

# What can business do to support people displaced by the conflict in Ukraine?

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Practical tips for employers and the private sector

**Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, over 5 million people have left Ukraine and crossed into neighbouring countries; as of April 25, over 7.7 million people have been internally displaced<sup>1</sup>. As the conflict intensifies and the number of displaced people increases, the focus of the global community on short-term humanitarian assistance will be accompanied by longer-term, sustainable assistance aimed at the successful inclusion of displaced people into host communities, including employment and income-generating opportunities.**

Under the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive,<sup>2</sup> EU Member States are working to provide immediate support and resettlement for Ukrainian refugees. Ukrainians and third country nationals who fulfill the eligibility requirements to benefit from temporary protection have the immediate right to receive one year residency permits (renewable up to three years) in European Union Member States and Switzerland, and by extension the right to employment, housing, healthcare and education.<sup>3</sup> Beneficiaries of temporary protection must first register with the country or municipality where they intend to reside as a pre-condition for accessing socio-economic rights.

Many companies in different sectors are already stepping up to support displaced Ukrainians in different ways. This resource provides comprehensive, practical guidance on the immediate and medium-term steps companies can take to respond to the conflict and the resulting displacement.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [UNHCR operational data portal](#); IOM [Ukraine Internal Displacement Report](#)

<sup>2</sup> More information about the Temporary Protection Directive can be found [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> The above-mentioned website provides a full list of the rights for beneficiaries of temporary protection.

## Labour Market Inclusion & Employment Protections

For many who are displaced by the war in Ukraine, having a job is vital for economic survival and independence and a crucial step in developing a sense of belonging, which requires the development of social networks that can help newcomers integrate into their host communities. Displaced populations often face a variety of barriers that can directly or indirectly obstruct their integration into the labour market, including lack of documentation attesting to their professional experience and credentials, language barriers and access to information. This is what your business can do to help:

- Implement a [dedicated company program](#) to address barriers related to the recruitment and employment of Ukrainians and encourage business partners and suppliers to do the same.
- Use your website to create a [central hiring portal in Ukrainian](#), featuring all open vacancies in your company. Consider joining forces with an industry association or public employment services to create a jobs portal for all vacancies in the industry.
- Leverage internal human resources and training programs or partner with external service providers [to conduct skills assessments and support upskilling](#) of candidates and recruits.
- Ensure [recruitment and hiring protocols are aligned with ethical principles](#). Conduct due diligence on third-party service providers used to identify candidates, such as recruitment agencies (for example, those based in countries neighboring Ukraine) or online platforms, and only use those with the highest ethical standards.
- For companies with operations or supply chain interests in Ukraine, [support your employees financially](#) throughout the conflict by maintaining wage and salary payments, including during periods of displacement. Where possible and if desired by the employee, [facilitate their transfer](#) from areas impacted by conflict to areas less severely impacted.
- Adapt your onboarding and training programs to meet the [psychosocial and integration needs of newcomers](#), including administrative assistance to regularize status, obtain temporary protection, identify short- and long-term housing opportunities, and get children into daycare or schools.
- Consider providing newcomers with [language courses](#) that focus on the improvement of work-related terminology and investing in [vocational training](#) for specific occupations. Providing opportunities that [combine education, training, and work](#), including the use of internships and apprenticeships, can increase access to skilled work and prevent newcomers from being relegated to lower skilled positions.
- Create or adapt your existing “[buddy system](#)” to improve the integration of new employees from Ukraine. This can be used not only as orientation and knowledge sharing but to raise and solve challenges related to workplace and community integration, legal and residency status, access to social services, etc.
- Ensure that all workplace programs and protections are [gender responsive](#). Take into consideration the risks faced by women within displaced communities associated with sexual harassment, and also challenges regarding parenting and childcare responsibilities, e.g. by establishing flexible working arrangements for parents or guardians.

- Where employees are housed in employer-owned or -operated facilities, consider adopting (or revising) protocols to [allow family members from Ukraine to reside with employees](#).
- Establish (or strengthen) a mechanism through which employees can report, in confidence, incidents of [harassment or discriminatory behaviour](#) to their supervisor; act upon and remedy all confirmed cases.

## Health, Well-being & Social Protection

To protect the health and well being of employees:

- For employers with operations in conflict zones, provide employees and their families with [direct relief and assistance](#) as well as [evacuation and relocation support](#), where possible.
- Assist [staff who are third party nationals](#) fleeing the conflict with all protection and repatriation efforts, including facilitating contact with consular officials or other representatives of countries of origin.
- In recruiting and onboarding new staff from among displaced Ukrainians, maintain all relevant [COVID-related health protocols](#) during recruitment, migration and employment.
- New staff may feel traumatized by recent experiences, isolated and deeply worried about the circumstances facing family members left behind. Consider referring employees to [psychosocial support](#), counselling services and/or hotlines; facilitating [regular communication with family members](#); and contacting relevant diaspora groups, civil society organisations and consular support services.
- Provide all necessary support to new staff members to [reduce barriers to health care, access to education and social services](#) in host communities.

## Community & Social Inclusion

Ukrainians fleeing hostilities are not likely to receive the information they need to facilitate community and social inclusion in their country of destination prior to departure. Here are some steps your business can take to support integration between newcomers, co-workers and communities:

- Support [access to language and orientation courses](#) for newcomers.
- [Liaise with relevant public authorities](#) to take advantage of existing resources, programs and initiatives that support community and social inclusion.
- Take steps to [prevent discrimination and combat xenophobia](#), including through targeted training among employees. [Prevent bias and promote equal treatment](#) in the workplace with due regard to the vulnerabilities faced by Ukrainian employees.
- Designate a staff welfare officer to provide [counselling and support](#).
- Consider strengthening [cooperation with diaspora groups and civil society organisations](#) representing the Ukrainian community in your communities of operation.
- Take steps to increase the [understanding and intercultural competence of staff](#) regarding the situation in Ukraine.

## Financial & Digital Inclusion

It is essential for refugees arriving in a new country to have access to a bank account and means of payment to be able to receive wages and for everyday life. Under the EU Temporary Protection Directive, Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war are granted temporary legal residence which gives rights to open a bank account.<sup>4</sup>

- Financial institutions can consider [facilitating procedures for refugees to access bank accounts, payment cards](#) and other financial mechanisms, and make these more affordable.
- Employers can assist refugees in [navigating the formalities](#) needed to open accounts and access payment systems.

Digital connectivity is also a fundamental necessity for accessing basic services in the host country as well as to maintain communications with family and communities in the country of origin. Affordability, access to devices and infrastructure, digital literacy, language, security, and privacy concerns are all possible barriers to digital inclusion of refugees.

- Companies in relevant sectors and employers can consider [facilitating access to devices and connectivity](#), as well as [training in language and digital skills](#).

## Enhancing Supply Chain Due Diligence & Integrity

To ensure the integrity of your operations and supply chains:

- Be aware of the [increased risk of human trafficking](#) to business operations and supply chains across Europe. Strengthen the integrity of your recruitment and hiring practices to [prevent fraudulent and unethical recruitment](#). More information and tips on the topic of ethical recruitment can be found on the website of IOM's IRIS: Ethical Recruitment Initiative or you can contact the IRIS Secretariat at: [iris@iom.int](mailto:iris@iom.int).
- Map your supply chains and business partners to [identify potential locations of human rights-related risks](#) in conflict zones and surrounding countries.
- [Strengthen due diligence and protection measures in supply chains](#), including efforts to combat human trafficking. This can include closer scrutiny and monitoring of suppliers, working with them to improve understanding and capacity to respond to conflict- and displacement-related risks, etc.

## Raising Awareness, Cooperation & Support

Companies can help raise awareness and increase support as follows:

- Use your social media platforms to [draw attention to the global humanitarian response](#) to the conflict, including the work of UN partner agencies in Ukraine and the region.
- [Partner with national chambers of commerce, industry representatives and other companies](#) to boost communications and awareness efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> See [webpage](#) and [video](#) on Ukrainian refugee rights to a bank account in the EU.

- Design a corporate communications campaign to [showcase the steps you are taking](#) to support humanitarian and other forms of assistance, including through employment and livelihood opportunities, workplace integration and social inclusion.
- Contact and [coordinate with relevant authorities and the consular services](#) of Ukraine, directly or through your representative industry association or chamber of commerce.

## Contact & Further Information

This [website](#) established by the European Commission contains comprehensive information about humanitarian assistance, resettlement support, temporary protection, social rights as well as contact information for relevant national authorities across the European Union.

IOM operates support [hotlines](#) for people in Ukraine and fleeing Ukraine in the following countries: Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Slovakia and Moldova.

ICC's Centre of Entrepreneurship for Ukraine aims to strengthen the resilience of Ukrainian SMEs and support displaced Ukrainians. Organisations interested in contributing to this initiative should contact [icccoe@iccwbo.org](mailto:icccoe@iccwbo.org).

For principles for private sector involvement in the economic integration of refugees, see the Charter of Good Practice on the Role of the Private Sector in Economic Integration of Refugees developed by the [Private Sector for Refugees](#) initiative.

### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental and private sector partners. While operational and security challenges persist, IOM continues to provide much needed aid in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, whenever and wherever possible, in close coordination with humanitarian partners. This includes distributing core relief items to displaced people, including blankets, food, kitchen sets and hygiene kits. IOM also manages regional hotlines to support the safety of individuals on the move. To provide financial support for IOM's humanitarian response, use this [dedicated portal](#).

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### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ICC)

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 100 countries. ICC's core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Our members include many of the world's leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.

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