



## **Teachers for refugee students**

### **EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine - Schools**

#### **Flash report on the Working Group Schools focus session of 5 April 2022**

This short report forms the first of a series of outputs from the focus sessions held with the Working Group Schools, concerning the education response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Member states have been creative and responsive in finding ways to employ Ukrainian teachers, to provide initial teacher education for student teachers, and to harness the expertise of teachers to meet pre-existing shortages in key subjects. In some cases these are urgent, short-term, and temporary measures.

#### **1) Identifying and hiring Ukrainian teachers among the refugees**

Ukrainian teachers and those from related professions have been identified by the following means:

- **Administrative checks** – direct engagement with the Ukrainian authorities to verify teachers' status on official databases, and liaison with higher education institutions to access information about student teacher qualifications.
- **Self-declaration** – a public recruitment drive for Ukrainian teachers online and via events, working in partnership with teaching associations and civil society organisation to advertise vacancies and to encourage take-up.

**Emergency legislation** has played an important role in removing obstacles to hiring Ukrainian teachers, and providing entry points to the education system in the short term. Examples include waiving requirements on the knowledge of the host country language for a transition period (e.g. LT) or providing flexibility to schools in assessing teacher's competences to teach specific subjects. In DE (Saxony), teachers who self-identify and who pass the initial priority assessment are hired on probation covering the period of a school term while employment checks are completed. In RO, exemptions allow for the hiring of teachers on refugee status by self-declaration on short-term renewable contracts.

#### **2) Measures to support Ukrainian student teachers**

Member States have taken active steps to ensure continuity and completion of study for Ukrainian student teachers, upon their arrival and having obtained refugee status. Validation of professional and language competences are among the main considerations. In CZ, the ministry is supporting teaching assistants with lower Czech language skills to move into permanent positions. Language learning can take place alongside the completion of pedagogical studies. In ES, student teachers are employable as part time language assistants in schools while they complete their qualification.

#### **3) Teacher shortages in host countries**

Steps taken have included legislating to extend the categories of eligible teachers, including retired teachers, and waiving the compulsory traineeship for student teachers where minimum hours of study can be demonstrated. Capacity for support services is also a consideration, with Ukrainian counsellors and psychologists in high demand to assist with the social and emotional needs of refugee families and teachers feeling war (e.g. trauma). In RO, the ministry has put additional resources in multi-agency support centres at a municipal level.

#### **4) Transversal themes**

The **temporary status** of emergency measures raises questions for **planning for the next school year and beyond**. Many refugee families anticipate returning to Ukraine when it becomes safe to do so, others are still moving through EU countries. Measures that work for emergency teaching may look different to longer term strategies for integration of refugee teachers and learners. A need was also identified for a multi-lateral approach towards liaison with the Ukrainian authorities, to avoid multiple requests for information.