

# European Network of Public Employment Services

Labour market integration of displaced people and  
refugees

Update of 'Key Considerations'



## **THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

The European Network of Public Employment Services was created following a Decision of the European Parliament and Council in June 2014<sup>1</sup>. Its objective is to reinforce PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. This activity has been developed within the work programme of the European PES Network. For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

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<sup>1</sup> DECISION No 573/2014/EU

## Introduction

Following the high inflow of asylum seekers in 2015–2016, the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network) identified '[Key Considerations](#)' to guide employment services assisting refugees, which are related to four key aspects: language, skills and qualifications, partners and institutions, and employers.

In view of the arrival of a significant number of displaced people from Ukraine, and of broader changes in the labour market, a PES Network Working Group (WG) was set up in November 2022 to consider amendments and additions to the existing document. While the WG agreed that key considerations and practices from the previous text are still to a large extent valid, this updated document also includes considerations and good practices that address the labour market inclusion of displaced people from Ukraine on temporary protection (see box below).

Recent immigration movements to Europe call for increased efforts to integrate refugees into host countries' labour markets. Along with nearly 4 million displaced people from Ukraine in the EU-27 Member States (who have been registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes), the EU recorded almost one million asylum applications from the Middle East and other parts of the world in 2022. Research has shown that well-designed measures and successfully implemented services for refugees can deliver high returns on the labour market<sup>2</sup>. In order to ensure synergies and further exchange of experience, this report addresses the situation of both refugees and displaced people from Ukraine (brought together under one term), even though their access to employment may vary. For example, beneficiaries of temporary protection have the right to access the EU labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning.

PES are key actors when it comes to supporting refugees and displaced people to find employment. PES responsibilities vary across countries, but typically include registration, counselling and active labour market policy measures. Regardless of differences in national integration approaches and the scale of the inflows, PES share many common challenges and considerations when addressing this task.

### ***Persons displaced from Ukraine within the EU***

Displaced people from Ukraine are protected by the [EU Temporary Protection Directive](#) (TPD)<sup>3</sup>. They are entitled to engage in employment or self-employment at a much earlier stage than those who have to first apply for refugee status via the asylum system, and they enjoy the right to work without prior registration at the PES. Upon activation of the TPD, Member States removed many formalities and additional administrative steps (such as additional work permits) or other barriers, to ensure immediate access to the labour market<sup>4</sup>.

While the immediate access to employment in connection with characteristics such as educational profile, existing social networks and labour shortages across European countries are likely to improve the labour market integration prospects of displaced Ukrainian people, others may hinder them. On the one hand, displaced people from Ukraine possess, in general, higher formal qualification levels than most other refugee groups and also benefit from the support of large diaspora networks in host countries. On the other

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<sup>2</sup> Andersson Joonas et al., 2016, Sarvimäki, M. (2017), Battisti et al., 2019, Bonin et al., 2021.

<sup>3</sup> The Temporary Protection (Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001, Art.12) activated by the EU in early March 2022, implies that Ukrainian displaced persons can stay in the EU for up to three years without having to apply for asylum or another form of residency. Rights under the temporary protection include residence permit, access to the labour market, housing, social welfare assistance, medical assistance and access to education for children. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32001L0055&qid=164822358733>

<sup>4</sup> [Temporary protection for those fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: one year on](#)

hand, the fact that displaced Ukrainians are predominantly women accompanied by children poses a specific challenge to their labour market integration.

Displaced people from Ukraine use PES services voluntarily and registration rates with the PES differ considerably across countries. They are particularly high in countries that offer a single point of contact for both employment and income support (e.g. Ireland or Germany<sup>5</sup>). PES elsewhere have observed a 'waiting dilemma' when it comes to making use of job placement services and registering with the PES. In other words, the uncertainty of the length of stay can cause people to postpone decisions and prevent them from entering education or employment.

The key considerations highlight areas of particular importance for the labour market integration of refugees and displaced people, extending the previous text with three new areas that reflect recent developments and deal with specific aspects related to people on temporary protection<sup>6</sup>. Although the (legal) situation of refugees and displaced people from Ukraine differs, useful experiences and practices from PES can be built upon and used in other contexts in the future. The document now addresses the following topics:

- Bundling and dissemination of information
- Digital job matching
- Language
- Skills and qualifications
- Balancing short- and long-term integration perspectives
- Partners and institutions
- Employers

## **Bundling and dissemination of information**

A lack of coherent information upon arriving in a host country is one of the main challenges for newcomers. PES reacted rapidly in spring 2022 when displaced people from Ukraine arrived in large numbers and adjusted quickly by providing information on finding work, job orientation and career guidance. Several PES used social media channels to spread information on their services.

The need to bring all relevant information together by creating dedicated websites, webinars, or onsite support centers with a range of specialists has been an emerging feature in the process of supporting displaced people from Ukrainian. Some PES have set up coordination groups involving municipalities, ministries and NGOs. PES outreach activities have been organised via mobile teams in the (largest) reception centres or at the main areas for refugee arrivals. Materials and measures have been prepared and translated into Ukrainian (and sometimes Russian). Most PES have created online information in multiple languages. Some offer a simplified registration/pre-screening system; others have set up dedicated counsellors or teams of counsellors, speaking Ukrainian (or Russian) and/or with access to interpreters. EURES advisors are sometimes used within dedicated teams to help with the dissemination of information or other tasks.

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<sup>5</sup> In Germany, the decision to shift responsibilities from municipal welfare offices to labour offices was based on past experiences, which has shown that refugees registered with the PES participate more often in support programmes, find a job more quickly and had better earnings prospects.

<sup>6</sup> Bundling and dissemination of information, digital job matching, reconciling perspectives of quick and sustainable integration into the labour market and return intentions (dual intent policies).

**Key consideration 1:**

PES are encouraged to provide all relevant information for refugees and displaced people on how to enter the labour market. They should make it easily accessible in the required context, keep it up to date, and expand it by creating dedicated websites or onsite support centres, or organising webinars.

**Practice Zoom from PES in Europe**

Lithuania: The Lithuanian PES – together with a variety of other actors including the National Health Insurance Fund, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Migration information Centre and State Labour Inspectorate – took part in a series of webinars for displaced Ukrainian people, organised by the European Migration Network. Practical information and advice on issues of employment for foreigners such as registration at PES, job search, recognition of qualifications, or participation in active labour market measures, was provided by a Ukrainian-speaking PES career counsellor.

**Digital job matching**

Given that some displaced people from Ukraine are ‘work-ready’, and in light of the many unfilled vacancies across the EU, assisting with job matching has become a key focus in many host countries. In this context, the identification and registration of vacancies has been a major activity as many employers want to hire newly-arrived Ukrainian refugees. Based on the jobseeker’s competences and aspirations, efforts have been made to match directly to vacancies where possible. A growing number of PES have launched online portals with varying degrees of in-built matching systems to connect Ukrainian refugees to companies and suitable jobs. To identify relevant work opportunities some PES have also created a specific filter on their vacancy portal. Alongside easing labour market entry, such tools might also promote more skill-appropriate employment and minimise skills mismatch and underemployment. At EU level, a pilot initiative for a new online job search tool was also set up to this end. The [EU Talent Pool](#) pilot was started to help displaced people with securing employment in the European Union. The new tool is available in English, Ukrainian and Russian, and accessible via the European Labour Authority's [EURES portal](#). After registering, jobseekers can upload their CVs to the online platform and highlight their relevant skills. Their profiles are then made available to employers, national PES and private employment agencies across the EU, and the jobseekers themselves are able to browse available vacancies.

**Key consideration 2:**

PES efforts to facilitate online vacancy and CV portals, where job matching can also take place directly between employers and ‘work-ready’ refugees, are key to ensuring a successful and speedy process for finding (relevant) work in the host country.

**Practice Zooms from PES in Europe**

Poland: A job matching portal called Praca w Polsce (‘Work in Poland’ – [www.pracawpolsce.gov.pl](http://www.pracawpolsce.gov.pl)) was launched by the government in June 2022 to support Ukrainians in finding employment commensurate with their qualifications. The portal is skills-based and aims to match people to quality jobs. Displaced Ukrainian people can use it to provide information about their education, qualifications and previous employment, which is then anonymised and made accessible to Polish employers. Data on the portal is protected and logging in is possible with the use of a trusted profile, which is an identity verification method used by the Polish state administration. Ukrainian citizens can set up a trusted profile together with a PESEL-UA number for free (PESEL = the Universal Electronic Population Registration System). The new system has been developed by an

external operator and complements the existing PES internal system. In the internal PES system job offers are checked by PES staff but it is not possible to match CVs to job opportunities.

## Language

Language skills are the first step towards labour market integration as they enable and motivate asylum seekers and refugees to interact with future employers, public institutions and the wider society into which they want to integrate. Language barriers are perceived as the biggest challenge to entering the labour market by both refugees and employers. Therefore, language training is particularly important, even when the host country population and the new arrivals can communicate in another language, e.g. English or Russian.

However, only few countries, such as Norway and Germany have fully opened up the integration infrastructure available to migrants and refugees to include language training for displaced Ukrainian people under temporary protection. Language training in Norway is also offered in English, in addition to Norwegian, for people covered by temporary protection. Other countries do offer language training or civic education for people on temporary protection but on a less comprehensive scale. Sharing lessons learnt and reflecting upon possible synergies between programmes supporting refugees and persons displaced is also needed, whilst keeping in mind differences in status.

Ideally, language training should be combined with work practice or on-the-job training. Therefore, timing, length, and flexibility of provision of language training with work-related experiences or services are important aspects to consider for PES and employers.

### **Key consideration 3:**

Language training should ideally be tailored to the personal situation, and skills and qualifications of the individual, and be combined with work practice. For 'work-ready' individuals, flexible on-the-job language training is deemed to facilitate 'work-first' pathways.

Opening relevant programmes available to migrants and refugees contributes to the sustainable integration of displaced people on temporary protection.

## Practice Zooms from PES in Europe:

Belgium: 'Learning Dutch on the work floor' is a programme developed previously by the Flemish PES (VDAB). The aim is to align language skills with professional skills in shortage occupations by providing a combination of language training and job training in companies. VDAB has recently opened up the programme for displaced persons from Ukraine. Language instructors commissioned by VDAB visit the workplace and teach/coach both refugees as well as Dutch-speaking colleagues. The language instructors focus on the specific elements of the Dutch language that are needed in the company in order to ensure that the jobseeker can thrive independently.

Germany: The PES (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA) has the possibility to build upon the existing infrastructure for integration courses (language and civic education) of the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees, set up in 2015/2016, and adjust their support accordingly. BA can also build upon various programmes for combining labour market policy measures with language acquisition, which were developed in the previous refugee crisis. This means that language acquisition and the integration into the labour or vocational training market can take place in parallel, thus avoiding waiting times between measures and accelerating the integration process.

## Skills and qualifications

Swift validation of skills and recognition of qualifications is essential for successful labour market integration. Lack of information on qualifications and skills makes it difficult for PES to plan and provide services or to engage with employers. In this context, three aspects are particularly important: i) assessing skills effectively – whether acquired via formal or informal learning, hard/soft skills or digital skills; ii) identifying and recognising qualifications appropriately – whether these are vocational qualifications or university degrees, and iii) considering which institution is responsible for i) and ii).

Many asylum-seeking refugees come to Europe without documentation of their qualifications nor any proof of their skills and competences. In addition, the assessment and validation of skills is important for asylum seekers and refugees as they often have work experience but no formal qualification in a profession. It is generally less the case for displaced persons from Ukraine, though the situation might vary across countries. Given the high average skill profile of Ukrainian refugees there is, however, a risk that, without professional recognition, many qualified people are placed in low-paid jobs. Indeed, there is evidence<sup>7</sup> that skill mismatches are common among displaced people from Ukraine. The majority of those who found work quickly are employed in elementary occupations and low-skilled jobs. While these jobs may be easily accessible, they are often in sectors and at skill levels that do not match their own.

Hence, early assessment of skills and recognition of qualifications are key to allow refugees and displaced people to work in their field of expertise. Professional recognition is mandatory in so-called regulated professions in all Member States. However, recognition procedures are often lengthy and formal competences are often not easily transferable to the host country. Against this background, some Member States have taken important steps to facilitate expedited credential recognition. Among them are measures allowing Ukrainian medical professionals to work under supervision before their qualifications are formally recognised.

For the work of PES, it is key to have tools in place (or available to them) that help them assess skills, recognise existing qualifications, support the acquisition of further skills and qualifications and, ultimately, help to better match refugees with employment opportunities. While skills assessments can, in principle, be carried out by PES, validation of skills also requires input from the education and training sector as well as business-related institutions. In this context, information from PES and cooperation with the competent institutions is important.

In recent years, PES have increased their efforts regarding skills assessment and validation, covering formal as well as non-formal and informal learning. PES also have the possibility to use skill assessment tools developed at EU level (see box below).

**Key consideration 4:**

Further efforts are needed to secure work opportunities that correspond to the qualifications and experience of refugees and displaced people. Key to this is improving the assessment of skills and the formal recognition of qualifications.

Validation of skills requires close cooperation with the education system and employers. For some professions, making skills evaluation procedures more flexible might be a way to ease labour shortages and, at the same time, avoid deterioration of professional skills.

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<sup>7</sup> [Fleeing Ukraine: Displaced people's experiences in the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

*EU tools on skills assessment and information on recognition of qualifications*

To support the early identification and profiling of skills and qualifications of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants, the European Commission has developed an [EU Skills Profile Tool for third country nationals](#). The online tool aims to map qualifications and experiences of refugees and other third country nationals who can create profiles with personal details such as country of origin and residence status, as well as professional information such as educational level and past experiences. They can also add their aspirations for the future: from improving their language skills to finding a job in a field of their choice. The online self-assessment tool is designed to propose 'next steps', on the basis of the information provided. It can be used by recruiters in interview situations and in integration processes, including PES, as it is designed in a way that is well understood by those actors across the EU.

In April 2022, the Commission issued a [Recommendation](#) and advice for the flexible recognition of qualifications, giving access to regulated professions or to further learning for people fleeing Russia's war against Ukraine. Together with the European Training Foundation, it also set up a [resource hub](#) with vast information on the Ukrainian education system as well as on recognition procedures in EU countries. To support a better understanding and comparability of Ukrainian qualifications with qualifications gained in the EU, the Commission published a comparison report and is organising exchanges for practitioners and others involved in the review of qualifications. Displaced people from Ukraine can also obtain internationally standardised documents such as the [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees](#). Based on an assessment of the available documentation and a structured interview, these tools provide credible information on refugees' academic and professional qualifications as well as language proficiency.

## Practice Zooms from PES in Europe

Sweden: A new and innovative Qualifications Assessment Tool is provided by ENIC-NARIC (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region – National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union<sup>8</sup>) at the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR). The tool currently assesses what a foreign qualification is comparable to in Sweden and allows the user to immediately download a pdf and use it when looking for employment or planning studies. It covers approximately 1,000 qualifications from 77 countries. The Swedish PES (Arbetsförmedlingen) often refers jobseekers with foreign education and qualifications to UHR to use the tool. Although this method does not provide formal recognition, it speeds up the comparison of qualifications<sup>9</sup>.

Lithuania: As many displaced Ukrainian people are qualified as doctors, nurses, paramedics or care workers, the State Health Care Accreditation Agency, together with the Ministry of Health, decided to speed up the process of recognition of professional qualifications by shortening the recognition period to one month instead of the three-month period established by legislation. In addition, the relevant licensing rules were simplified. The requirement of Lithuanian language skills was also removed but the applicant must prove that he/she has started to learn it. Furthermore, to make flexible decisions on hiring healthcare professionals before the recognition process is completed, they can be employed as doctors' assistants. Such a decision facilitates faster integration and

<sup>8</sup> The [ENIC-NARIC Networks](#) are the result of an ongoing collaboration between the national information centres on academic recognition of qualifications in a total of 55 countries operating under the principles of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#) (1997).

<sup>9</sup> The tool is available at: [ENIC-NARIC Sweden - Swedish Council for Higher Education \(uhr.se\)](#)

adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in the working environment. Similar measures have also been put in place in Poland, Latvia and Slovakia.

Germany: To better validate non-formal qualifications in different professions, with a focus on existing skills and the assessment of practical skills of migrants and refugees (and career changers), the Ministry of Education, together with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts and the Chambers of Industry & Commerce, set up the pilot project 'ValiKom' to certify relevant skills in the reviewed profession in accordance with German standards. The German PES is cooperating in five regions with the regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts, Industry & Commerce, and Agriculture, to develop a process for transferring the PES clients to ValiKom. To this end, PES counsellors are trained to advise suitable clients to contact ValiKom during regular job interviews or via email.

## **Balancing short- and long-term integration perspectives**

The longer refugees stay, the more they invest in host country-specific 'human capital' (language, vocational education, recognition of credentials). This can also be beneficial to their countries of origin in the long run, should they return home with their newly-acquired skills. Experience shows that displaced people on temporary protection are particularly ready and willing to accept any job rather than waiting for the right job, given the uncertainty regarding the length of their stay. And finding a job quickly has been enabled by recruitment difficulties in many sectors across the EU, including in low-paid sectors such as hospitality services. However, accepting lower-skilled positions may be detrimental if displaced people stay for a longer period.

As a protracted war in Ukraine will increase the likelihood that a growing number of displaced people on temporary protection will stay longer, or even permanently, PES may need to adapt their strategies, too. Against this background, the question of how to strike a balance between providing support in finding a job quickly and making the most use of peoples' qualifications is becoming increasingly important. A further point relates to 'dual intent' solutions that give those under temporary protection quick access to integration support without hampering a possible return to their home country once the situation allows. Dual intent policies might require further reflection around strategies such as fast-track systems or upskilling. Fast-track initiatives can help to recruit skilled immigrant workers into occupations with labour shortages, allowing people to become self-reliant and exposing them to the working culture and language.

Responding to the short-/long-term stay 'waiting dilemma', PES are increasingly extending services developed previously for asylum seekers and refugees, such as 'integration through work', by combining training opportunities and language acquisition at the workplace. Continued counselling of those who have taken up low-skilled jobs early on but possess formal and informal skills is one way to facilitate the transition into qualified employment. Making existing integration programmes more flexible is another way to respond to the waiting dilemma. Nonetheless, efforts can still be stepped up to reach out to displaced people with information about possible support to enter the labour market, and to encourage registration at the PES.

### **Key consideration 5:**

Balancing the short-/long-term perspectives of a fast entry into the labour market and a more sustainable integration process is important to ensure that skills and competences are used in an efficient way.

Sustainable inclusion enhances the sustainability of job placements as well as financial independence. For displaced people, it is also beneficial in the long run to develop their skills for when they return home to rebuild the country.

Encouraging registration with a PES for those who can benefit from guidance, training, and ALMPs, is essential to tackle the waiting dilemma and avoid waste of talents.

## Practice Zooms from PES in Europe

Norway: The Introduction Programme for asylum seekers and refugees has been opened up to displaced people on temporary protection. Participants in the programme receive an individual plan including career counselling and mapping of competence, as well as language and parental guidance courses. Since most displaced Ukrainian people are highly educated, they are offered a short introduction programme of 3–6 months, with the possibility to extend for an additional six months, up to a total of one year. Unlike other refugee groups, candidates protected under the TPD may also opt to work immediately instead of attending the Introduction Programme. To reconcile working and programme participation it has been made available on a part-time basis. This enables people with dependants, for example, to start regular part-time work. Flexibility within the existing Introduction Programme is generally seen as a way to combine integration support with 'work-first' integration.

Belgium: Within its job trial programme, the Wallonian PES (FOREM) offers the opportunity to test two or more jobs before deciding which training to follow or which job to choose. The Flemish PES (VDAB) has deployed 21 additional mediators for both initial assessments and work guidance for Ukrainian jobseekers. Based on the jobseeker's competences and job aspirations, efforts are made to match them directly to vacancies where possible, and to provide training and guidance where necessary.

## Partners and institutions

To address labour market integration issues and to provide sequencing of support adequately, systematic and effective cooperation with partners and institutions (immigration offices, municipalities, training institutions, social partners, family/child related services, and NGOs) is essential. Promoting a multi-stakeholder approach by strengthening the cooperation structures between relevant labour market actors and making the assessment, recognition and validation of skills and qualifications of refugees easier and more straightforward has also been emphasised by European Social and Economic Partner organisations in a recent joint statement<sup>10</sup>.

To provide support as early as possible and address other needs that are equally crucial for employment (e.g. healthcare, housing, and language), PES cooperate with a variety of institutions. They determine effective ways of timing service offerings, such as organising psychological support or childcare before addressing employment issues. Many refugees need advanced/extended health services, and single parents may require childcare. Since the majority of people fleeing the war in Ukraine are women with children, it is crucial not only to have childcare services available when entering work, but also during job or language training. In addition, stepping up cooperation with health-/family-/child-related services may be particularly important for some.

More than in previous times, PES have been emphasising the need for closer links with civil society actors, including networks of the Ukrainian diaspora, that go beyond employment promotion by advising and accompanying displaced people in everyday practical matters. While several countries can build on systems developed during previous refugee crises, in many (especially Eastern) European countries with less or no experience of receiving large numbers of immigrants, the high influx of refugees fleeing the war has created new challenges for public services. Countries such as Poland only

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<sup>10</sup> [Joint statement of December 2022](#)

recently began to scale up their more project-based reception and integration activities by establishing a more comprehensive system to support new arrivals.

**Key consideration 6:**

Seamless collaboration and information-sharing with relevant authorities, as well as a more systematic involvement of civil society actors, can close service gaps and make it easier for refugees and displaced people to integrate into work and society.

## Practice Zooms from PES in Europe

Poland: To build a more systematic integration system, a programme called 'Together We Can Do More' has been set up recently. The programme is coordinated by the PES at central level (under the Ministry of Labour). Its objective is the professional and social activation of those who face problems with, among other things, finding employment, learning the Polish language, or overcoming other societal integration barriers. The programme supports, on the one hand, entities that specialise in professional activation and integration and, on the other hand, projects in which mainly NGOs (e.g. Caritas) and volunteers are involved. Within such projects, individual paths towards social integration are developed, and/or NGOs assist by helping with the search for work and housing, as well as communicating with institutions that affect everyday life. Courses in cultural orientation and initiatives to support children and youth via extracurricular activities are also funded within the programme.

Austria: The PES (AMS) cooperates closely with training and employment service providers to support displaced people from Ukraine. The project 'UKR.WORKINAUSTRIA' is carried out, for example, by ABZ\*AUSTRIA on behalf of AMS Vienna. The offer includes counselling with multilingual counsellors, support in professional orientation, recording of professional competences and qualifications, assistance in accessing the Austrian labour market and in job searches with concrete offers, support in preparing application documents in German, and advice on the use of AMS tools or on childcare. ABZ\*AUSTRIA also provides services targeted to specific groups such as migrant women and youth. Within the project 'Perspectives on learning and work' ABZ supports women in starting a job or entering an apprenticeship.

Norway: The Labour Inspection Authority works to prevent undeclared work and exploitation. It has produced information films for refugees which underline the importance of a contract and the minimum wage, and state working hours and other employment rights. The PES cooperates with the inspectorates through regular meetings and uses these films to inform refugees and displaced people about the risks of exploitation<sup>11</sup>.

## Employers

Labour market integration of refugees can only be successful when employers are willing to hire, or offer on-the-job training to, newly arrived refugees. Close collaboration between PES and employers is crucial to the successful labour market integration of refugees. For PES, understanding where the workforce is and what type of skills are needed is essential to address labour and skills gaps and help refugees integrate more quickly. In this context, closer collaboration with municipalities in countries where local authorities are responsible for the settlement and integration of refugees can help to plan services and maximise local skills matches.

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<sup>11</sup> For further information see: <https://www.arbeidstilsynet.no/en/knowyourrights-UK/>

In addition, engaging with employers is important to facilitate the on-the-job language training that goes along with the vocational skills a displaced person might need. Successful matching of skills and jobs by PES sets a precedent with employers. In terms of Ukrainians under temporary protection, requests from and cooperation with employers takes various forms. PES in many countries have organised events and activities such as job fairs to help match employers and displaced people. Some PES report being approached by employers interested in drawing on work subsidies or training measures to employ people under temporary protection, as well as receiving requests on the application of rules and procedures. In this context, PES might raise awareness of the waiting dilemma on the employer's side. There are indications that in some countries small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) postpone hiring on the right level because they believe people under temporary protection may return to their home countries soon. To 'activate' employers, governments – in partnership with PES – have started initiatives to promote inclusion while using the potential of refugees and displaced people to cope with current labour shortages.

**Key consideration 7:**

Close collaboration between PES and employers is crucial to successful labour market integration of refugees. Knowledge of local labour markets, and identification of vacancies, helps refugees to secure suitable jobs, for example, in shortage occupations.

**Practice Zooms from PES in Europe**

France: A new initiative 'Les entreprises s'engagent' (Businesses Get Involved) by the French government aims to highlight the role of companies in the building of a more inclusive society and help firms to roll out a sustainable, local, supportive economy. The programme has been extended to mobilise companies that wish to hire and train displaced Ukrainians. Several actions have been set up, notably in partnership with the French PES (Pôle Emploi). An interface exists via which firms can fill in a form to be contacted by Pôle Emploi about procedures on how to recruit and train people displaced from Ukraine. A special focus is given to training possibilities before hiring.

Belgium: The Flemish government funds a consortium of businesses on the condition that they offer paths to employment for Ukrainians. Sectors can appoint temporary coordinators for Ukrainians, with government funding, to establish links between municipalities, NGOs and PES. The government's inter-sectoral initiative strengthens the sectoral and local approach of the Flemish PES (VDAB) by offering support in the rapid detection of suitable vacancies, in workplace learning, and in helping to ensure that the many vacancies in the sector reach the target group efficiently.

Germany: The PES (BA) raises employers' awareness of how to use the potential of refugees and displaced people to fill their vacancies and encourages them to give applicants a chance who may not fully meet the requirements at first glance. It advises employers on the particularities of employing people from abroad, e.g. with regard to existing German language skills, recognition procedures for vocational qualifications, and residence permits, and points out ways in which employers can support social and professional integration. PES services for employers include assistance with language acquisition and/or education and training, mentoring or sponsorship in the company, organisation of childcare, contribution to childcare costs, offer of transport, support in finding accommodation and dealing with authorities.

## **Conclusion**

Drawing on lessons learned from previous crises, the Commission in its June 2022 communication on guidance to access the labour market, vocational education and training, and adult learning of displaced people from Ukraine, explicitly points to the importance of exchange and cooperation through the European Network of Public Employment Services on areas and challenges in which PES have a specific role to play<sup>12</sup>. These updated guidelines of the PES Network on the labour market integration of displaced people and refugees adapts previous learning to the reality of the current situation. They provide good practices from PES in Europe to address the short-term needs as well as medium- to long-term support to ensure integration in the labour market and opportunities for newcomers to efficiently use their skills and competence in their new environment.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=25721&langId=en>