

Temporary Protection Cyprus

This annex on temporary protection complements and should be read together with the [AIDA Country Report on Cyprus](#).

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Temporary Protection Procedure

A. General

Cyprus transposed the Temporary Protection Directive in 2004 into the national Refugee Law¹ through a Decision of the Council of Ministers.² The TPD was activated by a decision issued by the Council of Ministers on 22 March 2022.³

According to the Ministerial Decision, the following categories of persons displaced from Ukraine on 24 February 2022 or later as a result of the military invasion of the Russian armed forces during that period are eligible for temporary protection:

- ❖ Ukrainian nationals, beneficiaries of international protection in Ukraine, and their family members living in Ukraine before 24 February 2022;
- ❖ Stateless persons and non-Ukrainians living in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 with a permanent residence permit, who are unable to return safely to their country of origin;
- ❖ Members of the families of the above-mentioned categories. Family members for the purpose of this provision are considered to be spouses and minor children (under 18) on the condition that the family existed and resided in Ukraine before 24 February 2022. In case of adult children or other family members a separate application should be submitted.

Temporary protection was initially announced to last one year, with the possibility to be extended depending on the situation in Ukraine. At a later stage, temporary protection was extended to the above categories of persons living in Ukraine up to the 1 February 2022.⁴

As of 31 December 2022, 13,893 individuals were registered for temporary protection and as of 28 February 2023, 15,338 were registered for temporary protection.

There is no information available on people who may have been displaced - directly or indirectly by the conflict present in the country but beyond the scope of TPD such as Russian nationals.

B. Qualification for temporary protection

Temporary protection is applied to the following groups of persons who have been displaced from Ukraine on 24 February 2022 or later as a result of the military invasion of the Russian armed forces during that period:

- ❖ Ukrainian nationals, beneficiaries of international protection in Ukraine, and their family members living in Ukraine before 24 February 2022;
- ❖ Stateless persons and non-Ukrainians living in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 with a permanent residence permit, who are unable to return safely to their country of origin;
- ❖ Members of the families of the above-mentioned categories. Family members for the purpose of this provision are considered to be spouses and minor children (under 18) on the condition that the family existed and resided in Ukraine before 24 February 2022. In case of adult children or other family members a separate application should be submitted.

¹ Articles 20-20IB, Refugee Law.

² Refugees Law 2000 (6(I)/2000), Ο περί Προσφύγων Νόμος του 2000 (6(I)/2000), as amended by <https://bit.ly/3ZfFHA5> Ε.Ε., Παρ.Ι(Ι), Αρ.3918, 5/11/2004.

³ Decision (No 33/2022) of 22 March 2022 on management of influx of displaced persons from Ukraine, Διαχείριση Εισροών εκτοπισθέντων απο την Ουκρανία. (Decision has not yet been published in the official gazette of the Republic of Cyprus). <https://whoiswho.euaa.europa.eu/Pages/Temporary-protection.aspx>

⁴ Excerpt from the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting Council Date 4/5/2022, available in Greek at: [93.006.pdf \(cm.gov.cy\)](https://cm.gov.cy/93.006.pdf).

Persons who had reached Cyprus before 24 February 2022 were initially not eligible for temporary protection, however from May 2022, temporary protection was extended to persons who reached Cyprus from 1 February 2022 onwards.⁵

Stateless persons and TCNs have been included in the scope of the TPD as well as their families in line with the Council Decision. However, in practice there are no indications that persons from these groups have reached Cyprus, most probably due to obstacles in reaching the island. For example, the location of Cyprus as well as the fact the country is not a member of the Schengen area.

Persons fleeing Ukraine who do not fall under the scope of the temporary protection regime may access the asylum procedures and apply for international protection. The asylum procedure was accessed in 2022 by Ukrainian nationals, specifically 53 persons applied for asylum.⁶

C. Access to temporary protection and registration

1. Admission to territory

As Cyprus does not have land borders the main entry point of entry for people fleeing Ukraine is via air travel. There are no reports of people fleeing Ukraine being refused entry at the airport. Prior to the activation of the TPD, Ukrainian nationals had access to Cyprus without a visa for a stay of 90 days. Following the activation of the TPD access to territory was facilitated for persons fleeing Ukraine as entry continued to be permitted without visa but for all passports and other documents in accordance with the EU guidelines, including valid biometric and non-biometric passports, irrespective of the date of expiration; expired biometric and non-biometric passports; identification cards issued by the Government of Ukraine; internal passports; temporary Travel Documents issued by the Government of Ukraine; and permanent or temporary residence permits issued by the Government of Ukraine. The above requirements apply to all displaced persons from Ukraine that would like to enter the Republic of Cyprus legally, either by land or by sea. Furthermore, people who have returned to Ukraine and are seeking to re-enter the country are permitted to do so.

2. Freedom of movement

Individuals entitled to temporary protection not holding a biometric passport or biometric travel document do not experience any issue in moving within the country territory. Furthermore, there is no information indicating that they experienced any issues regarding attempts to continue their journey towards other European countries.

3. Registration under temporary protection

The Asylum Service is responsible for registering temporary protection applications. Initially applications could be submitted online via the website of the Asylum Service or in person at the Asylum Service for persons residing in Nicosia or at the district offices of the Aliens and Immigration Unit (AIU) in Larnaka Limassol, Paphos, and Famagusta. From the end of 2022 and onwards, applications can only be registered online or at the Asylum Service in Nicosia.

As Cyprus does not have land borders, the main entry point for persons fleeing Ukraine is via air travel. When persons fleeing Ukraine arrive in Cyprus and express their intention to apply for temporary protection at the airport, they are informed to contact the Asylum Service and/or the AIU of the district they will be residing in. As the majority of persons reaching Cyprus have family members or acquaintances in Cyprus the majority were guided by such persons. There are no specific time limits laid down in law for individuals to make their application.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Official statistics by the Asylum Service.

Applicants are requested to provide the following documents in order to prove they fall under the scope of temporary protection:⁷

- ❖ A copy of their passport (valid or expired) or I.D;
- ❖ A page of their passport with the official stamp showing the date that the person has left Ukraine or the date of arrival to the first country of entry (if available).

Upon registration of the Temporary Protection applicants are provided with a 'Notification', which consists of a letter confirming that they have been registered under Temporary Protection.

Overall, there were no problems reported in practice for temporary protection applicants with regard to the registration of their application, with very few exceptions such as applications being delayed.

Applicants who are refused registration under the temporary protection regime are not informed of the possibility to access appeal procedures, however in such cases an appeal could be submitted under the general rules for all administrative decisions. To date, there is no information of any such cases. Regarding the possibility to submit a subsequent application, it is possible to submit such an application however there is not information on the procedure, criteria or chances of success.

4. Legal assistance

There is no legal assistance provided specifically for persons entitled to temporary protection. The only legal assistance available is that provided to applicants of international protection (see [AIDA Country Report: Cyprus section; Regular Procedure: Legal Assistance](#)).

5. Information provision and access to NGOs

According to the Refugee Law,⁸ the Asylum Service shall provide persons enjoying temporary protection with a document, in a language they understand, in which the provisions of this Law or any other law relating to temporary protection are clearly stated. In practice, there are 2 leaflets available, one for adults and the other for children including unaccompanied and separated children, both with very basic information.⁹ Furthermore, the Asylum Service has provided basic information on their website, including links to information leaflets prepared by EUAA in Ukrainian and English.¹⁰ A helpline was also set-up for information to be provided, however this was not offered in Ukrainian. No information is provided specifically tailored to the needs of vulnerable individuals. Finally, there are no alternative sources of information other than basic information provided by UNHCR office in Cyprus.¹¹

D. Guarantees for vulnerable groups

There is no identification mechanism or special procedures in place to identify individuals, including unaccompanied children, entitled to temporary protection, who may need specific procedural guarantees because of their vulnerability, before or after their registration as temporary protection beneficiaries. Furthermore, there has been no specific programme introduced to address the needs of individuals fleeing from Ukraine suffering from mental health problems, including torture survivors and traumatised beneficiaries.

⁷ Cyprus Asylum Service, official website, available at: <https://bit.ly/3njLwPG>.

⁸ Article 20 ΣΤ, Refugee Law

⁹ Cyprus Asylum Service, official website, available at: <https://bit.ly/3lsFo7y>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ UNHCR Cyprus, see: <https://bit.ly/3ZptObf>.

Content of Temporary Protection

A. Status and residence

1. Residence permit

Indicators: Residence permit

1. What is the duration of residence permits granted to beneficiaries of temporary protection?	12,588
2. How many residence permits were issued to beneficiaries from the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive until 31 December 2022?	149,268
28 February 2023	14,495

According to information provided by the Asylum Service the decision granting Temporary protection is issued on the same day the application is registered by the Asylum Service and a notification is issued.¹² Furthermore, the decision covers all the members of the family included in the application. In practice the decision is often issued on the same day or within 2-3 days at the latest. After receiving the notification issued by the Asylum Service, the main applicant and family members included in the same application have 2 working days to visit any district Aliens and Immigration Unit of the Police to submit biometric data, which is necessary for the issuance of a residence permit. Applicants residing in Nicosia can apply for the issuance of a biometric residence permit by visiting the offices of the Civil Registry and Migration Department. Unlike beneficiaries of international protection, an appointment is not required for the submission of biometric data or for the issuance of a residence permit; beneficiaries are instructed to simply visit the Immigration Office of their district.¹³

The authority responsible for issuing the residence permit is the CRMD. According to the information provided once the submission of biometric data is completed the applicant also receives an ARC number and the residence permit which is issued within 72 hours. In practice the residence permit is issued within 5-7 working days on average. There have been no obstacles noted in practice as long as beneficiaries provide biometric data, otherwise delays occur until such data is provided.

Temporary protection was initially valid until 4 March 2023 and all residence permits regardless of date of issuance are also valid until the above-mentioned date. In view of the decision to extend Temporary Protection until the 4 March 2024, all residence permits have been automatically extended until 4 March 2024.¹⁴

Regarding access to rights, according to the Refugee Law,¹⁵ rights are not connected to the issuance of the residence permit and indeed in practice the majority of rights (accommodation, health, labour) can be accessed with the Notification issued by the asylum service and prior to the residence permit being issued. In any case, as temporary protection status and the residence permit are granted in a timely manner there have been no issues with regards to accessing rights.

If a TP holder wishes to return to Ukraine or move to another MS, they must express their will to leave Cyprus either directly to the Asylum Service or via email. Then Asylum Service will then inform via email that the TP in Cyprus is cancelled.

¹² EUAA, official website, available at: <https://bit.ly/3LMe7Yi>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ministry of Interior, Announcement concerning the extension of the temporary protection status to Ukrainian citizens in Cyprus, available at: <https://bit.ly/3n53hSQ>.

¹⁵ Article 20H, Refugee Law.

2. Access to asylum

According to the Refugee Law,¹⁶ beneficiaries of temporary protection have a right to apply for international protection at any time. In practice, there is no available information indicating TP holders accessing the asylum procedures. However, considering the extremely large backlog it is expected that such cases would be examined with very long delays.

B. Family reunification

To date, there has been no case reported in which a TP holder needed to apply for family reunification in order to reunite with family members.

C. Movement and mobility

Beneficiaries of temporary protection have freedom of movement only within the areas under the effective control of Republic of Cyprus, with no restrictions within these areas. As is the case for beneficiaries of international protection they do not have the right to reside or visit the areas in the north that are not under the effective control of the RoC.

Once beneficiaries of TP are registered, they have freedom of movement towards other EUMS and can exit Cyprus for 90 days without losing their status. In case they are out of the country for a period that exceeds 90 days their residence permit may be cancelled. However, in practice this is not implemented.¹⁷ Furthermore, there are no issues for beneficiaries of temporary protection who wished to temporarily return to Ukraine.

D. Housing

Indicators: Housing

1. For how long are temporary protection beneficiaries entitled to stay in reception centres?	N/a
2. Number of beneficiaries staying in reception centres as of 12/2022	2,900
3. Number of beneficiaries staying in private accommodation as of 12/2022	N/a

The following forms of accommodation were provided to beneficiaries of temporary protection in the country:

- **21 hotels/apartments hosting refugees.** Nineteen in Famagusta district, one in Agros (Limassol district) and one in Polis Chrysochous (Paphos District).
- **Some 2900 individuals** are hosted at this moment in state funded accommodation.

In order to provide accommodation to beneficiaries of temporary protection, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism (DMoT)¹⁸ has been delegated by the Council of Ministers to establish lease agreements with hotels.¹⁹ The DMoT has contracted private hotels for this purpose and this constitutes the only form of accommodation provided to TP beneficiaries. As of March 2023, a total of 21 hotels and apartments were contracted for this purpose, specifically 19 in Famagusta district, 1 in Agros (Limassol district) and 1 in

¹⁶ Article 20(3)(a), Refugee Law.

¹⁷ Information provided by Cyprus Refugee Council.

¹⁸ Deputy Ministry of Tourism, <https://bit.ly/3TKapk0>.

¹⁹ EUAA, see: <https://bit.ly/40d9sDg>.

Polis Chrysochous (Paphos District).²⁰ Such arrangements are not connected in any way to the general reception system and beneficiaries of TP are not entitled to access reception conditions.

There is no limitation on the duration of stay and although availability is limited there have not been significant complaints by beneficiaries on not being able to access such accommodation. These arrangements were initially planned until March 2023 but are expected to be extended. As of March 2023 2900 TP beneficiaries were hosted in hotels or apartments.

Furthermore, in August 2022 the Ministerial Council approved a Rent Subsidy Scheme for displaced persons from Ukraine who are granted temporary protection status and have been accommodated in hotel units.²¹ However up until March 2023 this had yet to be implemented.²²

E. Employment and education

1. Access to the labour market

Beneficiaries of temporary protection have access to the labour market under the same conditions as nationals. There are no specific measures in place to facilitate access to the labour market, however the immediate access to the status and to the labour market under the same conditions as nationals which was widely known among employers facilitated high numbers of TP securing employment.²³ Beneficiaries are entitled to equal treatment to nationals with regard to employment with no exception for specific rights. Currently, there is no data available on the number of temporary protection beneficiaries who accessed the labour market.

2. Access to education

The Law provides access to education for child beneficiaries of temporary protection under the same conditions provided to nationals.²⁴ Access to education is limited to under 18 and to state schools. In practice there are no obstacles to accessing school, however there are no preparatory classes available. As in the case of other non-Greek speaking children, additional Greek language classes are provided. In cases of a child beneficiary that is identified to have special needs they will be supported under the same conditions as nationals. To date there is no statistical information is available on the number of child beneficiaries of temporary protection who accessed education until 31 December 2022.

Regarding access to higher education the University of Cyprus (UCY, a state university provided 10 scholarships to Ukrainian refugees, whose studies were violently interrupted by the Russian invasion. Specifically the UCY announced that ten scholarships would be awarded, five at undergraduate level and five at postgraduate level, as well as scholarships to attend courses at the Greek Language School of the University of Cyprus. The scholarships cover tuition fees as well as monthly living expenses.²⁵ The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), also a state university, provided ways to facilitate access to the University either for Ukrainian students to transfer or for Ukrainian high school graduates that have arrived in Cyprus as refugees from Ukraine and wish to study at the Cyprus University of Technology.²⁶ Frederick University, a private university introduced a special-purpose scholarship scheme for all students whose studies have

²¹ Ministerial Decision, No.93.493, 'Provision of Financial assistance to displaced persons from Ukraine' available at: <https://bit.ly/3JT9nO2>.

²² Information provided by Cyprus Refugee Council.

²³ Information provided by Cyprus Refugee Council under the <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/> initiative

²⁴ Article 20H (2), Refugee Law.

²⁵ Phileleftheros, "University of Cyprus: Scholarships to refugees from Ukraine" available in Greek at <https://bit.ly/409RKAq>.

²⁶ Cyprus University of Technology, see: <https://bit.ly/3JLmsci>.

been affected by the conflicts. The scholarships apply to all undergraduate studies, fully cover the tuition fees of the first year and 50% of fees for subsequent years.²⁷

The Law provides for access to education/vocational training for adults.²⁸ In practice, however, no trainings have been organised specifically for beneficiaries of TP.

F. Social welfare

According to the Law, beneficiaries of temporary protection have a right to receive social assistance and livelihood support when they lack sufficient resources.²⁹ In practice social welfare is not provided to temporary protection beneficiaries under the same conditions and on the same level as for nationals or as legally residing third-country nationals. Instead, they only have access to a one-off financial allowance as follows:

- ❖ A single person (and the main applicant if there is a family) is entitled to €340
- ❖ Every dependent family member above the age of fourteen is entitled €170 and every dependent member below the age of fourteen is entitled to €100
- ❖ Benefits are provided in cash in one or two instalments

Applications are made to the Social Welfare Services which is the responsible authority for granting social assistance. The provision of social welfare is not tied to a requirement to reside in a specific place or region. Furthermore no obstacles have been observed in practice which is probably due to the fact that it is a one-off payment. There is no statistical information available on the number of beneficiaries of temporary protection who accessed social welfare.

In August 2022 the Ministerial Council approved a monthly financial assistance of €102 for early childhood care for children aged up to 4 years and 8 months provided that the parent/guardian is working.³⁰ However, access to this provision did not become available until March 2023.³¹

G. Health care

According to the Law³² beneficiaries of temporary protection have access to medical care, in case they do not have sufficient resources, which includes at least first aid care and the necessary treatment of diseases. Furthermore, the Law states that they have access to necessary medical or other assistance, as long as they have special needs, in particular unaccompanied minors or persons who have suffered torture, rape or other serious forms of mental, physical or sexual violence.³³

In practice TP beneficiaries have not been given access to the same health care as nationals, or as legally residing third-country nationals including beneficiaries of international protection who have access to the National Health System. Instead, medical care is provided under the same conditions as provided to asylum seekers which entails access to the public health system (state hospitals and other state medical services) for care beyond emergency care or essential treatments but does not allow access to private doctors/professionals and private medical services available on the NHS (see [AIDA Country Report on Cyprus: Health Care](#)). Access is facilitated by presenting the Notification that they are registered as TP

²⁷ Frederick University, see: <https://bit.ly/40d0O7C>.

²⁸ Article 20H (1)(β), Refugee Law.

²⁹ Article 20H (1)(δ), Refugee Law.

³⁰ Ministerial Decision, No.93.493, 'Provision of Financial assistance to displaced persons from Ukraine' available at: <https://bit.ly/3JT9nO2>.

³¹ Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Application for Financial Support for the Care of Children Displaced from Ukraine up to the Age of 4 Years and 8 Months, available at: <http://bit.ly/3IU9kth>.

³² Article 20H (1)(ε), Refugee Law.

³³ Article 20H (1)(σ), Refugee Law.

holder. There is no available data on the number of beneficiaries of TP who have accessed public health care or any issues or obstacles.