseval research on the common european asylum system* (23), p. 13. http://ceaseval.eu/publications/WP3_Germany.pdf

³⁹ [Verloren im Niemandsland: Flüchtlinge an der belarussisch-polnischen Grenze | Europa | DW | 07.07.2022](https://www.dw.com/de/verloren-im-niemandsland-fl%C3%BChtlinge-an-der-belarussisch-polnischen-grenze/a-62349252)

⁴⁰ CG34(2018)13final, Unaccompanied refugee children: the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities, 28 March 2018, p. 11; Informal information by Jesuit Refugee Service Romania, 30 June 2022

⁴¹ As recommended by the Dutch-Speaking National Council of Women of Belgium in “Women in asylum reception centres: Towards a gender sensitive approach”, p.93

⁴² Dutch-Speaking National Council of Women of Belgium in [“Women in Asylum Reception Centres: Towards a Gender Sensitive Approach”](#)

79. Refugee children in mass accommodation should not be denied their right to play and learn safely. The creation of spaces geared specifically toward children is essential. However, the notion of child-friendliness should be taken into account throughout the organisation of the centre as a whole. As mentioned in the previous chapter, involving children in the organisation and activities of a reception centre, can provide a good insight into their needs and can help local authorities and frontline workers adapt, to the extent possible, mass accommodation to meet children's expectations. Meaningful child participation can also give children in reception centres a sense of belonging and agency.

80. According to UNICEF, child-friendly spaces should be secure, safe and inclusive, provide a stimulating and supportive environment, build on existing structures and capacities within a community, use a participatory approach, and provide or support integrated programmes and services. To establish such spaces, the organisation developed a Practical Guide for Developing Child Friendly Spaces, which can also be a useful tool for local and regional authorities receiving a large number of refugee children.⁴³

81. It is crucial to provide information, transparent communication, stay sensitive towards the needs of women and children in the accommodation, and establish trustful relationships. To do so, the presence of staff, trained in human rights, gender equality and violence against women, including, as appropriate, lawyers, social workers, intercultural mediators, interpreters, police officers and guards, should be ensured in these facilities. As this provides a considerable deployment of personnel, it can be an added value to involve NGOs and volunteers in the organisation of mass accommodations.

82. In general, the rapporteurs stress that good cooperation with civil society, including children's organisations or clubs, women-led organisation and diaspora groups, is essential. If the analysis of individual vulnerabilities show that certain women or children are particularly at risk, for example due to their origin, gender identity or health condition, civil society organisations who work with specific subgroups may be able to provide useful insights and support.

83. It is helpful to have set up an appropriate platform for cooperation at local level even before a crisis situation arises. Municipal authorities should actively involve their relevant bodies (e.g., housing, welfare, education etc.) here. Since in situations of crisis, many new volunteers want to join, it is advantageous to have an appropriate coordination structure, such as a volunteer agency, which can register new volunteers accordingly, give a first briefing and suggest relevant organisations or assignments to the volunteer. In cases where volunteers engage with vulnerable groups, the same standards should be set as for professional employees regarding personal integrity and maturity. This can entail to define a minimum age, or to ask for a certificate of good conduct. Training and supervision as well as psychological support should also be available for volunteers.

84. Information material should be produced that are designed in different languages and are also accessible to children and young people or other groups with special needs. References to information and emergency hotlines are important, and a local hotline where refugees can present their concerns is an excellent way for local actors to keep track of relevant and often rapidly changing problems. This information can be used additionally to monitoring and supervision of group accommodations in order to solve problems on the ground.

Good practice examples

85. In particular when visiting a reception centre in Lublin, the rapporteurs noted the importance of interpersonal relations to create safe and welcoming accommodation for women and children. The centre, which was located in a former school, hosted around 50 refugees at the time of the visit and had accommodated around 900 people since February 2022, nearly all women and children. Social workers and volunteers both worked in shifts to ensure that the residents had a point of contact, at the start of the operations 24 hours per day. This was reduced to 16 hours per day at the time of visit for the sake of the well-being of volunteers and staff. Upon arrival with a member of the City's administration, the warm greetings with the social workers, volunteers and residents immediately indicated a close, respectful relation between residents and city administration. Residents all slept in the former school gym on cots. An effort was made to create a private space in a room where the laundry machine was located. Containing a table with two chairs, this room – which could be closed off – was used for children's online schooling and by the women as a make-shift hair or nail salon or for a space to have a private conversation. However, despite fact that the centre did not have private rooms

⁴³ [A Practical Guide for Developing Child Friendly Spaces](#), UNICEF

and despite the relatively crowded circumstances, the rapporteurs' overall impression was that of a facility that appeared homely, familiar and filled with humanity. This centre provided an example of how, even with limited facilities and infrastructure, and by prioritising trust and communication, group accommodation can provide safe spaces for women and children.

Images 2 and 3: dormitory and private space in a reception centre in Lublin ©Council of Europe



86. In reception centres visited by the delegation in Lublin and Warsaw, children's play areas were established, either within the larger dormitories themselves or as separate rooms. In the children's play area in a reception centre run by the City of Warsaw, which consisted of a large room for general play and a smaller room for guided activities, professionals were present to organise activities for children, allowing mothers time off childcaring.

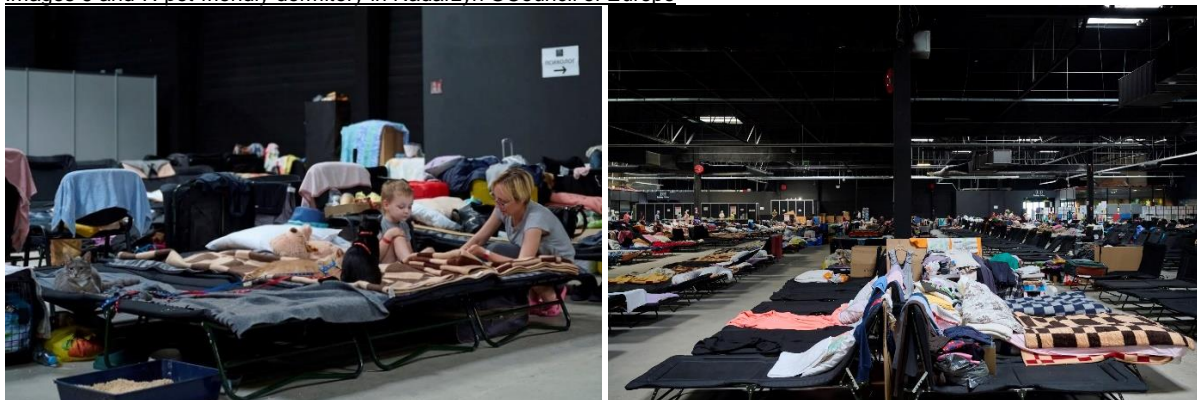
87. The reception centre in Warsaw also hosted an on-site free 'shop', where residents could collect items they needed. The rapporteurs noted that the goods available, in line with the demographic composition of the residents, were tailored in particular to the needs of women with children, with many child carriers and children's clothes available to choose from.

Image 4: children's play space in Warsaw reception centre Image 5: free 'shop' in Warsaw reception centre ©Council of Europe



88. Research has shown that pets can have beneficial effects on mental health and can bring comfort to refugees in times of despair. Mindful of this, a regional reception centre near Warsaw, visited by the delegation, assigned one of its dormitories as an animal-friendly dormitory. While organising such pet-friendly spaces may not be feasible in all mass accommodation settings, the interlocutor the rapporteurs spoke with, stressed the importance of being able to stay with their animals for the residents of the centre.

Images 6 and 7: pet-friendly dormitory in Nadarzyn ©Council of Europe



89. To organise the safe accommodation of Ukrainian refugees in private housing, the City of Lublin in East Poland, in cooperation with civil society organisations, developed a system to match refugees and hosts, while ensuring the trustworthiness of hosts. An “accommodation point” was set up in a local cultural centre, operating eight hours per day. Refugees looking for accommodation and hosts offering accommodation were interviewed during at least one hour to make sure that they match. The organisation also carried out follow up visits to ensure that the cohabitation went well, to ask for further needs, to distribute donations of fresh food, and to provide advice to the hosts.

90. In Vienna, Austria, the city explicitly promotes and financially supports individual housing for asylum applicants staying in the reception system of the Land. It is considered the best housing arrangement to foster integration and does not require alternatives to be found when international protection is granted. In addition, public costs for individual housing are lower than for organised facilities. Some 70% of asylum applicants in Vienna live in individual housing. Asylum applicants transferred to basic care in Vienna are required to go to a central service point and there they get the information on individual housing.⁴⁴

91. In Belgium, since 2016, the Flemish regional foster care agency, in cooperation with civil society, has worked to place unaccompanied refugee children in foster families, to provide them with a stable family environment and because there is a lack of capacity to adapt group accommodations to the needs of young refugees. By late April 2022, 106 Ukrainian children had already been placed in foster care.

92. Following pilot projects by the Ministry of the Interior, the Italian Association of Municipalities and UNHCR, a decentralised accommodation system for asylum applicants and international protection beneficiaries was created in Italy. It was referred to as the SPRAR system. Interested municipalities could request funding to open facilities, which would offer not only accommodation and food, but various other forms of support. Municipalities often cooperated with civil society organisations. SPRAR facilities were usually on a small scale and distributed over the territory, to avoid marginalisation. However, in December 2018, the system was renamed SIPROIMI and exclusively reserved for international protection beneficiaries and unaccompanied children, relegating asylum applicants to reception centres.

4.3 Protecting women and children refugees' health

93. From the perspective of receiving localities, a specific challenges in relation to health infrastructure is the sudden increase of population in need, especially certain groups like children or elderly people, which might overburden the existing health care system, or produce specific shortages. Furthermore, the arrival of persons with disabilities or severe, life-threatening diseases which need immediate intervention can be challenging. Diversity of languages spoken by refugees makes it more difficult to provide interpreters, and budgetary issues or unclear regulations regarding the reimbursement of health costs related to refugees can put further pressure on local and regional authorities.

94. From the perspective of refugees, while during the flight and often before, health risks are high and health infrastructure missing, after the arrival at a place of reception, there are further barriers to an adequate health care. Some countries restrict access to medical treatment during the asylum process to basic and emergency treatment. Sometimes, there are practical barriers regarding the access to

⁴⁴ [Country Report Austria](#), European Council on Refugees and Exiles, April 2022

medical care, such as the necessity to report to (not medically trained) staff of the asylum accommodation who then assess if an appointment with a doctor is necessary. Often, there is also a lack of knowledge about the health system of the reception country, cultural barriers such as hesitation of women refugees to receive treatment by a male doctor, misunderstanding due to missing interpretation, or limited access to specialised medical treatment due to living in a remote area.

95. In particular the need for mental healthcare is high for women and children refugees. The Asylum Protection Center in Belgrade in May 2015 found that almost every child referred to them had experienced some form of trauma or violence, either in their country of origin or on their journey to Serbia. The children witnessed killings or violence committed against their parents or close family members, war and accidents, and they themselves were often victims of physical and or sexual abuse. Along the way, they were separated from parents, robbed; they faced violence from regional and government officials who treated them as adults, or deprived them of food and water. These experiences leave long-lasting psychological and physical consequences on the children themselves.⁴⁵

96. The German Chamber of Psychotherapists reported in September 2015, that at least 50% of adult refugees in Germany were suffering from post-traumatic stress-disorder, and 20% of refugee children, but only 4% actually received psychotherapeutic therapy.⁴⁶ The Chamber criticized that in Germany, asylum seekers during the asylum procedure are only eligible for basic and emergency health care, so that an early treatment of mental diseases is often denied. This can lead to chronification and can severely hamper the integration process in the long run.

97. In the context of Ukrainian women and children refugees, the interlocutors highlighted the importance of trauma sensitivity, as traumatic experiences often are suppressed as long as other, immediately pressing issues have to be solved, such as housing, education, or labour market access. The consequence of suppressing trauma is belated diagnose, so that therapeutical interventions become more difficult.

98. Local and regional authorities play a role in the provision adequate health care, and they should provide women and children refugees with effective access to quality, age- and gender-sensitive health services. This should encompass in particular mental health, sexual and reproductive health services and rights, health services during and after pregnancy and services related to experiences of violence against women. Authorities should ensure that healthcare provision takes into account the situation and personal characteristics of women and children refugees and provides age- and gender-sensitive treatment. Essential healthcare services, including primary care, urgent and immediate care, palliative care and treatment or assistance necessary for public health reasons, should be provided to all women and children refugees, also those in irregular situations.⁴⁷

99. Of specific concern is the aspect of sexual violence. Rape as a war crime is well known from the war in Bosnia, with devastating consequences for the victims. Even though numbers are hard to estimate and are probably largely underestimated, at least 10,000 to 50,000 women are believed to having been sexually assaulted during the Bosnian war.⁴⁸ A medical study of 68 Croatian and Bosniak victims of rape during the 1992–1995 war found that many suffered psychological problems as a result of the crime, while none had been diagnosed with psychiatric history prior to the rapes. The study reached the conclusion that the rapes had “deep immediate and long-term consequences on the mental-health” of the women.⁴⁹

100. To assess health status, special needs and vulnerabilities, a first medical screening is indispensable, connected with information to the refugees regarding health services and how they are accessible, and clarity about the payment procedures. General Practitioners and their reception and administrative staff should also be informed about the eligibility of refugees to receive health care, and what documents are needed, as confusion about those issues is believed to hamper the access of refugees to medical care

⁴⁵ Minors seeking asylum <https://www.azilsrbija.rs/minors-seeking-asylum/?lang=en>

⁴⁶ Bundes-Psychotherapeutenkammer: 2015: Mindestens die Hälfte der Flüchtlinge ist psychisch krank. <https://www.bptk.de/mindestens-die-haelfte-der-fluechtlinge-ist-psychisch-krank/?cookie-state-change=1659093520551>

⁴⁷ CM/Rec(2022)17: Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

⁴⁸ ‘20,000 Women Sexually Assaulted’ During Bosnian War | Balkan Insight

⁴⁹ Lončar, M.; Medved, V. (2006): Psychological Consequences of Rape on Women in 1991–1995 War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Croatian Medical Journal* 47(1): 67–75. PMC 2080379. PMID 16489699.)

101. As the health sector, notably hospital staff, often has a high degree of diversity, it is helpful to collect data on language competencies of medical staff, so that language-competent personnel can be matched to refugee patients. Furthermore, a local pool of certified interpreters should be set up, and local and regional authorities should secure the financial means to provide this service to health institutions and General Practitioners when needed. Even if not favorable, but maybe necessary if resources are scarce, interpretation assistance could also be organised online.

102. As traumatic and violent experiences are hard to detect and are largely underreported, local and regional authorities should be aware of this problem and should also raise the awareness of all staff dealing with refugees. It is advisable to cooperate with competent NGOs in this context, and to set up specific trauma-centres where specialized teams offer efficient diagnosis and treatment.

103. There should be alertness with regards to specifically vulnerable groups, such as marginalized minorities, disabled persons, children and unaccompanied youth. Local and regional authorities should take care that relevant measures are developed to promote fair access to healthcare and to support healthcare literacy of those groups.

104. Health conditions should also be considered, in policies that in first instance are not directly related to healthcare, such as relocation. For example, in Berlin, it was decided not to relocate a group of deaf Ukrainians even though due to capacity reasons, half of the group should have relocated to the city of Cologne. For the group of deaf refugees, the reorientation in a new city and separation from family members would have meant a specific hardship, compared to other refugees without disabilities.

105. Best practice examples in this context are often bound to horizontal transnational cooperations, such as the relocation of a boarding school for deaf children to its German partner institution in Rhineland-Palatinate (see example below). Those local-to-local cooperations are an important basis for tailor-made support, and they should be supported by local and regional authorities in the receiving countries.

Good practice examples

106. The rapporteurs witnessed several initiatives aimed at helping refugee children cope with and process mental trauma, including drawing sessions with trained child carers or psychologists, allowing children to express and process their emotions through images. In one centre, volunteers had laminated these photos, as mothers often wanted to destroy their children's drawings as they were an expression of their fears and trauma. Interlocutors stressed the importance of having staff trained to cope with such psychic trauma. In several instances, Ukrainian psychologists were involved in these activities.

107. The City of Lublin, Poland, developed and published a children's book entitled "Brave little bunny", which tells the story of a mother rabbit and its child who have to flee their home. The interlocutor said it had helped children cope with their uncertain situation and helped mothers talk to their children about it.

Image 6: a volunteer shows children's drawings



Image 7: A story book for refugee children ©Council of Europe



108. A reception centrum visited by the rapporteurs, in Nadarzyn (Poland), consisted of very large dormitories, accommodating up to 1000 persons at a time. However, separate, smaller dormitories were available for residents recovering from illnesses, the elderly and mothers with very small children.

109. In the city of Frankenthal, by 6 April 2022, 29 Ukrainian refugees were hosted by the Pfalz Institute for Hearing and Communication, under the auspices of the regional authority of Palatine. 14 children and 15 adults from Ukraine were hosted in the boarding school in Frankenthal. The deaf children are students from a Ukrainian partner school in Kyiv. There were also two Ukrainian teachers of the Kyiv school for the deaf among the refugees, who will be employed at the boarding school. Private donors provide for the school supplies as well as for the daily needs of the refugees, including, for example, batteries for hearing aids.

110. The British Medical Association developed a Refugee and asylum seeker patient health toolkit, to inform General Practitioners about refugees' specific health needs and how to overcome common barriers.⁵⁰ The UK Free E-Learning Module for General Practitioners on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) provides online information and training to deal with FMG, including a section on communication skills for FGM consultations.

111. In 2018, the municipality of Keçiören (Türkyie), in collaboration with IOM, established the Keçiören migrant and refugee centre to serve newcomers, especially Syrian and Iraqi refugees in the district, in collaboration with both local government and NGOs. The centre runs a one-stop shop for multiple services including supporting newcomers' access public services and referrals to other institutions. This first municipality-led migrant centre also organises social and educational activities, awareness-raising events, Turkish language courses, training on women's health and family planning and intercultural mediation in collaboration with interpreters.⁵¹

4.4 Access to education and extra curricular activities

112. While it is widely reflected that there might be a difference between first reception/protection and long-term integration, at the local level, both processes go hand in hand. This is specifically true regarding the topic of education, as access to schooling is a fundamental right and should be provided from day one after entering a state territory. However, member states are dealing differently with education issues, such as definition of compulsory school age, but also the question at what point in time the enrolment of refugee children is organized, and by whom.

113. Notably children in transit are often excluded from education. Given the fact that those journeys sometimes take several years, as a report on refugee girls in Balkan countries revealed, children often face lengthy times of interrupted education, which can be detrimental for their further life options. The report found that as many as 4,200 children who lived in Moria, Lesbos had no access to formal education as of September 2019. But even among refugee children living outside camps in Greece, only 67% were enrolled in schools.

114. Among the reasons were not only lacking enrolment options and organisational problems, but also lacking motivation, as the children expected to be in transit and leave Greece soon. Furthermore, some parents of refugee girls did not accept mixed classrooms, and some were concerned about teenage girls traveling to school on the bus with the boys. Explaining why it was difficult to go to school, the girls mentioned instances of islamophobia, racism and xenophobia.⁵² Such issues as availability of public transport and discrimination should be identified and tackled by local and regional authorities.

115. To allow children in this situation a chance to find their way back into the schooling system, it is recommended to expand the age threshold for school enrolment above the end of the compulsory education age, to give youth who lost years at school due to their flight an opportunity to catch up and open further options for tertiary education.

116. Access to education in the context of children refugees is, from the perspective of receiving localities, a matter of coordination and capacity management. As many local authorities face similar challenges regarding the provision of education, in particular during large refugee arrivals. The rapporteurs recommend that they exchange best practices and share lessons learned. National associations of local and regional authorities play a key role here, providing their members with best

⁵⁰ <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/ethics/refugees-overseas-visitors-and-vulnerable-migrants/refugee-and-asylum-seeker-patient-health-toolkit>

⁵¹ "Paving the way for refugees in Türkiye: from reception to durable solutions", International Catholic Migration Commission, April 2018

⁵² Save the Children (2020): Girls on the move in the Balkans. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/girls_on_the_move_balkan.pdf/

practices and offering a platform for exchange. Similarly, transnational networks of cities and regions can also play such role.

117. Notably in times of mass arrival, and in cases where refugees are concentrating in certain urban areas, providing capacities for schooling can pose a serious challenge. This is the case in the context of Polish cities towards the start of the school year 2022/23. While until the end of school year 2021/22, the majority of Ukrainian refugee children were taking part in the Ukrainian online education, interlocutors expected that the vast majority would enrol in Polish schools at the start of the school year 2022/23. In the city of Warsaw, while during the 2021/22 school year there were less than 20,000 Ukrainian children enrolled in the school system, it was expected that in the next school year, there would be more than 60,000. For Poland as a whole the estimations were that enrolment numbers would jump from 200,000 to 700,000.

118. The efforts needed in terms of providing buildings, learning material and teachers are enormous, yet they are difficult to assess, given the volatility of the situation, with many refugees still expecting to return soon. Furthermore, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science has pleaded to the major reception countries to not assimilate the Ukrainian children but support them to preserve their own culture and education curriculum.

119. Several solutions are already being developed by local and non-governmental actors. UNICEF Poland collected data on Ukrainian children to better allocate them to schools and recommended, as an instantaneous soft measure, to raise the maximum class size from 25 to 28 children. Regarding the need for teachers, Polish municipalities have already started to employ Ukrainian teachers who fled the country. The city of Lublin for example, had 65 Ukrainian teachers during the school year 2021/22 and will increase the number up to 80 in the school year 2022/23, in cooperation between the local authority, local schools, and NGOs.

120. In the city of Warsaw, a Ukrainian school was installed which follows the Ukrainian curriculum. Many Ukrainian children all over Europe also participated in distance schooling after their flight from Ukraine. During the Covid crisis, the Ukrainian online school program was fully developed, which can be seen as an asset for the current situation, as it leaves Ukrainian children and youth with several options for pursuing their educational career.

121. However, while distance schooling was appreciated during the first months of war, it is not seen as a long term solution, as it prevents children and youth from social learning and meeting with their peer group. Furthermore, the curriculum for online teaching does not cover the entire school curriculum, and notably sports or arts are left out. Nonetheless, in order to compensate for the lack of teachers notably for the older students, a mixed model of classroom participation and online lessons could be envisaged.

122. Several interlocutors were specifically concerned about the situation of older Ukrainian refugee children. During the school year 2021/22 many of them were alone at home the whole day, following their online curriculum while mothers were at work, and younger siblings in childcare. Thus, youth suffer from loneliness and lack of perspectives, notably those who were close to school graduation or had just started tertiary education.

123. Given the fact that in Ukraine adult age starts at 16, while it is 18 in most member States, youth between 16 and 18 experienced a roll-back in their independence and development opportunities. In the eyes of several of the delegation's interlocutors, it was very important to pay more attention to the age group 16-25 and develop support programmes for their professional and social development.

124. Another important aspect regarding the well-being of refugee children and youth is the access to extra-curricular activities, such as sports, arts or music. By attending those activities, they cannot only develop their talents, but also express their emotions and find friends and a meaningful participation in social life. Studies and feedback from the interlocutors suggest that extracurricular activities are often focussed on children at primary school age, while there are few offers for youth and adolescent refugees.⁵³

⁵³ Save the Children (2020): Girls on the move in the Balkans. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/girls_on_the_move_balkan.pdf; Interview 2 with Deputy Commissioner of Human Rights, 4 July 2022; interview 4 with Stakeholders working in the field, 4 July 2022).

125. While compulsory education is strongly regulated by law, in the field of non-formal education, there is much more room for manoeuvre, which should be used by local and regional authorities to develop tailor-made offers for all age groups of refugee children and youth. Local authorities can integrate public institutions such as theaters or music schools, but also local sport clubs and the collective creativity of civil society.

Good practice examples

126. The Association of Polish Cities developed a guidebook on how to set up Ukrainian temporary schools in Poland, aimed at providing a stable schooling environment, releasing time for working partners, creating workplaces for Ukrainian teachers in Poland and simplifying re-integration of Ukrainian refugees upon their return. The guide is available in Polish and English.⁵⁴

127. The State of Luxembourg developed a system to respond to the needs of older children and youth, where recent graduates of Ukrainian upper secondary education, who have not been in higher education for at least one year previously, have the opportunity to prepare for a Luxembourgish national diploma, during a one-year course offered by the National School for Adults. For the target group of young secondary school leavers, a summer school of the Diploma + programme, bridging the transition between school and employment or higher education, will be set up by the Ministry of Education's VET department (SFP). To spread the information and offer consultation, the Department for the Schooling of Newly Arrived Children (SECAM) of the Luxembourgish Ministry of Education has set up a single point of contact for families from Ukraine, with hotlines available in English and Ukrainian.⁵⁵

128. The County of Norfolk (United Kingdom) has organised online trainings and developed informational material aimed at schoolteachers and staff to build their capacities to receive Ukrainian students and provide them with information about the available interpretation services and good practices.⁵⁶

129. In March 2022, in the town of Caserta in Italy's southern region of Campania, organised play-based workshops for Ukrainian children aged 6 to 14 who have fled the war to learn Italian. The workshops were held in the offices of Cidis, a non-profit organization for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and lasted for an initial period of two months.⁵⁷

130. In the city of Lublin, the Social Committee to Help Ukraine organised tailor made offers to refugee children and youth, in order to help them develop their talents. Individual approaches entail the recruitment of an Ukrainian opera singer to give music lessons, and the organization of scholarships for attending music schools and creativity classes for refugee children. Several international organisations also organize summer camps for Ukrainian refugee children during summer holidays.

131. In the city of Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), the City Centre of Young Naturalists from Chisinau – an institution of extra-scholastic education, the goal of which is to educate children in the ecology and environmental protection sector – organised a day camp for Ukrainian refugee children, comprising of drawing classes, applications developments, design, floriculture, gardening, taking care of pets, ecological theatre, fine arts, classes of photography and computer literacy.⁵⁸

4.5 Access to the local housing and labour market

Access to housing

132. Housing is a pressing issue in the context of refugee reception, notably when dealing with vulnerable groups. Challenges arise from unequal distribution or settlement of refugees, who are often oriented towards larger cities with an already dense housing market, the provision of affordable or social housing, as refugees mostly have few financial means or are dependent on social benefits, and discrimination in the housing market, which makes it difficult for refugees, notably vulnerable groups, to find decent housing, and increases the risk of segregation and social exclusion.

⁵⁴ [Guidebook: Providing extramural education to Ukrainian children on-site in Poland](#), Association of Polish Cities

⁵⁵ Cedefop 2022: Luxembourg: integrating Ukrainian refugees in education and the labour market system. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/luxembourg-integrating-ukrainian-refugees-education-and-labour-market-syste>

⁵⁶ [Support for schools with newly arrived Ukrainian children - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

⁵⁷ <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/39227/refugee-children-learn-italian-with-play>

⁵⁸ Refugees' children involved in extra-curricular activities. 10 March 2022. <https://www.moldpres.md/en/news/2022/03/10/22001833>

133. Many member States have a form of relocation mechanism to distribute refugees more evenly across the country, which can be particularly important in the context of very large migration flows, which often impact urban centres and border regions disproportionately. Other local and regional authorities, on the other hand, may actually have a need for new inhabitants, be it to address labour shortages, to repopulate rural areas or for other reasons.

134. To address this, some member States have put in place legislation that restrict the mobility of refugees, at least for a certain duration. However, relocation mechanisms do not always take into account specific needs of or the impact of relocation on vulnerable groups like women and children. This happened in Munich, when the district government allocated newly arriving Afghan refugees to a collective accommodation where refugee families lived as over-stayers.⁵⁹ Refugee families had to move out of the accommodation and were re-distributed to other group accommodations all over the district. This solution was clearly to the detriment of the integration process of children and families, as children had to enroll in another school and were driven out of their already established social network. In order to avoid those difficult situations, stakeholders of all government levels should cooperate to agree on an accepted relocation mechanism.

135. Ukrainian refugees have mostly arrived in large urban centres. This is partly due to personal networks existing in those cities, but also due to selective knowledge and the perception that only larger cities can offer employment or education opportunities. During the visit, interlocutors repeatedly pointed to the immense pressure on the housing market in major arrival cities, such as Warsaw, which received 350,000 Ukrainian refugees, or Rzeszów, whose population increased from roughly 200,000 to 300,000, with 35% of today's residents being Ukrainians.⁶⁰

136. This added to already existing problems in the housing market, such as shortage of housing, rapidly increasing prices, and residential segregation. Initially, most Ukrainian refugees in Poland (and elsewhere) found shelter in private accommodations. This can prove to be very useful as a first accommodation type, as private hosts can assist with information, bureaucracy, or help to find childcare, schools, or job offers. However, those private accommodations are only provided temporarily. Several of the Polish interlocutors pointed to big concerns regarding the end of the summer 2022, when financial support for Polish families hosting Ukrainians would end and many Ukrainians would need to find housing. Even though the volatility of the situation made planning difficult, local authorities envisaged that about 50% of Ukrainian would stay in Poland and need adequate housing.

137. However, recent surveys show that a certain share of Ukrainian refugees would be ready to relocate to smaller towns, as they also suffer the negative effects of overpopulated cities.⁶¹ Therefore, local and regional authorities who have space and opportunities for refugees, could develop information material to inform refugees of the opportunities of certain regions.

138. Nonetheless, efforts towards a more equitable redistribution of refugees, especially when they target more rural areas, cannot be seen separately from the need for further development and better service provision of rural areas, the need for which the Congress has repeatedly pointed out.

139. Also, as another interlocutor mentioned, private accommodations are not offered to everyone, and there are vulnerable groups of refugees who end up in mass accommodations as they are not accepted by private families, such as people with severe illness, children with disabilities, minority families or very large families.⁶² Thus, local authorities should have an eye especially on the most vulnerable groups in mass accommodations, as they cannot draw from their own social capital to find decent housing. To find appropriate housing, local and regional authorities can cooperate with civil society, as well as with the private sector and use their transnational or national associations of local and regional authorities.

⁵⁹ Beschämender Umgang mit Menschen, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 27. December 2021,

<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/muenchen-gefluechtete-allach-unterkunft-regierung-1.5496620>

⁶⁰ Union of Polish metropolises 2022: Urban hospitality: unprecedented growth, challenges and opportunities. A report on Ukrainian refugees in the largest Polish cities. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/poland-urban-hospitality-great-growth-challenges-and-opportunities_en

⁶¹ Info GmbH 2022: Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine. Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat - März 2022. Pressegespräch, 4.4.2022. https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/nachrichten/2022/umfrage-ukraine-fluechtlinge.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3

⁶² Interlocutors cited the example of a family who was discharged from hospital after a 4-months cancer therapy and did not know where to go, or a mother with an autistic child who was not accepted by private hosts.

140. The same alertness should be developed regarding discrimination in the housing market, which particularly affects minorities, large families and families with disabled relatives members. Local authorities should take extra efforts to support those groups on an individual basis.

Employment

141. Labour market access is a crucial issue of integration, and in the case of refugees, it is often a long and exhausting process. The most important obstacles immigrants and refugees face are language competence, acknowledgement of educational certificates and prior work-experience,⁶³ as well as discrimination and deskilling, notably in highly competitive labour market situations.

142. However, refugee women also face specific, gender-related obstacles, resulting in a lower labour market activity and particular vulnerability on the job market.⁶⁴ Among the main challenges refugee women are facing when integrating in the labour market, the most important were language challenges, cultural differences, health issues and the role and attitude of caseworkers. Studies have found that notably women with smaller children rarely attended language classes.⁶⁵ The most obvious reason is the lack of childcare, but another study also found that women had given up courses not only because of childcare responsibilities but because of pressure from their husbands.⁶⁶

143. Further constraints were mobility issues, notably in rural regions, and when women are dependent on public transport. Poor public transport infrastructure hampers the participation in language training, and in the labour market.⁶⁷ Furthermore, in particular medium-qualified, refugee women are less likely than their male counterparts to find employment in rural areas and face more obstacles to integration in rural areas.⁶⁸

144. In the case of Ukrainian refugee women, the wish for labour market participation is expected to be high, as most women were also active in the labour market in their home country. In 2021, the employment rate of women above 15 years in Ukraine was 43,9%, compared to 57,8% among men.⁶⁹ However, in addition to the obstacles described above, Ukrainian women refugees may face additional structural challenges, considering that so many women are momentarily single-parent households. The access to childcare facilities will thus be crucial for their labour market integration.

145. Local and regional authorities need to establish a labour market inclusion strategy that includes all relevant stakeholders, such as employers, chambers, migration specialists, consultants, NGOs, and members of the relevant municipal authorities. Strategies should be based on an intersectional and anti-discriminatory approach.

Good practice examples

146. With regard to relocation of refugees, in the Norwegian system municipalities voluntarily inform the Directorate for Integration and Diversity of the number of refugees they are able to welcome and, in turn, receive subsidies and integration grants for a period of five years in order to cover any cost incurred by the settlement of newly arrived refugees locally.⁷⁰

147. In Luleå (Sweden) the municipal housing company Lulebo aims at making 25% of its vacant flats available for refugees who were assigned Luleå as their municipality of reception. First families and unaccompanied young people have priority.

⁶³ Since 2015, Europe has recognised the importance of validating informal and non-formal skills early on and recognising foreign qualifications so that refugees are able to capitalise on their skills. Sweden's Fast Track initiative is a good example how this can work [Sweden: Fast-track initiative to help asylum-seekers enter labour \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/european-council/en/stories/sweden-fast-track-initiative-to-help-asylum-seekers-enter-labour)

⁶⁴ idem

⁶⁵ de Paiva Lareiro, C., Rother, N., Siegert, M. (2020): Dritte Welle der IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung von Geflüchteten. Geflüchtete verbessern ihre Deutschkenntnisse und fühlen sich in Deutschland weiterhin willkommen. Ausgabe 01|2020 der Kurzanalysen des Forschungszentrums Migration, Integration und Asyl des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Nürnberg.

⁶⁶ Hillmann, F., Toğral Koca, B. (2021) : "By women, for women, and with women": on the integration of highly qualified female refugees into the labour Markets of Berlin and Brandenburg. CMS 9, 3 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00211-3>

⁶⁷ Arbeitsmarkt-Integration von Migrantinnen: „Kein Sprint, sondern ein Marathon“. 26 March 2021.

<https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/sachsen-anhalt/migrantinnen-arbeitsmarkt-integration-fachtag-100.html>

⁶⁸ Perchinig, B., Perumadan, J. (2022) [Are rural areas across Europe viable destinations for Ukrainian refugee women?](https://www.destatis.de/SharedDocs/pressesprache/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2022/03/22_ukraine.html)

⁶⁹ Statistisches Bundesamt 2022 : [Ukraine](https://www.destatis.de/SharedDocs/pressesprache/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2022/03/22_ukraine.html). Statistisches Länderprofil 2/22. Wiesbaden : destatis; Info GmbH 2022: Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine. Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat - März 2022. Pressegespräch, 4.4.2022.

⁷⁰ Steen, A. (2016): Deciding Refugee Settlement in Norwegian Cities: Local Administration or Party Politics? *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29/4, pp. 464-482

148. NGOs in Marseille (France) implement a 'sliding lease' system. The NGO rents accommodation, which it sublets to a beneficiary. After subletting the accommodation, the NGO also provides overall social and administrative support (e.g. daily budget management, management of administrative procedures). When the beneficiary is sufficiently independent, the NGO 'slides the lease' over, and the beneficiary then becomes the tenant.⁷¹ A similar subletting scheme in the Swedish region Norrbotten is run by social services. Such schemes can help vulnerable refugees find accommodation, as the NGO or municipal service is the contracted party, providing a guarantee to the landlord.

149. In Leipzig (Germany) the NGO Kontaktstelle Wohnen helps refugees to find an apartment or a shared room. Refugees are paired with volunteers who support their search on the housing market. They jointly browse ads, make phone calls, and go to appointments with potential landlords. The presence of the local volunteer helps to overcome obstacles and stereotypes on the side of the landlords, and helps refugees understand the functioning of the German housing market and their obligation as tenants. To train the volunteers, Contact Point Housing convenes workshops on questions about housing, refugee rights, the housing market or other issues.⁷²

150. To provide better labour market support for Ukrainian refugees, the Polish Ministry of Family and Social Policy organised training for employees of labour market offices on how to work with war trauma survivors.

151. In Spain, with support of Catalan regional authorities, the SURT NGO accompanies refugee women in particularly vulnerable situations in their economic and personal empowerment and has developed a care guide for non-EU immigrant women, focused in particular on labour market insertion.⁷³

4.6 Women and children refugees as a multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder issue

152. Local and regional authorities cannot ensure the protection of women and children refugees alone, nor should they. Vertical cooperation, city-to-city relations and strong relations with civil society actors can help develop the necessary legal framework, funding and capacities to address the risks women and children refugees face.

153. Firstly, concerted action and cooperation between different levels of government is crucial for the protection of women and children refugees' human rights, which is a duty of governments at all levels. The admission and reception of refugees are a matter for multiple governance levels. While international standards, EU and national law lay the ground for crossing the border into a country of refuge, define national responsibility for the handling of asylum applications and determine the outcome of status decisions, it is the local level which takes care of the reception process, and where practical questions regarding accommodation, health issues, education and social integration have to be tackled.

154. As outlined above with regards to data collection for the determination of vulnerability, close cooperation between different levels of government is crucial to protect women and children refugees. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to protecting women and children refugees from human trafficking, for which they are especially vulnerable. The multifaceted nature of human trafficking requires concerted action at all levels.

155. However, while the safe reception of women and children is mainly ensured by concrete action at local and regional level, funding is often determined at national level, which can cause tensions. In the current context, several interlocutors the rapporteurs met in Poland complained about missing or belated national funding to finance pressing issues on the ground. Several had asked for direct allocation of European funds to the city-level, bypassing the national level as a distributor, in particular considering that the EU procedure regarding the rule of law in Poland also causes a withholding of EU funds, which in the current situation is much to the detriment of the cities that shoulder the refugee reception. The urgency was showcased by the example of the city of Sopot, where the number of receivers of social benefits doubled due to the presence of Ukrainian refugees, while the tax income stayed the same.

156. Secondly, city-to-city or region-to-region initiatives, such as twin cities or city networks, can foster mutual exchange of knowledge, goods, or result in joint political actions that transcend the ordinary

⁷¹ https://www.eliasud.org/logement-bail-glissant_fr/concept-bail-glissant_intermediation-locative-et-de-gestion-locative-sociale/

⁷² <https://kontaktstelle-wohnen.de/>

⁷³ [Guia d'Atenció a Dones Immigrants Extracomunitàries](#)

level of hierarchical state structures.⁷⁴ National associations of local and regional authorities play a crucial role in supporting their members to cope with large arrivals of refugees and to provide them with guidance on how to protect in particular women and children refugees' human rights. In particular smaller communities or those with limited resources may not have the capacity to develop or gather good practices themselves. National associations can also play a role in representing the voices of local and regional authorities with national authorities and convey their needs, in particular with regard to funding.

157. For example, in Wroclaw (Poland), in June 2022, a Local Government Round Table on refugees from Ukraine was held, bringing together 500 local government officials, ngo's, scientists and businesses, including representatives of the Union of Polish Metropolises, the Union of Polish Cities, the Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland, and the Local Government Movement YES! For Poland. As a result, a White Paper of 220 pages was developed, containing recommendations and necessary legal changes to cope with the reception of refugees from Ukraine. The White Paper includes, among others, the issues of facilitating access to work for teachers, doctors and nurses from Ukraine, financing language learning, ensuring a sufficient number of places in schools and kindergartens, and housing - with both Ukrainians and young Poles in mind.

158. There has also been an intensification of horizontal, often transnational networks such as the Eurocities Network, but also more specific networks focusing on migration and asylum, such as the Solidarity Cities Network, the City Network of Safe Havens, the Partnership for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, the Council of Europe Network of Focal Points on Migration (NFPM), created in 2019, or the very recent the Network Cities4Cities, a digital platform that matches Ukrainian and European cities for offering and receiving direct help and support developed by the City of Sindelfingen under patronage of the Congress.⁷⁵

159. The rapporteurs welcome the great solidarity and pragmatic response offered to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine via those horizontal transnational networks, such as partner cities of Ukrainian cities or cities in neighbouring countries, which send donations in cash and kind, or cooperate in the resettlement of vulnerable groups of refugees, such as children with disabilities. During their visit to Poland, the rapporteurs heard of many such initiatives, showing both an openness to the needs of others and the practical ability to give and receive support through those networks, as well as the power of (often large) city diplomacy.

160. Lastly, the rapporteurs stress the importance of developing strong local networks to protect women and children refugees. During their visit to Poland, and notably in the city of Lublin, the rapporteurs witnessed how long-standing co-operation between local authorities and civil society had a positive impact on the quality and speed with which women and children refugees could be welcomed. The presence of a committee, bringing together municipal departments, NGOs and institutions working on integration of migrants, for over a decade, meant that the necessary communication channels to coordinate action were already established. The interlocutors indicated that this long-lasting cooperation fostered an atmosphere of trust between the city hall and civil society organisations, reducing possible tensions as well as overly long administrative procedures.

⁷⁴ Khagram, S., Levitt, P. (eds.) (2007): The transnational studies reader: intersections and innovations. London: Routledge; Pries, L. (2018): Refugees, Civil Society and the State. European Experiences and Global Challenges. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

⁷⁵ <https://eurocities.eu/>, <https://solidaritycities.eu/>, <https://staedte-sicherer-haefen.de/>, <https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/working-together-for-migrant-integration.aspx#:~:text=The%20Partnership%20on%20the%20Inclusion%20of%20Migrants%20and,migrants%20integration,%20Cities%20are%20places%20where%20integration%20happens>, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/-/the-network-of-focal-points-on-migration-discusses-the-situation-of-the-people-fleeing-ukraine-and-child-friendly-procedures-for-children-in-migration>, <https://cities4cities.eu/LandingPage/Index?ReturnUrl=%2F>.

5. CONCLUSION

161. This report established that women and children refugees, because of their gender and age, are a particularly vulnerable group, in the context of a range of fields for which local and regional authorities have a (partial) responsibility. The rapporteurs highlighted that addressing vulnerabilities is an essential component of human rights protection, which is a duty of towns, cities and regions. As such, the rapporteurs strongly advise local and regional authorities to take into account the particular vulnerabilities of women and children refugees arriving in or travelling through their territory when developing policies related to, amongst others, education, housing, refugee reception, healthcare and employment.

162. The rapporteurs stressed that vulnerability should be determined at the level of the individual, as certain women and children may face additional hardships for example due to their gender identity, health situation or origin. Therefore, local and regional authorities need to assess the specific and individual needs and vulnerabilities of women and children refugees through an intersectional lense and take into account the life-course and time dimension, in order to identify specific needs at the relevant intersections and develop tailor-made responses, with full respect of their human rights. To do so, they recommended to create multidisciplinary response teams and multi-actor-networks on the ground and to actively draw on local expertise and resources.

163. At the same time, the rapporteurs underline that women and children are not inherently vulnerable, but also resilient. They encourage local and regional authorities to tap into the potential of women and children refugees, by foreseeing participation of women and children in the decision-making related to the daily activities and organisation of reception centres, their consultation with regard to their needs and by allowing them to make use of and develop their individual skills and talents.

164. The rapporteurs stress that local and regional authorities should take steps to protect women and children refugees from violence, exploitation or trafficking throughout and beyond the reception procedure. In particular with regard to trafficking, starting at border crossing points, and continuing in organising transportation to local reception spots, local and regional authorities in collaboration with national authorities and NGO's, such as women or children's organisation, need to set-up a first screening system to identify specifically vulnerable individuals. At all stages of the refugee route, appropriate information material and help offers such as hotlines should be provided to inform women and children refugees about the risks of being trafficked for different forms of exploitation.

165. In addition to identifying potential victims of violence and addressing address individual vulnerabilities of women and children refugees, local and regional authorities can also diminish the risks to women and children refugees by mainstreaming a gender and child right's perspective in their reception policies as well as other policy fields such as education, healthcare, housing and employment to respond to the most common needs of women and children refugees.

166. Regarding the accommodation and reception of women and children, the rapporteurs recall that mass accommodations, while sometimes indispensable, are generally not appropriate for women and children refugees. However, when mass accommodation is the only option, the rapporteurs highlight the need for women and children's participation in such centra and outline several ways in which local and regional authorities can make these safer, more appropriate spaces for women and children.

167. Gender should be mainstreamed throughout the organisation of mass accommodations, including when determining the location and transport possibilities, when organising activities, and in the set-up of private and shared spaces. The presence of staff trained in human rights, gender equality and violence against women, including, as appropriate, lawyers, social workers, intercultural mediators, interpreters, police officers and guards, should be ensured in these facilities.

168. The rapporteurs stress that, if responsible for providing adequate healthcare, local and regional authorities should provide women and children refugees with effective access to quality, age- and gender-sensitive health services, in cooperation with medical professionals, specialised civil society organisations and state institutions. This should encompass in particular mental health, sexual and reproductive health services and rights, health services during and after pregnancy and services related to experiences of violence against women. The rapporteurs underline the need to consider the impact of decisions in other policy areas, such as relocation, on the (mental) health condition of women and children refugees.

169. The rapporteurs ask that local and regional authorities ensure that refugee children are offered education from day one and develop information and training to educational staff on how to best organise this. Children who have been outside of the schooling system for a longer time, should be offered an opportunity to find their way back into the schooling system, for example by expanding the age shreshold for school enrolment or through vocational training. It is important, notably in such volatile situations as with an armed conflict, to develop a variety of educational options that respond to the future plans of refugee children and youth, and their parents. Educational options should also entail extra-curricular activities that enable children and youth to further develop their talents and personality. It is important to develop a strong stakeholder network with all relevant actors from local, regional and national authorities as well as with relevant stakeholders from educational institutions and civil society.

170. The rapporteurs note that especially women or large families can have specific difficulties to find adequate housing, due to lacking financial resources and knowledge about local housing markets or prejudice of landlords. Therefore, local and regional authorities need to develop criteria for the allocation of refugees to types of accommodations, considering demographic structure, special needs, but also consider the best interest of women and children in the case of relocation. To facilitate housing, local authorities can develop or support the development of mechanisms that can moderate between refugees, landlords, and neighbours.

171. The rapporteurs remind that local and regional authorities cannot ensure the protection of women and children refugees alone, but that vertical cooperation, city-to-city relations and strong relations with civil society actors can help develop the necessary legal framework, funding and capacities to address the risks women and children refugees face.

172. Authorities at all levels should cooperate to establish a coherent reception policy that integrates a gender and child-rights perspective. National authorities should set up clear and transparent funding mechanisms so that local and regional authorities can provide quality reception, accommodation, education and healthcare for women and children refugees on a solid financial basis. Especially in situations of mass arrival, flexible funding schemes that can be used for immediate needs should be developed, with national and/or direct international funding. The rapporteurs stress that the collection of disaggregated data and sharing of such information between different levels of government is crucial in order to assess if and how many women and children refugees reside in their communities. National authorities have a particular responsibility of providing information about the refugees arriving in a certain municipality, in order for the necessary protection measures for women and children to be taken timely. For a more sustainable distribution of refugees, sensitive to the specific needs of women and children, the rapporteurs underline the need for national authorities to further support the development rural areas, in particular with regard to housing, transport and employment.

173. The rapporteurs point out the role that national associations and international networks of cities and regions can play in sharing good practice on the reception of women and children, in burden sharing and regarding advocacy, and encourage local and regional authorities to make use of these platforms. Local and regional authorities can also cooperate with regions of origin and relevant authorities to develop protective measures for people on the move. Considering the high volatility of refugee movements, as it is the case for instance from and to Ukraine, it is recommended to closely monitor the flows and to develop collaboration between state and regional authorities in neighbouring countries to provide a clear picture of the situation and identify situations of concern

174. The rapporteurs stress that civil society is a strong force in local and regional response schemes. Local and regional NGOs, but also individual volunteers from civil society can fill response gaps and should be valued for their engagement and integrated in crisis management strategies. Good cooperation with NGOs is essential. It is helpful to have set up an appropriate platform for cooperation at local level even before a crisis situation arises. Municipal authorities should actively involve their relevant bodies (e.g. housing, welfare, education etc.) in those platforms.

Appendix

CONGRESS VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND *Warsaw, Lublin (4-5 July 2022)*

PROGRAMME

Congress Delegation:

Head of the delegation:

Mr Thomas ANDERSSON

Chair of the Current Affairs Committee (R, ILDG)
President of the Regional Council of Jämtland and
Härjedalen,
Sweden

Rapporteurs:

Mr Bernd VÖHRINGER

Rapporteur on the reception of women and children
refugees in Europe's cities and regions (L, EPP/CCE)
President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the
Congress, Lord Mayor of the City of Sindelfingen,
Germany

Ms Annika VAIKLA

Rapporteur on the reception of women and children
refugees in Europe's cities and regions (L, ILDG)
Member of the Current Affairs Committee
Member of the Municipal Council of Viimsi, Estonia

Congress secretariat:

Ms Stéphanie POIREL
Ms Inge HANNON

Head of the Statutory Committees Division
Secretary a.i.to the Current Affairs Committee

Expert:

Prof. Dr. Birgit GLORIUS

Expert, Technische Universität Chemnitz, Germany

Photographer:

Mr Sandro WELTIN
Council of Europe

Photographer, Directorate of Communications,

Interpreters:

Mr Andrzej GRZADKOWSKI
Ms Aleksandra SOBCZAK

The working languages, for which the interpretation will provided during the meetings, are Polish and English

Monday, 4 July 2022
Warsaw

08:30 – 9:30**THE CITY OF WARSAW**

Venue:
pl. Bankowy 3/5
00-950
Warsaw

Mr Michał OLSZEWSKI, Deputy Mayor of the City of Warsaw

09:45 – 10:45**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

Venue:
al. Solidarności 77
00-090 Warsaw

Ms Hanna MACHIŃSKA, Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights

11:30 – 12:30**NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Venue: Council of
Europe Liaison Office
ul. Sniadeckich 10
PL - 00-656
Warsaw

Ms Magdalena CZARZYŃSKA-JACHIM, Chair of the Committee of Human Rights and Equal treatment, Association of Polish cities

Mr Paweł ADAMOWICZ, Responsible for migration at Sopot City Hall

Mr Tomasz FIJOŁEK, Managing Director, Union of Polish Metropolises

11:45 – 13:30**VISIT TO A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION CENTRE**

Mr Tomasz PACTWA, Director, Welfare and Social Projects Department, City of Warsaw

14:00 – 15:00**STAKEHOLDERS WORKING IN THE FIELD**

Venue: Council of
Europe Liaison
Office
ul. Sniadeckich 10
PL - 00-656
Warsaw

Mr Geoffrey IJUMBA, Deputy Head of Office, UNICEF Poland

Ms Natia JOKHADZE, Education Specialist, UNICEF Poland

Ms Katarzyna OYRZANOWSKA, UNHCR Assistant Government Liaison Officer

Ms Irina ISOMOVA, UNHCR Senior Community-Based Protection Officer

Ms Marta ŻBIKOWSKA, Coordinator, Fundacja Feminoteka

Ms Myroslava KERYK, President, Our Choice Foundation

15:30 – 16:30**MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND ADMINISTRATION**

Venue: Council of
Europe Liaison
Office
ul. Sniadeckich 10
PL - 00-656
Warsaw

Mr Mariusz BOGUSZEWSKI, Director of the Department of International Affairs and Migration

17:30 – 19:00**VISIT TO PTAK HUMANITARIAN AID CENTRE**

Venue: ul. K.
Guderskiego 3/96
03-982 Warsaw

Mr Konstanty RADZIWIŁŁ, Governor of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship

Tuesday, 5 July 2022
Lublin

10:45 – 11:45

Venue: Ratusz
(Town Hall), pl.
Łokietka 1

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (joint meeting)

Mr Jakub BANASZEK, Mayor of the City of Chelm
Mr Krzysztof STANOWSKI, Director of the International Cooperation
Office, City of Lublin
Mr Andrzej WOJEWÓDZKI, Secretary, City of Lublin

12:15 – 13:00

Venue:
Government
office Artura
Grottgera 4

REGIONAL AUTHORITIES- Lubelskie Voivodeship

Mr Michał MULAWA, Vice-Marshall of the Lubelskie Voivodeship
Mr Zbigniew WOJCIECHOWSKI, Vice-Marshall of the Lubelskie
Voivodeship
Mr Lech SPRAWKA, Governor of the Lubelskie Voivodeship

14:30-15:30

Venue: Centrum
Kultury
Peowiaków 12,
20-007 Lublin,
Poland

LUBLIN SOCIAL COMMITTEE TO AID UKRAINE

Ms Anastazja KINZERSKA, Coordinator
Mr Julian HOFMAN, Coordinator
Ms Jaroslawa SZEWCZUK, responsible for refugees accommodations

16:00 – 18:00

Venue :
Accommodation
center
Podwale 13a

VISIT TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION CENTRE

Mr Krzysztof STANOWSKI, Director of the International Cooperation
Office, City of Lublin
Mr Roman JABORKHEL, Deputy director of the International
Cooperation Office, City of Lublin