



## REGIONAL CONFERENCE

# Inclusive Education and Continuous Learning for All Children

*Inclusion of Ukrainian Refugee Children in Education in Europe*

### ORGANIZERS

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and UNICEF, under the auspices of the Human Rights Commissioner Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková

### COUNTRIES

Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Ukraine, and other European countries with experience in accommodating refugees and migrants

### DATE AND LOCATION

14-15 February 2024, [Liechtenstein Palace](#) Prague

### PARTICIPANTS

Policymakers, government officials, academia, civil society, UN, embassies

## Background

Since February 2022, more than 4 million people from Ukraine, mostly women and children, have registered for temporary protection across Europe.<sup>1</sup> Based on the Council Decision and Directive 2001/55/EC (the 'Temporary Protection Directive'), the legislative provisions have immediately ensured their access to education, health and social services as well as the job market. The European Commission, in consultation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR), representatives of Ministries of Education, and stakeholder organisations jointly developed recommendations for the educational inclusion and integration of refugee children across all ages in EU countries for the school year 2022-23. Since then, about 800,000 children have obtained access to national education systems of the EU member states.<sup>2</sup>

Despite various supports provided across the host countries almost over the past 2 years, a number of challenges and barriers still remain. They include shortages of classrooms and learning spaces; language barriers and lack of teaching and learning materials; insufficient qualified and competent teachers, teaching assistants and caregivers; mental health and wellbeing of children, families and teachers/staff; bullying and discrimination; financial pressures and lack of social networks, especially among adolescents and young people to name a few. A critical question is how we can collectively address these challenges to **ensure that all Ukrainian children and young people continuously access inclusive quality education and learning opportunities during these difficult times, wherever they may be.**

## Rationale

The Czech Republic, with its presidency of the [Visegrad Group 2023/2024](#), prioritizes the "Support to Ukraine" as one of its 3 pillars, and proposes that "[t]he Czech Presidency will support the integration of Ukrainians into the educational systems of the V4 countries through sharing best practices and experience". In this context, the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and UNICEF, under the auspices of the Human Rights Commissioner Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, will jointly organise a **Regional Education Conference** with the aim of facilitating cross-country sharing of emerging good practices. The organisers also wish that this forum will contribute to strategic discussions around the broader goal of inclusive quality education for all with regards to the European Education Area and other regional frameworks and commitments. Lessons from

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location>

<sup>2</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/migration-management-welcoming-refugees-ukraine\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/migration-management-welcoming-refugees-ukraine_en)

the current refugee response will provide valuable insights into the inclusive quality education and learning of the most marginalized children such as children with disabilities, Roma children, and children from poorest households.

## Expected Outcomes and Objectives

The conference conclusions are expected to inform the work of policymakers, senior officials, experts, and practitioners thereby facilitating development and implementation of each country's action plans/roadmaps for inclusive quality education system through key investments and programmes.

### **Outcome 1: Host countries inspired to further include Ukrainian refugee children in national education systems**

- » To provide a strategic and open forum of stocktaking and exchange of policies as well as lessons between policymakers, senior officials, academia, and practitioners on the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees (e.g. legislation, coordination, financing, workforce development etc.).
- » To identify and share innovative measures, tools, and practices to support the Ukrainian children, including young children and adolescents, to quickly develop language skills in the context of the whole school approach, catch-up programmes, and recognition of competencies, skills, and qualifications.

### **Outcome 2: EU education systems enhanced cooperation with the Ukrainian MoES to facilitate continuous learning of the Ukrainian children and future recovery of the country.**

- » To identify strategies for improving exchange of information about the students, education systems, curricula and workforce across the countries.
- » To discuss frameworks and tools for recognising skills and competencies as well as education/school certificates across the countries.

## Segments/Themes

**Day 1 (PM):** Opening; Setting the scene; Principles to strengthen inclusive approach for all learners; Inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children (wellbeing, language, support to teachers/staff)

**Day 2 (AM):** Continuous and flexible learning pathways in Europe (qualifications, non-formal education, preparatory courses), Cooperation between the European Countries and Ukraine; Summary and Closing

## Participants

- » Ministries of Education and national/state education agencies from the host countries of Ukrainian refugees and countries with experience in integrating migrants/refugees.
- » Ukrainian Ministry of Education Education and Science
- » EU Commission and the Council of Europe
- » UN and other international organisations
- » Academia
- » Civil Society Organisations
- » Embassies and diplomatic community (incl. US BPRM)

# Programme

Day 1 | (14 February 2024, Wednesday Afternoon)

Time	Session	Topic/Content	Speaker/Moderator
<b>Theme 1. Opening, Setting the Scene, Principles to Strengthen Inclusive Approach for All Learners</b>			
12:30 - 13:30	Welcome and registration		
13:30-14:00	<b>Opening</b>	Introduction and Video of Ukrainian Children	<b>Moderator:</b> Akihiro Fushimi, Chief of Education, UNICEF Refugee Response Office, Czechia
		Welcome and Opening Remarks	Yulia Oleinik, Head, UNICEF Refugee Response Office, Czechia
		Opening Remarks	Jiří Nantl, Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Czechia
14:00 - 15:00	<b>Setting the Scene</b>	Situation of Ukrainian Refugees and Their Education and Learning – Data and Trends	Adrienn Nyircsak, European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture: DG EAC)
		Rights to Quality Education and Learning for Ukrainian Refugee Children	Maida Pasic, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO)
		Situations and Prospects of Education and Learning of the Ukrainian Children (video message)	Yevhen Kudriavets, First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine
		Challenges and Opportunities in the Hosting Countries	Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, Human Rights Commissioner, Czechia
15:00 - 15:30	<b>Youth Voice</b>	Youth share their experiences, challenges, successes and ambitions	<b>Moderator:</b> Karolina Emanuelová, Education Officer, UNICEF Refugee Response Office, Czechia
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee/Tea Break		
<b>Theme 2. Inclusion of Ukrainian Refugee Children in Host Countries</b>			
16:00 - 16:50	<b>Topic 1: Language Acquisition for Learning</b>	How have the refugee children and families been supported to learn the languages in the host countries/communities? What implications does it have for multilingualism in schools and the education systems?	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Andrea Naletto, Education Specialist, UNICEF ECARO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Czechia:</b> Halka Smolová Závorová, Main guarantor of support for teachers working with foreign children/pupils, National Pedagogical Institute (NPI)</li> <li><b>Poland:</b> Kamila Dembińska, Language Program Director, SOK Foundation</li> <li><b>Switzerland:</b> Judith Hollenweger Haskell, Professor for Diversity and Education, Zürich University of Teacher Education</li> </ol> <p><b>Discussant 1:</b> Oksana Demchenko, Ukrainian Teacher, Teaching Assistant in Primary School Prague 9</p>
16:55 - 17:45	<b>Topic 2: Wellbeing and Safe, Welcoming Schools</b>	How have the refugee children been welcomed in the education systems in the host countries and communities?  What are the best practices and lessons to support their mental health and wellbeing?	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Tanja Rankovic, UNICEF Refugee Response Office, Slovakia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Poland:</b> Elżbieta Neroj, Director Inclusive Education Department, Ministry of Education</li> <li><b>Slovakia:</b> Matej Sapák, Project Manager, Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth</li> <li><b>Czechia:</b> Petr Winkler, Director, National Institute for Mental Health</li> </ol> <p><b>Discussant 2:</b> Ábel Lukács Kiss, Managing Director, Dorkas Ministries, Hungary</p>
17:45 - 18:00	<b>Closing</b>	Review of Day 1	Martina Běťáková, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czechia
18:00 - 20:00	Reception		

## Programme

Day 2 | (15 February 2024, Thursday Morning)

Time	Session	Topic/Content	Speaker/Moderator
9:00-9:15	Introduction	Recap of Day 1	<b>Moderator:</b> Akihiro Fushimi, Chief of Education, UNICEF Refugee Response Office, Czechia
<b>Theme 3. Continuous and Flexible Learning Pathways in Europe</b>			
9:15-9:35	<b>European Education Area</b>	Promoting inclusive education in the European Education Area (EEA)	Ulrike Storost, European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture: DG EAC)
9:35-9:50	<b>Country Experiences</b>	Preparatory courses and programmes to facilitate entry to national education systems	<b>Austria:</b> Markus Benesch, Head of the Group for General Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Research
9:50-10:05		Supporting educational biographies of migrant and refugee pupils in the German school system	<b>Germany:</b> Mostapha Bouklouâ, Head of the Department for Integration through Education, Municipal Integration Centers, North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Schools and Education
10:05-10:20		Building learning ecosystems: Thinking across physical, digital, and social learning spaces.	<b>Switzerland:</b> Judith Hollenweger Haskell, Professor for Diversity and Education, Zürich University of Teacher Education
10:20-10:55	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Questions from the audience to presenters.	<b>Moderator:</b> Karolina Emanuelová, Education Officer, UNICEF Refugee Response Office, Czechia
10:55-11:15	Coffee/Tea Break		
<b>Theme 4. The Road to Inclusion – Next Steps</b>			
11:15-12:30	Panel Discussion	<p>What more needs to be done to ensure continuous quality learning and skills development for all Ukrainian children and young people that currently reside in your countries? What is the unfinished business?</p> <p>What do you think is the role of Ukrainian Ministry in the education provision for their children abroad? How can they help you in the work you are doing?</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Maida Pasic, Regional Adviser Education, UNICEF ECARO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Czechia:</b> Martina Běťáková, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports</li> <li><b>Poland:</b> Marcin Miedziński, Deputy Director of Education, City of Wrocław</li> <li><b>Slovakia:</b> Alžbeta Štofková Dianovská, Chief School Inspector, State School Inspection</li> <li><b>Moldova:</b> Daniela Tîrsînă, Chief Adviser, Department for General Education and Lifelong Learning Policies, Ministry of Education and Research</li> </ol>
12:30-12:45	Summary	Key Insights	Regina De Dominicis, Director, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO)
12:45-13:00	Closing	Closing Remarks	Mikuláš Bek, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Czechia
13:00-14:00	Lunch		