

Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2026

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Dear Colleagues,

The production of the Asylum Report 2026 is currently underway. The annual [Asylum Report](#) presents an overview of developments in the field of international protection in Europe.

The report includes information and perspectives from various stakeholders, including experts from EU+ countries, civil society organisations, researchers and UNHCR. To this end, we invite you, our partners from civil society, academia and research institutions, to share your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2025 by topic as presented in the online survey (**'Part A' of the form**).

We also invite you to share with us any publications your organisation has produced throughout 2025 on issues related to asylum in EU+ countries (**'Part B' of the form**). These may be reports, articles, recommendations to national authorities or EU institutions, open letters and analytical outputs. Your input can cover information for a specific EU+ country or the EU as a whole. You can complete all or only some of the sections.

Please note that the Asylum Report does not seek to describe national systems in detail but rather to present key developments of the past year, including improvements and challenges which remain.

All submissions are publicly accessible. For transparency, contributions will be published on the EUAA webpage and contributing organisations will be listed under the [Acknowledgements](#) of the report.

All contributions should be appropriately referenced. You may include links to supporting material, such as analytical studies, articles, reports, websites, press releases, position papers. Some sources of information may be in a language other than English. In this case, please cite the original language and, if possible, provide one to two sentences describing the key messages in English.

The content of the Asylum Report is subject to terms of reference and volume limitations. Contributions from civil society organisations feed into EUAA's work in multiple ways and inform reports and analyses beyond the Asylum Report.

NB: Similarly to last year, this year's edition of the Asylum Report will be leaner and more analytical, with streamlined thematic sections. The focus will be on key trends in the field of asylum rather than on individual developments. For this reason, information shared by respondents to this call may be incorporated in the Asylum Report in a format different than in the past years. It will also feature prominently as info boxes in the [country overviews](#).

Your input matters to us and will be much appreciated!

Please submit your contribution to the Asylum Report 2026 by Friday, 9 January 2026.

Contact details

* Name of organisation

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I accept the provisions of the EUAA [Legal and Privacy Statements](#)

General observations

Before sharing information by thematic area, please provide your general observations on asylum developments as indicated in the following three fields:

What areas would you highlight where important developments took place in the country/countries you cover?

Poland - changes in national legislation regarding temporary protection, see especially Section 16.

What are the areas, where only few or no developments took place?

Would you have any observations to share specifically about the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in the national context of the country/ countries you cover?

PART A: Contributions by topic

Please share your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2025 by topic. Kindly make sure that you provide information on:

- New developments and improvements in 2025 and new or remaining challenges;
- Changes in legislation, policies or practices, or institutional changes during 2025.

1. Access to territory and access to the asylum procedure (including first arrival to territory and registration, arrival at the border, application of the non-refoulement principle, the right to first response (shelter, food, medical treatment) and issues regarding border guards)

Rapid Entry Path: The Special Law (formally the Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country) was established to provide a fast-tracked legal basis for Ukrainian nationals who entered Poland from 24 February 2022 due to hostilities. The Special Law was specifically intended to bypass the standard international protection (asylum) procedure. This was because the Polish administration was unable to process individual applications quickly enough to handle the influx of over one million people. The Special Law's scope was narrower than the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) because it primarily limited protection to Ukrainian citizens and their family members, potentially excluding third-country nationals fleeing the same conflict. Furthermore, those who crossed the border "illegally" (unrecorded) often had to rely on the TPD for legalisation rather than the Special Law itself.

2. Access to information and legal assistance (including counselling and representation)

Because the 2022 Special Law was enacted in response to an emergency and underwent 29 amendments by late 2024, actors had to adapt to provide accurate counselling continuously. Information did not always flow through official government channels; instead, it relied heavily on community-led and digital efforts:

- **Social Media and Community Platforms:** Migrant organisations and social media platforms (specifically Facebook and Telegram groups) emerged as the most effective channels for communicating essential legal updates. Blogs and vlogs created by community representatives were often preferred over official government websites.
- **Social networks transformed legal information into a "network resource".** For instance, "word of mouth" allowed information regarding municipal procedures to spread faster than formal announcements.
- **Technological Integration:** The state provided digital access through the mObywatel application and the Diia.pl system, which facilitated identity registration and provided a digital basis for accessing rights. The central administration also translated websites into Ukrainian and Russian to reach forced migrants.

Legal aid was provided by a mix of specialised professionals and reoriented humanitarian actors:

- **Organisations with prior experience in refugee assistance** were best positioned to navigate the law's complexities. These groups often trained one another to understand the "unclear and repeatedly amended" act. They provided counselling on the differences between the Special Law, the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), and leftover COVID-19 regulations.
- **Commercial Actors:** Employment agencies took on an expanded role, providing legal aid to help migrants adapt to the labour market. This was necessary because many employers and migrants were uncertain about documentation deadlines and the frequently changing sub-statutory regulations.
- **State and Local Administration:** Some labour offices established specialised phone lines with Ukrainian-speaking staff. Local municipal administrations also provided direct support, helping migrants "sort out" job-related documents and registration for school benefits.
- **Informal Assistance:** In many cases, legal counselling was decentralised. Individuals such as church volunteers or established "settled" migrants assisted newcomers with PESEL registration, opening bank accounts, and applying for parental benefits like "500 Plus".

Challenges in Representation and Counselling

Despite these efforts, providing assistance was hampered by the "liminal legality" of the status. Practitioners struggled to represent migrants effectively because:

- **Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms:** The law lacked clear mechanisms for enforcement, leading to operational uncertainty for implementing organisations.
- **Legal "Collapse":** Actors had to help migrants distinguish between different legal orders that overlapped, such as visas extended under COVID-19 laws versus protection under the Special Law.
- **Warning Against Abuse:** Social networks also provided a form of "protective counselling," warning migrants against sharing their PESEL numbers with unscrupulous landlords seeking to exploit the "40 Plus" subsidy program.

3. Provision of interpretation services (e.g. introduction of innovative methods for interpretation, increase/decrease in the number of languages available, change in qualifications required for interpreters)

4. Dublin procedures (including the organisational framework, practical developments, suspension of transfers to selected countries, detention in the framework of Dublin procedures)

5. Special procedures (including border procedures, procedures in transit zones, accelerated procedures, admissibility procedures, prioritised procedures or any special procedure for selected caseloads)

6. Reception of applicants for international protection (including information on reception capacities – increase/decrease/stable, material reception conditions - housing, food, clothing and financial support, contingency planning in reception, access to the labour market and vocational training, medical care, schooling and education, residence and freedom of movement)

7. Detention of applicants for international protection (including detention capacity – increase /decrease/stable, practices regarding detention, grounds for detention, alternatives to detention, time limit for detention)

8. Procedures at first instance (including relevant changes in: the authority in charge, organisation of the process, interviews, evidence assessment, determination of international protection status, decisionmaking, timeframes, case management - including backlog management)

9. Procedures at second instance (including organisation of the process, hearings, written procedures, timeframes, case management -including backlog management)

10. Issues of statelessness in the context of asylum (including identification and registration)

11. Children and applicants with special needs (special reception facilities, identification mechanisms/referrals, procedural standards, provision of information, age assessment, legal guardianship and foster care for unaccompanied and separated children)

The Special Law (formally the Act of 12 March 2022) was specifically designed to accommodate children, who, along with women, made up the vast majority of the population fleeing Ukraine. While the sources do not explicitly use the term "applicants with special needs," the law establishes a framework for medical care and social assistance that addresses the requirements of vulnerable populations, including the elderly.

12. Content of protection (including access to social security, social assistance, healthcare, housing and other basic services; integration into the labour market; measures to enhance language skills; measures to improve attainment in schooling and/or the education system and/or vocational training)

The Special Law (formally the Act of 12 March 2022 on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine) was established as an emergency response to the full-scale war in Ukraine to provide an alternative, rapid path for those seeking refuge in Poland. Its primary function is to grant temporary protection to Ukrainian nationals, effectively equalising their rights with those of Polish citizens in many spheres of life.

The content of this protection includes the following key components:

Legal Status and Identification

- **PESEL Number:** The law introduced a simplified procedure for forced migrants to obtain a PESEL (Universal Electronic Civil Registration System) number. This number is the primary mechanism for migrants to access social benefits, public healthcare, and the labour market.
- **Duration of Stay:** Initially issued for one year, the legality of residence has been regularly extended and remained in force until 30 September 2025 (now prolonged until 4th of March 2026).
- **Residence Pathways:** A new 2024 amendment allowed those with an active PESEL UKR status for at least 365 days to apply for a three-year residence card, offering a bridge from temporary protection to the general immigration system.
- Despite these protections, the sources highlight that certain legal pathways, such as the initial 2023 residence card amendments, did not include children, leading to uncertainty regarding their long-term legal status compared to their working parents

Social Assistance and Healthcare

- **Financial Benefits:** The law provided various cash allowances, such as the "300 Plus" one-time allowance and the "40 Plus" program, which subsidised Polish households and companies hosting forced migrants.
- **Parental Support:** Migrants have access to parental benefits like "500 Plus" and "Good Start," though recent amendments require children to be enrolled in the Polish educational system to qualify.
- **Public Services:** Protection includes full access to the public healthcare system and social assistance on par with Polish residents.

Labour Market Access

- **General Employment:** Ukrainian citizens covered by the law can work legally without a specific work permit and are permitted to open one-person businesses.
- **Professional Facilitation:** The act contains specific provisions to simplify entry into regulated professions, including doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, academic teachers, and mining professionals.
- **Notification Requirements:** Employers are required to notify authorities of the employment of a protected person within a strict timeframe (recently reduced from 14 to 7 days).

Education and Integration

- **Schooling:** The law ensures access to education for persons under 18.
- **Intercultural Assistants:** Recent updates introduced intercultural assistants into schools to help non-Polish students communicate with the school environment and assist with integration.

Limitations and Conditions

- **The 30-Day Rule:** A significant limitation is that protection status (PESEL UKR) can be lost if a migrant leaves Poland for more than 30 days, which constrains the transnational mobility of those who may need to return to Ukraine temporarily.
- **Scope:** Unlike the EU's broader Temporary Protection Directive, the Special Law primarily limits its protection to Ukrainian citizens and their family members, potentially excluding third-country nationals who also fled Ukraine.

13. Return of former applicants for international protection

14. Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes (including EU Joint Resettlement Programme, national resettlement programme (UNHCR), National Humanitarian Admission Programme, private sponsorship programmes/schemes and ad hoc special programmes)

15. National jurisprudence on international protection in 2025 (please include a link to the relevant case law and/or submit cases to the [EUAA Case Law Database](#))

16. Other important developments in 2025

In December 2025, work was underway to amend the Special act, with the aim of moving from emergency-based measures towards more systemic solutions. On 29 December 2025, a draft law on the expiry of measures resulting from the 2022 Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict in that Country, together with amendments to certain other acts, was published on the website of the Government Legislation Centre (<https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12405609>).

The draft was submitted for public consultation to a selected group of non-governmental organisations on 23 December 2025, with the consultation period closing on 2 January 2026. The solutions proposed by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration seek, inter alia, to comply with “the principle of equal treatment, expressed through the rational shaping of the economic rights of beneficiaries of temporary protection and the effectiveness of procedures related to this protection”. The amendments are intended to equalise the rights of Ukrainian citizens with those of other third-country nationals benefiting from temporary protection in Poland, while preserving the effective solutions introduced after 2022.

The proposed changes also aim to render the notion of “temporariness” more realistic and to facilitate a relatively smooth transition for Ukrainian citizens covered by the special act towards more stable forms of residence. However, it should be recalled that measures regulating the residence of foreigners, as well as amendments to core legal acts underpinning migration policy – such as the changes already introduced to the Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners in the Territory of the Republic of Poland, or the planned amendments to the Act on Citizenship tightening the conditions for its acquisition (see e.g., Committee for Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, December 2025, https://kbnm.pan.pl/images/Stanowisko_Komitetu_w_sprawie_mo%C5%BCliwych_zmian_w_ustawie_o_obywatelstwie.pdf) – should be embedded within a coherent strategy and supported by robust integration mechanisms.

Against this backdrop, the public consultation on the draft amendment to the special act, scheduled for the end of December 2025 and subject to an exceptionally short deadline of 2 January 2026 – coinciding with the Christmas and New Year holiday period in Poland – effectively precluded meaningful dialogue and substantive engagement with the proposed legislation. In response, NGOs expressed their opposition by submitting a letter of protest to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

PART B: Publications

1. If available online, please provide links to relevant publications produced by your organisation in 2025.

1. Hernes, V., & Łukasiewicz, K. (2025). Restrictive, liberal, selective or universal? A cross-national analysis of European countries' policy response to forced migrants from Ukraine. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-24 DOI:10.1080/1369183X.2025.2565907
2. Humanitarian Observatory for Central and Eastern Europe. (2025). Humanitarian Observatory Newsletter, 2(2025). <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/IHSA-2.2025.pdf>.
3. Humanitarian Observatory for Central and Eastern Europe. (2025). Humanitarian Observatory Newsletter, 1(2025). <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/IHSA-1.2025.pdf>.
4. Kindler M., Tygielski M. (2025). "How 'Special' is the Special Law? Temporary Protection and Migration Infrastructure in Poland Following the Outbreak of the Full-Scale War in Ukraine" *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* (online first): 1-23. doi: 10.54667/ceemr.2025.18
5. Krępa, M., Pachocka, M., Trylinska, A., & Jaroszewicz, M. (2025). Country Dossier Poland WP7: Return Aspirations and Trajectories of Migrants (v1.). GAPS: De-centring the Study of Migrant Returns and Readmission Policies in Europe and Beyond. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15066688>
6. Krępa, M., Pachocka, M., Trylinska, A., Sieniow, T., & Jaroszewicz, M. (2025). Return Migration Infrastructures in Poland and Georgia - WP3 Country Dossier (v1.). GAPS: De-centring the Study of Migrant Returns and Readmission Policies in Europe and Beyond. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15750564>
7. Łukasiewicz, K., Yeliseyeu, A., & Pachocka, M. (2025). Selective restrictions and liberalisations: unpacking Poland's response to forced migration in the post-2022 context. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2025.2565918>
8. Stefańska, R., Grzymała-Kazłowska, A. & Wach, D. Welfare Pluralism and a Policy Window in Refugee Policies: The Emergence and Proliferation of Community Sponsorship in Europe, 2013–2023. *Int. Migration & Integration* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-025-01273-x>

2. If not available online, please share your publications with us at: Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu or upload your file using the functionality below (max. file size 1MB).

Please upload your file

The maximum file size is 1 MB

3. For publications that due to copyright issues cannot be easily shared, please provide references using the table below.

	Title of publication	Name of author	Publisher/Organisation	Date
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Useful links

[EUAA Asylum Report 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025)

[Executive Summary -Asylum Report 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025-executive-summary\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025-executive-summary)

[Sources on Asylum 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2025\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2025)

[National asylum developments database \(https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database)

[International Protection in Europe: a Year in Review \(https://euaa.europa.eu/international-protection-europe-year-review\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/international-protection-europe-year-review)

Background Documents

[Word template to submit input to the 2026 Asylum Report.docx](#)

Contact

[Contact Form](#)