Temporary protection - Croatia

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Croatia transposed the Temporary Protection Directive and it is currently in force with the Law on International and Temporary Protection (LITP) | Zakon o međunarodnoj i privremenoj zaštiti of 2015.

The government activated temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine by the Decision on the introduction of temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia for displaced persons from Ukraine I Odluka o uvođenju privremene zaštite u Republici Hrvatskoj za raseljene osobe iz Ukrajine on 7 March 2022. It entered into force on 7 March 2022 and it applies retroactively to all qualified person displaced from Ukraine.

Temporary protection has been extended until 4 March 2026.

National legislation

Law on International Protection and Temporary Protection (LITP). Consolidated version. Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia | Odluka o uvođenju privremene zaštite u Republici Hrvatskoj za raseljene osobe iz Ukrajine NN 70/15, 127/17, 33/23, 17/25.

Implementing Acts Decision on the introduction of temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia for displaced persons from Ukraine I Odluka o uvođenju privremene zaštite u Republici Hrvatskoj za raseljene osobe iz Ukrajine

Lastly amended by the Decision on the extension of temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia for displaced persons from Ukraine | Prijedlog odluke o produljenju privremene zaštite u Republici Hrvatskoj za raseljene osobe iz Ukrajine on 27 February 2025.

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Competent authority and stakeholders

Area	Competent national authority	Assistance to the competent authority (if applicable)
Screening at the external border (if relevant)	Border police I Granična Policija	
Biometric data (if relevant)	n/a	
Granting temporary protection	Ministry of the Interior I Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova Republike Hrvatske	
Issuing the residence permit	Police station / Police administration I Policijska uprava / Policijska stanica Ministry of the Interior I Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova Republike Hrvatske	
Providing accommodation	Ministry of the Interior, Civil Protection Directorate I Hrvatska za Ukrajinu - Važni brojevi	
Medical care	Ministry of Health I Ministarstvo zdravstva Republike Hrvatske - Ostvarivanje Prava Na Zdravstvenu Zaštitu Za Raseljene Osobe Iz Ukrajine	

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Area	Competent national authority	Assistance to the competent authority (if applicable)
Social welfare	Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy I Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskog sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike - Працевлаштування Та Соціальне Забезпечення Громадян України / Zapošljavanje i socijalna skrb za državljane Ukrajine	

Eligibility

According to Article 2 of the Decision on the introduction of temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia for displaced persons from Ukraine I Odluka o uvođenju privremene zaštite u Republici Hrvatskoj za raseljene osobe iz Ukrajine, the following categories of people are eligible for temporary protection:

- Citizens of Ukraine and their family members;
- Stateless persons and third-country nationals who have received international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine and their family members who have been granted residence in Ukraine before 24 February 2022;
- Nationals of other third countries who have had valid permanent residence in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 and who cannot return to their country or region of origin under safe and permanent conditions.

Croatia will also grant temporary protection to displaced citizens of Ukraine and their family members who have left Ukraine immediately before 24 February 2022 due to the security situation and cannot return to Ukraine due to the armed conflict.

According to Article 78(5) of the Law on International Protection and Temporary Protection (LITP), Croatia will not grant temporary protection to applicants who are not expressly mentioned in the relevant Government decision.

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According to Article 78(6) of the Law on International Protection and Temporary Protection (LITP), rejection decisions cannot be appealed but an administrative dispute can be initiated within 8 days of the delivery of the decision.

Admission to the territory

Holders of a biometric passport can enter Croatia visa-free and stay for a total of 90 days within the last 180 days. People who declare being displaced from Ukraine at the border crossing to the border police can enter the country without a travel document. In such cases, biometric data and fingerprints of all 10 fingers and a facial image must be taken, except for minors under 12 years old, who only need to be photographed.

Upon arrival in Croatia, displaced persons undergo security screening conducted by the police at designated border crossing points. Following this, all individuals are registered in the National Border Management Information System (NBMIS) to ensure accurate tracking and access to services. In parallel, medical screenings are carried out both at the borders and within accommodation facilities to assess immediate health needs. As part of its public health response, Croatia also offers COVID-19 vaccinations to all displaced persons entering the country.

Provision of information

Information platforms

A dedicated website 'Croatia for Ukraine' by the government provides information on first reception, rights and obligations, social rights, healthcare, etc.

Leaflets

- Useful information for displaced persons from Ukraine
- Important numbers

Dedicated contacts

The relevant numbers are available on 'Croatia for Ukraine' website.

Latest statistics

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The government shared weekly statistics on entry, displaced persons and accommodation on the 'Croatia for Ukraine' website since the beginning of the armed conflict in February 2022 until the beginning of 2023. From 2023 statistical data has not been published.

EUAA Booklets

EUAA Booklet on Temporary Protection in Croatia also available in UA and RU

Procedural aspects

Procedure to register and be granted temporary protection

The government established an Interdepartmental Working Group coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate all activities of receiving and caring for displaced people from Ukraine.

Displaced persons from Ukraine can apply for temporary protection through the Croatia4Ukraine online application, in person at a local police station or at a collective accommodation facility.

People who are not listed in the government decision implementing the Temporary Protection Directive will have their requests rejected under Article 78(5) of the LITP.

Applications can be completed in English or Ukrainian, and no fees are required. All requests are registered in the Ministry of the Interior's database.

An identity card of a foreigner with temporary protection is issued shortly after the application is approved and serves as a residence permit but not a travel document.

Under Article 82(4) of the LITP, Croatia will take back individuals under temporary protection who enter another country without authorisation, provided their foreigner's card is still valid.

Information on the procedure is available on 'Croatia for Ukraine' website.

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Registration	According to Article 78(5) of the LITP: The requests of displaced persons from Ukraine who were not mentioned in the government decision implementing the Temporary Protection Directive will be rejected. Displaced persons from Ukraine can apply for temporary protection: • online through the Croatia4Ukraine application; • in person at the nearest competent police administration or station according to the place of accommodation (full list available on website); • in Collective Accommodation (permanent form of accommodation) where a request for temporary protection in these facilities is submitted to the officers of the Ministry of the Interior, i.e. police departments/station officers. The application form for temporary protection can be completed in English or Ukrainian. Persons subject to temporary protection procedures are exempt from paying fees. All applications for temporary protection are registered in the national database of the Ministry of the Interior.

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Residence permit	An identity card of an alien under temporary protection is issued shortly after the application is approved and serves as a residence permit. The card is issued by the police department, i.e. the police station responsible for the place of residence of the foreigner or by officers of the Ministry of the Interior or police departments or stations in the facilities of the Collective Accommodation. A foreigner's card under temporary protection is not a travel document and persons cannot use it to move outside of Croatia. However, Croatia will accept to take back persons under temporary protection who attempted to enter the territory of another State without authorisation or who entered said territory, as long as their foreigner's card is still valid.
Legal aid	Information is currently not available
Appeal	According to article 78(6) of the LITD, Rejection decisions cannot be appealed against, but an administrative dispute can be initiated within 8 days of the delivery of the decision. Displaced persons from Ukraine can receive free legal assistance from lawyers of the Croatian Bar Association as part of a free legal assistance programme.

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Exclusion	The grounds for exclusion from temporary protection are laid down in Article 80(1) and (2) of the LITP. A displaced person can be excluded from temporary protection if there are serious reasons to believe that: • They have committed a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity as defined by the provisions of international instruments; • They have committed, incited to or participated in a serious non-political crime outside of Croatia before arriving in Croatia, including particularly cruel acts, even if they were committed with an allegedly political objective; • They have committed acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations as set out in the Preamble and Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations; • A well-founded suspicion exists that they are a threat to national security or public order of the Republic of Croatia; or • They have been convicted by a final judgment of a particularly serious criminal offence for which under the Croatian legislation a prison sentence of 5 years or longer may be imposed. According to Article 80(3) to (5), exclusion decisions cannot be appealed but an administrative dispute may be filed with the competent administrative court. This procedure has suspensive effect, but the appeal against the first-instance decision of the administrative court does not.

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Termination/Withdrawal	The grounds for termination or withdrawal of temporary protection are laid down in Articles 81 and 82(1) to (3) of the LITP. Croatia cooperates with other relevant organisations to ensure the protection of the rights of persons under international or temporary protection. Croatia also exchanges information on temporary protection with the European Commission and the national authorities of EU+ countries. If it is established during these exchanges that a person under temporary protection got a residence permit on the basis of temporary protection in another country, the foreigner's card issued to them in the Republic of Croatia ceases to be valid.

Reception and accommodation

Overview

Information on accommodation for beneficiaries of international protection is available on the website Croatia for Ukraine - Accommodation of the Ministry of the Interior. A beneficiary of temporary protection can be accommodated in:

Reception accommodation: the stay is short term, typically lasting up to 48 hours. During this period, the applicant is provided with a place to sleep, meals, internet access, as well as psychosocial and health support. After this initial stay, the applicant will move to a more stable housing in one of the collective accommodation facilities.

Staff from the Directorate of Civil Protection, the Croatian Red Cross, police, and healthcare workers are present at reception accommodations. When necessary, mobile teams from other relevant authorities and operational civil protection forces, such as social welfare services, employment offices, education staff, and additional civil protection units, are also deployed.

Collective accommodation: It is a more permanent form of accommodation. The applicant is provided with a place to sleep, food and internet access. At these locations, there are hotel employees for all questions related to accommodation

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and stay, and employees of the Directorate of Civil Protection and the Croatian Red Cross coordinate all the relevant activities.

Individual or private accommodation: Accommodation with citizens, relatives, friends, acquaintances or if the applicant is the owner of real estate in Croatia.

Organisation of reception and accommodation

Initial reception: Displaced people from Ukraine who do not have accommodation in Croatia are initially sent to organised accommodation in short-stay reception centres for up to 48 hours. There are two short-stay reception centres available:

- South 2 Sports Hall, King Petar Svačić Street 67, Osijek; and
- City Sports Hall, Elementary School of Dr. Jure Turić, Miroslav Kraljević Street 19, Gospić.

Accommodation: Article 90(1) of the LITP specifies that foreigners under temporary protection receive appropriate accommodation, regardless of their own financial resources.

After the short stay, applicants for temporary protection who do not have accommodation in private arrangements are accommodated in collective facilities throughout Croatia.

Employees of the Civil Protection, Police and Croatian Red Cross are present at the reception centres. The Croatian Red Cross registers residents through the form to be eligible for psychosocial support, humanitarian assistance and the needs of the Search Service. A health care professional and team of experts on labour issues are also present in each accommodation centre.

Rights of people granted temporary protection

Rights	Description

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Access to the labour market	According to Article 86(1) of the LITP, beneficiaries of temporary protection can work without a residence and work permit or a certificate of employment application and they can access the labour market with the foreigner card for temporary protection under the same rules as Croatian citizens. The Croatian Employment Service created a dedicated website for displaced persons from Ukraine and published a leaflet on the rights in the field of employment. Teams of experts have been set up at the accommodation centres to provide information and overall support. Beneficiaries may contact the Croatian Employment Service and register with the unemployment register. A consultant will support people entering the labour market (e.g. assistance with the cv, job interviews, information about job opportunities, etc.). The Croatian Employment Service also provides translation services to support the communication between Ukrainian citizens and consultants. Information on employment and work for beneficiaries of temporary protection is available on the website Croatia for Ukraine – Employment and Work of the Ministry of the Interior. For additional information consult the Overview of national measures regarding employment and social security of displaced persons coming from Ukraine - Country Fiches by the European Labour Authority.

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Access to medical care	According to Article 87(1) of the LITP, beneficiaries of temporary protection and their family members have the right to healthcare to the same extent as persons with compulsory health insurance. The right to healthcare under the compulsory health insurance includes the right to financial compensation and services covering: • primary healthcare; • specialist-consultative healthcare; • hospital healthcare; • medications determined by the basic and supplementary medicine list of the CHIF; • dental prostheses determined by the basic and supplementary prostheses list of the CHIF; • orthopaedic and other medical prostheses determined by the basic and supplementary orthopaedic and other medical prostheses list of the CHIF, and the right to cross-border healthcare. Compulsory health insurance also includes rights on the basis of accidents suffered at work and occupational diseases. Support for psychological issues is also in place.

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Social welfare assistance and means of subsistence	According to Article 90a of the LITP, beneficiaries of temporary protection have the right to social welfare in accordance with the Social Welfare Act. Beneficiaries of temporary protection are entitled to social assistance by a social worker. Specifically, they are entitled to: • the first social service (provision of information and initial assessing of needs); • counselling; • psychosocial counselling; • institutional social welfare accommodation at a foster family and different social facilities (if the conditions are met in accordance with the Social Welfare Act (unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, the elderly and people with disabilities); and • Amendments to the Social Welfare Act (Official Gazette No. 18/22, 46/22) stipulate that persons under temporary protection receive benefits and services in the social welfare system to the same extent as foreigners under subsidiary protection and asylum seekers. Beneficiaries can apply for a one-time allowance to the social worker on duty at the Reception and Collective Accommodation. People in private accommodation can apply in social welfare centres and branches in Croatia. Information on welfare assistance for beneficiaries of temporary protection is available on the website Croatia for Ukraine – Social rights and assistance of the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy | Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike.

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Education	Children of beneficiaries of temporary protection have the same rights as Croatian citizens for kindergarten, primary and secondary education. Depending on the needs and level of education, educational institutions organise preparatory Croatian language classes, provide textbooks, etc. Municipalities and cities have various programmes for co-financing the costs of food, transportation, textbooks for high school students and extracurricular activities. Several in-person and online language courses (general, free) are also available. Experts from Ukraine from different fields can join Erasmus+ through invited expert activities in all educational areas – education and general education, vocational education and training, adult education or higher education. Through Erasmus+, kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions as well as adult education organisations can invite experts from Ukraine of different professional profiles to facilitate the integration of refugees from Ukraine into educational institutions in Croatia. The stay is supported by Erasmus+ funds. The Ministry of Science and Education issued on 16 March 2022 a notice on the Inclusion of children, displaced persons from Ukraine under temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia in the system of early and preschool education as well as in primary and secondary schools. It had previously shared guidelines, recommendations and proposals for activities for teachers, educators and professional associates for the inclusion of vulnerable groups of refugee students. Information on education for minors, students and teachers, beneficiaries of temporary protection is available on the website Croatia for Ukraine – Education of the Ministry of Interior. Adults According to article 86(2) LITP, adults are entitled to re-training and additional training, under the same conditions as Croatian citizens.

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Family reunification	Family members of beneficiaries of temporary protection have the right to temporary protection. A family member is a spouse or cohabitant, minor children whether they were born in a matrimonial or cohabiting union or were adopted, and other close relatives who were living in a shared household at the time when the person became displaced from Ukraine and were wholly or mainly dependent on those persons at the time. The right to temporary protection is granted to the life partner/informal life partner of a Ukrainian national or persons who have enjoyed international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine.

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Other	Information on the overall rights and obligations of beneficiaries for temporary protection is available on the website Croatia for Ukraine – Rights and obligations of a person under temporary protection of the Ministry of Interior. **Transportation:** HŽ Putnički prijevoz provides free transport to Ukrainian citizens on all routes in the internal railway traffic of the Republic of Croatia in the 2nd class of trains. **Vehicles:** The Croatian Auto Club (HAK) provides free roadside assistance to refugees from Ukraine on Croatian roads. **Pets:** Non-commercial movement of pets accompanied by their owners to the territory of the Republic of Croatia is allowed. Upon receipt of a request and information, a veterinary inspector schedules a visit in order to determine the steps to be taken to identify the dog by chipping and vaccinating against rabies and mandatory registration. The veterinarian provides with all the necessary information regarding this procedure. These activities are free for owners who move with their pets from Ukraine.

Assistance to unaccompanied minors

Information on unaccompanied minors should be immediately reported to the police (number 192) or during the border control. If an unaccompanied minor arrives at a border crossing point, social services are involved during the border control.

Border police should also verify the kinship or other relationship if the minor is accompanied by an adult.

Legal guardianship

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It is necessary to contact a police officer or an official in the accommodation facility immediately for an unaccompanied minor. The unaccompanied child is assigned a special guardian by the social welfare centre tasked with safeguarding the child's wellbeing.

All further proceedings, such as identification and registration, are carried out by a police officer trained to work with children, always in the presence of the appointed guardian.

The special guardian is responsible for protecting the child's rights and interests, representing them in all relevant matters, and taking necessary steps to facilitate family reunification.

Additionally, data on unaccompanied children from Ukraine who are received in Croatia is shared daily with the Embassy of Ukraine in Zagreb, ensuring transparency and coordination.

Accommodation

According to Article 90(2) of the LITP, unaccompanied minors may be accommodated:

- with adult relatives;
- in a foster family;
- with providers of social services for children; or
- exceptionally, with the person who cared for them during the escape.

Education

A beneficiary of temporary protection has the right to elementary and secondary education.

Currently all children displaced from Ukraine attend online school in Ukrainian.

Assistance to people with special needs

According to Article 90(3) of the LITP, accommodation is maintained if a foreigner whose temporary protection has ended cannot return to the country of origin due to serious health reasons.

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Accommodation is organised taking into consideration several criteria, including the vulnerability of beneficiaries of temporary protection. Suitable accommodation in social welfare institutions is organised for people with special accommodation needs, people with disabilities and the elderly (aged 65 years or older).

Beneficiaries with disabilities could be provided with a personal assistant in cooperation with Croatian associations of persons with disabilities.

Information on support to persons with disabilities or elderly persons is available on the website Croatia for Ukraine – Social rights and assistance of the Ministry of the Interior.

Solidarity (relocation of people who are eligible for temporary protection)

Information is currently not available.

Impact of simultaneous application for international protection

Information is currently not available.

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