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WEBINAR

ASYLUM IN EUROPE:  
CAN THE UKRAINE RESPONSE SHAPE A BETTER POLICY APPROACH?

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PANEL DISCUSSION:

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**REVA DHINGRA:** Good morning, everyone, and good afternoon to those of us, those joining us from around the world. My name is Reva Dhingra and I'm the postdoctoral research fellow for the Foreign Policy program here at the Brookings Institution. And I'll be the moderator for this discussion. On behalf of the Center for the United States in Europe and Brookings, it is an honor to welcome you all to this important event to discuss the future of asylum policy in Europe and lessons from European cities and municipalities, experiences with Ukrainian refugees in building a new asylum architecture for both Ukrainians and Ukrainians.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has both forced over 13 million people to leave their homes and relocate within the country and abroad in search of safety. The European continent and the world more broadly has not seen such a level of displacement in both speed and scale since the Second World War. Nearly 6 million refugees from Ukraine have fled to Europe, and another estimated 5.1 million Ukrainians remain internally displaced within the country as of June 2023. European countries have faced real challenges at the state and municipal levels to find accommodation for Ukrainian refugees and provide appropriate social and educational services with no end to the war in sight. The future remains highly uncertain for Ukrainians living in displacement. At the same time, the European Union's response in the form of the Temporary Protection Directive granting Ukrainians the right to reside in member states and access housing, employment and social protections appears to have been remarkably effective in facilitating Ukrainian inclusion.

While the shock of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the refugee crisis dominated public discussions last year, Europe also saw near record numbers of non-Ukrainian asylum applications, which includes from individuals already present in the EU, as well as new arrivals across the EU plus countries including Norway and Switzerland. Almost 1 million people applied for international protection in 2022, which is an increase of over 50% compared to 2021 and the highest since 2016. New arrivals of non-Ukrainian asylum seekers and migrants by land and sea have also increased, though still paling in comparison to 2015 and 2016. These trends are reflective of worsening global displacement. As years long conflicts continue, new violence spreads, and more and more communities face the devastating effects of economic collapse and climate change. The number of displaced people worldwide now exceeds 110 million. Thousands have and will continue to risk their lives on treacherous journeys to Europe. Two weeks ago, over 500 asylum seekers and migrants were estimated to have lost their lives in the central Mediterranean, the deadliest disaster in years. And just this past weekend, flights out of Moscow were selling out as the volcano group inched closer to the capital, raising fears of a surge in Russians seeking asylum, even as neighboring countries keep their borders firmly closed to Russian citizens. Many neighboring, many neighboring countries.

The current situation has highlighted a sharp disparity in treatment of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers and the ongoing local challenges facing European communities and responding to displaced population needs. European policymakers have for years struggled to craft a unified asylum and responsibility sharing framework, and two weeks ago, the Council of the European Union announced a new agreement on asylum and migration management, which includes expanded border detention centers and a procedure for relocating migrants and asylum seekers within the EU. As policymakers grapple with how to respond to growing displacement, our distinguished speakers here today offer insights to inform these discussions based on decades of experience working on refugee migration and local response issues in Europe and more broadly. I'll give a few introductions before turning to the panel. I'd also like to acknowledge Brookings CUSE research assistant, Sophie Roehse, for her tireless work researching this topic and co-organizing this event.

We are first joined by Christine Goyer, currently the deputy representative for the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR in Poland. Ms. Goyer has worked with UNHCR for 20 years, including in Ukraine, Turkey and other countries, and has been with UNHCR Poland since 2018. We are joined as well by Dr. Petra Bendel. Professor of political science and the head of research on Migration, Displacement and Integration at Friedrich Alexander University, Erlang in Nuremberg in Germany. Dr. Bendall is an expert in refugee migration and integration issues at the local level in Germany and in many other contexts. Our next our next speaker is Marc Elxnat who is the head of unit of the Office of the Chief Executive of the German Association of Cities and Municipalities. Mr. Elxnat is also a member of the Evaluation Commission of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany. Our final speaker is Dr. Kemal Kirişçi, a senior nonresident fellow and the previous director of the Turkey Project at the Brookings Institution. Dr. Kirişçi has worked on asylum and refugee and migration issues for years and also wrote an article earlier this year on the Ukraine response.

Finally, before we begin, this panel discussion is on the record. Please feel free to send your questions in to [events@brookings.edu](mailto:events@brookings.edu) and use the hashtag Asylum Europe. So it's hashtag asylum Europe. One word on Twitter to tweet about the event or share questions for our panelists. And now turning to our panelists, Ms.

Goyer, we'll start with you. Can you tell us about the current status of arrivals and asylum applications from Ukrainians in Poland? And how has UNHCR adapted its response over the past year and a half?

**CHRISTINE GOYER:** Good afternoon. Thank you very much. And thank you for having me. I'll start maybe with the global figures on arrivals of Ukrainian refugees since 24th February 2022. And with the latest data that is available as of the 19th of June, so a week ago. So there's up to 5,958,000 Ukrainian refugees recorded in Europe. So that's not EU, that's Europe specifically. So that's a bit broader than that, than the EU context, and that includes those granted temporary protection, those granted refugee status, those granted different forms of protection statuses. In Poland there is up to 1.600 - 1,600,000, sorry, Ukrainians who have been recorded since 24th February 2022 and have been granted protection, temporary protection in Poland, out of which on a little bit on around 1 million now have active status. So it's a big, big number of refugees in addition to a preexisting large Ukrainian diaspora that was already in Poland before the war started under different form of statuses, mainly through work permits, for instance, students visa and a few a bit less in terms of numbers of Ukraine had been granted refugee status or different forms of protection. So obviously, this is a very big number that Poland had to deal with from the early days of the crisis.

And I think for sure, as you mentioned in the introduction, the fact that the EU very early on decided to trigger the temporary protection regime was a game changer because it came very quickly and it did provide very high levels of protection and rights to refugees coming from Ukraine, including. And that applies to Poland as Poland, as early as six of March, already had taken national legislation to transpose to the Temporary Protection Directive and has in some areas given even more rights or has exceeded that a little bit to the level of protection anticipated from the General Protection Directive. So that was quite instrumental to make sure that the conditions were set for a good response. But that alone, of course, doesn't do it all. I think this response showed us and when there is capacity, are so very strong political will at the national level, but also in this case at the EU level, it does make a difference in the way refugees are welcome and are very quickly given tools and access to rights to be integrated very quickly.

The last point I'd like to mention in this equation that we have seen in Poland is really a whole of society approach in a sense that, yes, the government took the EU level and then the government took very important normative approaches, kept the borders open, which is which was crucial in the context of the one in Ukraine. But also there was a huge solidarity movement from every single citizen of this country who decided to be part of the solution, to be part of the response. So I think the putting together all these elements and of course, the preexisting very active civil societies, NGOs who had some experience already working with refugees and more broadly the migrants was quite instrumental. And finally, as a U.N. refugee agency, we had been in the country for 30 years of using a very different goal as as you know, nobody had really expected such a mass influx, but it obviously had helped us. But we had to become operational very quickly and to have programs that would be complementing what was already made available to by the government. So overall, it's been quite extraordinary to witness the this equation, I would say, political will and capacities on the ground to response. And so it means that when when this is put together, the EU and Europe can really respond well to such a crisis.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. Thank you for highlighting the solidarity approach and the role of political will in this. Dr. Kirişci, I want to turn to you. What about non-Ukrainian asylum seekers? So, you know, we've seen a number of news headlines on recent increases in sea arrivals. So could you talk us through a little bit about this trend?

**KEMAL KIRIŞCI:** Thank you. Thank you for having me. As you pointed out in your introductory remarks, the number of asylum seekers coming to the European Union as well as beyond that as. Christine, go ahead. As mentioned, Europe at large is a trend that came immediately on the heels of the end of the COVID pandemic. And beyond the Ukrainians, those who are streaming towards Europe and the European Union are primarily Syrians. Syrians had to rushed to Europe during the 2015 and 16 what was called. And as the European migration crisis in a very different context, the problem had actually started in 2011, ten and 12, but there had been a sudden surge of about one 1.2 million Syrians and some other nationalities making their way to the European Union on foot in brackets. On that occasion, the Temporary Protection Directive was not invoked, but we might come to it later on in the discussion. Syrians hand-in-hand are followed with Afghans, as I'm sure you're all aware, and the those who are following this panel are aware, The major change in regime and the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan has precipitated a major displacement into the region and from the region around Afghanistan. There's been a movement, a continuous movement into the European European Union. The Iraqis used to arrive as well, But there's been some dipping a fall in the number of Iraqis arriving. But there is also, as the the disaster you referred to two weeks ago has demonstrated, there's a mixed population of irregular as well migrants, as well as asylum seekers that come from Africa and beyond. Africa from Asia is as well. And the directive the the council

decisions have made references reference to is also an effort towards distinguishing between the between them, the ones who will be entitled to international protection and those who would be considered as not entitled to that kind of protection and has to be returned. An issue will come come back to you. In Africa, there was the crisis in Sudan that was preceded by those ongoing crisis in Somalia. The Ethiopian situation had been resolved, but there is still pockets of instability and conflict in in in Africa. You mentioned the situation in in Russia. I couldn't help but consider what will happen, for example, in Mali, where vaccinated the vaccinated group had been active and we've seen asylum seekers arriving to Europe, the European Union from Mali as well. And lastly, lastly, especially when we take into consideration Spain, we do also see asylum seekers making their way from Central America, for example, for Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua have also been arriving, arriving to the European Union.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. And I mean, this is really highlighting the the global nature of the challenge that that Europe and much of the world is facing in terms of a rise in global displacement. So, Dr. Bendel, we talked a bit about the Temporary Protection Directive and as Goyer mentioned, the Temporary Protection Directive put in place for Ukrainians. And because we're, you know, when we really want to focus on the nitty gritty of policies put in place to welcome asylum seekers or facilitate local access to services, could you talk us through a bit more on what this what the measures put in place by national governments in Europe mean for for Ukrainian asylum seekers? And I also love to hear, you know, if you see there's a big difference in legal frameworks for Ukrainians and non-Ukrainian asylum seekers.

**PETRA BENDEL:** Yeah, but is thank you Reva for inviting me and happy to be here just discussing with you all. First of all, I would agree with Christine who said that the the temporary Protection Directive was really a game changer. It actually has been in place, have been in place since 2001. And it had never, never been triggered simply simply because there was no political will to do so. But in this case, it was really something with what can be called historic, actually, because the directive and its implementation in the member states and the European member states in national law allow protection to be granted quickly and mainly and bureaucratically, in principle and and people can be integrated into the labor market very quickly. For instance, they have direct access to labor. They have direct if they are recognized and what they bring with them in terms of education and labor experience. This is a still an important point also to to say and Ukraine can can also in principle choose the place, their place of residence. Other asylum seekers not only cannot they register in at least in Germany, only when they seek access to benefits here. So if they don't get one to get benefits on the ground, they don't have to register right at the beginning. So at the beginning, we didn't even know how many people live there. And unlike other refugees, they are not registered centrally and then distributed accordingly to the to the to the borders. Linda in German. In Germany, we have a distribution key which is called for those of you who know German, the going to go and extend key, which normally distributes and the number of a percentage of refugees and to the national level to the lender according to their population and the economic and economic strength and the freedom of choice that the Ukrainians have offers them, of course, at considerable advantage because they can use their existing networks of Ukrainians of a maybe also friends they know from other places. And so at only for those who don't get access directly via the networks and get accommodation privately there. There's also the possibility still to be able to be distributed to the municipalities through a key. And also in Germany. I would underline that the support from civil society was really key because they, the municipality says maximum, they will say, wouldn't have managed that. This would only be possible with the many, many people from civil society who supported them. And now coming to the empirical point, integration is actually taking place. We have a very huge representative study already which was published two months ago among 11,000 Ukrainians. And this is important because there we see that the intentions to stay in Germany, this is German based and vary a lot like 34% say they want to leave Germany after the war and more or less one third also says they want to stay in Germany. And another seven, 17% would like to stay several years or shorter. So and several others cannot make a statement yet, of course, because we don't know what will be happening. And in the end, the empirical data also shows that integration is taking place rapidly. Like three, three quarters are housed in private apartments and only 9% in shared accommodations. And then many have already attended a German course, like 51%. And 22% of the children are already in daycare centers and 60% in kindergartens. And 90% of the school aged children are already in the schools attending true schools. And the employment rates are slowly but rising like we have 18% of Ukrainians who have already found a job. So, yes, I think this is a very in a very helpful direction for that rapid integration also on the ground. And of course, as you ask for an unequal treatment, of course, we have discussions now about unequal treatment because asylum seekers have to stay depending on whether in the in the country, but they have to stay in and come in accommodation centers. Sometimes they have a long asylum procedure which Ukrainians simply could skip. And on the other hand, once they are recognized as refugees, they can stay and for a long period. And Ukrainians just have a temporary protection, which is normally two years and mostly in Germany and also it's four years. So it's unequal treatment on the one hand. On the other hand, Ukrainians are not guaranteed refugee rights on the long term. So let's leave it at that. There's a lot a lot of discussion about unequal

treatment also in the municipalities and local authorities. Tell us a lot about these unrest among asylum seekers and refugees also.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. And Dr. Bendel, that's a really great transition point to Mr. Elxnat, I'd love to ask you about exactly this question. You know, what are we seeing at the municipal level and the local level in terms of the main challenges, you know, facing cities and and towns? And could you talk a little bit about this point that Dr. Bendel mentioned in in the way these different legal frameworks for refugees and asylum seekers are playing out?

**MARC ELXNAT:** Yes, of course I can. Thank you, Reva, and thank you for inviting me to this discussion. Yeah, Let me maybe start with a few numbers. Cities and municipalities in Germany and the last year took in over 1 million people from Ukraine and 210,000 asylum seekers. So 1.2 million people. We had to organize the accommodation for a starting integration process. And like Petra and Christine said, it wouldn't be possible without a great solidarity movement from the people we had in our citizenship. These numbers. That means 1.2 million people, this comparable to an additional and additional city in the cities between Cologne and Munich, which are the third and fourth largest cities in Germany. So how are we walking and going? What is our goal to really tackle this issue as cities and municipalities, for the most part, and together with the federal states, we are working on it to have accommodation decentralized and the more than 10,000 cities and municipalities as the aim is to have private housing for for people from Ukraine, not for people that are like people set in an asylum asylum procedures. We are estimating for 2023, around 300,000 US asylum seekers as numbers for people from Ukraine are pretty solid. I would say there are few a lot like 25 to 30000 people leaving Germany every month. There are also people coming back to Germany, so the number of 1 million people is pretty on a pretty constant level. So what are the big challenges for the local level and in Germany? The biggest challenge we face, I would say, is having the appropriate accommodation for people from Ukraine, but also for our refugees. Since we don't have or it's not possible just to use every three accommodation, we have to have accommodations where you can start the process of integration. Like, for example, you need accommodation close to schools, kindergartens, daycare, and you have families with kids, for example. You can't just have empty living space and put them there. It's not, not, not our goal to just have an accommodation, but we want to start integration. And that's the goal we have with our cities and municipalities in the most, most part. The tempo at you ask for the temporary protection. It was really a game changer because we don't had to have the asylum process for the Ukrainians. It honestly wouldn't have been possible to have. Procedures, a fast procedure for the number of people coming in such starters. Trial time just wouldn't be possible with our regulations. So that that is a big relief actually for the cities and municipalities. And was a big relief. And our trust we put out won more respect for all. The biggest challenge you asked before to to put the numbers set into context in Germany all together we have Ukrainians and asylum seekers in a state of 31st December 2020 to around almost 3 million people, 2.5 million massive asylum seekers and people from Ukraine, 2.5 million people from Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Russia and the Western Balkans alone and foreign 45,000 around like Mr. or they come outside from other states and regions of the world. So 3 million people to have accommodation integration. That's a big challenge to organize and also to to organize it with different nationalities, different culture and theirs. And that's why as the unequal treatment we have for Ukrainians may be justified, if you look at maybe cultural background and how easy or comparable easy it is to to start the integration process compared to other regions or other cultures we see. And that's also something we are hearing from the cities. And amongst the policies I think will leave us with that. I could also go into detail to benefit system, but that's the German problem.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. And and on that last point, you know, I'd love to hear from from your research and what you all are seeing on, you know, how much can we disentangle these cultural factors from the legal frameworks that have been put in place. And I'd like to turn now to how this Ukraine response can shape our thinking around an asylum policy in Europe. And, you know, a couple of weeks ago, the Council of the European Union announced an agreement, as I mentioned in the introduction on reforms to migration and asylum approaches, which will be discussed again later this month and may become rule later next year. And Dr. Kirişçi, I want to I want to ask you about this question. Given your expertise on refugee issues, both within the EU and in other countries, though, do we see this as a step towards a unified asylum framework? Do we see this as integrating, you know, lessons from the Ukrainian response, or is this, you know, another situation of a parallel rule system for Ukrainians, the non-Ukrainians?

**KEMAL KIRIŞÇI:** In. I think I need to start by saying that the European what makes the European Union European Union is the so-called four freedoms, the free movement of goods, services and labor and people. So what we have seen two weeks ago is a product of an ongoing, very difficult process of trying to create a common European asylum system, as it is called. But it also comes as part and parcel of an effort to harmonize the practices of EU member countries, not just on asylum, but also on migration, aspects of migration, irregular migration, as well as irregular migration, plus the control of the European Union's external

borders to ensure free movement of people within the European Union. I think it was familiarized as the Schengen area, Schengen free movement area. You need to make sure that your external borders are, well, well-managed. The the idea of reforming what has been put into place since the mid-1990s came up with the current legislative period that started in 2019. In September 2020, before the cranium crisis, that era erupted. The European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, came up with a proposal. And what is happening is that that proposal is, if you wish, being processed. It's going through a decisionmaking process. And if significant development occurred in mid-June, when, as you pointed out, the European Council, that is the body that is representing member states, were able to agree on two aspects of this reform process. One is the the regulation that will govern. It has not been adopted yet, as you've pointed out. It has to go through the European Parliament as well and hopefully before this legislative period ends next year in in the spring, it will be adopted. What it does is it put puts into place common rules and regulations to handle, manage asylum applications and the rights of those asylum applicants while their application is being processed. And it concerns mostly countries on the edges of the European Union. External borders. Maybe very quickly, time is very limited. What these two developments that took place or steps that were taken two weeks ago is a is is product of an effort to address to tensions or challenges within the European Union. That is the complaints coming from countries on the external border of the European Union that is taking asylum applicants but also receiving mixed populations, as I pointed out. And they have to sort out those that deserve international protection and those that need to be to be sent send back. They demand greater solidarity in the process of going through through this. But the countries inside the European Union and Marc will correct me on Petra if I'm wrong, most of them are trying to head to to Germany. They complain that the countries that are in the external border, on the external borders of the European Union are not doing a vigilant enough and effort because a lot of these people are getting picked up inside the European Union. For example, the chancellor of Germany not that long ago complained that almost 80% of people who are getting picked up in Germany are people who are coming from the external border, not necessarily from inside Germany. That is those people who've run out. So that's the dire and the critical aspect of that meeting was that these tensions were resolved to a certain degree. That is, the countries in the external at the external border of the European Union like. Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta, Cyprus are going to the the the regulation, if adopted, is going to ensure a more precipitous processing of applications that are questionable. And the regulation has the details. It's 140 or 50 pages long. The proposal has the details of how to add to the deal list. And the other side of the medallion is that there will be a possibility to relocate some of these people to countries inside the European Union. And there the tension was that East European countries like Poland, Hungary and Slovakia were very reluctant to do this, and the European Commission, in its usual skill, managed to find an arrangement where these countries will have the possibility to financially contribute to the countries at the external border or administratively by providing resources in the form of staff and other policy possibilities. Time is limited. Maybe I should I should stop, stop here. But I personally would consider this as an important break too. But don't count your children before they hatch, because the European Parliament has to be brought on board. And there are complaints that what this is going to do is that make the European Union an even greater fortress than it it. It used to be. It has been so far.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. And this deal has been, you know, heavily criticized by a number of rights groups. But it's also receiving criticism, you know, from from countries such as Poland and and Hungary. So, Dr. Bendel, I want to ask, you know, from a from a practical perspective, do you see these these new policies coming out as integrating some of the lessons that we learned from the Ukraine response? Could there be more done here? And how do you see this shaping integration at the local level as based on your expertise on this?

**PETRA BENDEL:** Maybe I can say three sentences about the agreement that we've seen two weeks ago, because I'm really, really concerned about that. Not only as a human rights activist, but also as a researcher, because in political terms, I think in. I'm really concerned about about the human rights aspect there. It's particularly worrying with regard to procedures being held at the European borders and how you control human rights standards there, and particularly with regard to children's rights. And then there's also practically no monitoring or monitoring is left to the member states alone. So when asked Greece if it is violating human rights, that will head you know, obviously we are not. We are we are strictly monitoring it. I'm just a bit cynical on that. But and with regard to the to the Ukrainian situation and the Temporary Protection Directive, I think that as we said right at the beginning, in political terms, it's really an historical situation, but it's also unique. And we haven't seen that, for instance, Poland and Hungary, who have been willing to accept Ukrainians fleeing from the civil war, from the from the from the aggressive war to their countries. They they haven't united their forces with other with other member states at the borders, as Kimmel rightly said, who are being more overwhelmed than others by the situation because they are right at the borders they even have right now. They also have to to do the asylum proceedings, etc.. But there has has not been any solidarity. It has remained as unique, a unique common political will as you may be. What say, Christine? Because that's what you framed it like in there in the beginning. And secondly, it's important to see how they what are the the consequences of free choice, because Ukrainians, as we said, had free

choice. They weren't sent to being distributed in certain areas nor to certain member states. So this, of course, while it is very important for the individuals, it has definitely led to a more equal distribution right of the country. We have, of course, people and this is what migration is like. Normally we go where we have networks, so people in the member states have concentrated in certain member states of the eastern borders is also in many also in Germany, because they did have networks already. And so in view of the large numbers of Ukrainians, it what have been, I think, preferable to have a certain burden sharing. I won't call a refugees a burden, but member states call it like that. So it's a quote, please. And so to relieve the burden of the initial reception in Central and Eastern Europe and to ensure that people who are coming also have the best possibilities to access to health services, to accommodation, to labor, until the labor market, to education, etc.. And even the Temporary Protection Directed Directive would have allowed to add to do pledges to to name quotas. It hasn't been it hasn't been done because a mandatory quota triggers negative restrictions in certain member states. So I think what we should do, why we should remain that we should leave to a certain point the possibility of free choice, because it is really helpful for for the individuals and for the families and networks and however member states could have who have taken in comparatively few refugees could quantify many from minimum quota for refugee intake according to their economic capacity, for instance, or provide other assistance. And third, in the near future, I think what we should use, we should make use of matching procedures. Matching procedures could be very useful to bring together member states willing to take refugees and the local communities and get back to my to to the municipalities. Because just to give you an example, my team at the University of 11, Newham, back together with several partners and four federal states in Germany is developing. We have already developed an algorithm which is based on the findings of migration integration research. It's called match in. If you want to look it up. It's also about legally injecting policies in the chat afterwards, and this records individual aspects of the offer of the protection seekers on the one hand and match them. Well, the possibilities that most municipalities have and match them with among those women's villages best matched to their needs. So I think this could also be scaled up. And if we're good at it, because we are right now piloting during the summer, the European summer, and we are piloting this this project and we are distributing refugees according to the algorithm, and we are following that scientifically. And if we can can show that this is really a good way to distribute more fairly and more individually, maybe this could also be scaled up on a national and also on an EU level.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah, and thank you for that. We also have a number of questions from the audience and I just want to make sure I turn to Christine and Marc before turning to them. So I really want to ask about this question of solidarity. And, you know, again, lessons learned from the Ukraine response. So something where you talked about this question of solidarity and a huge amount of solidarity in shaping the response in Poland. But we also saw, you know, within the last few years a very different response to asylum seekers arriving at the border. Now, do you see, you know, in terms of Poland's reaction, do you see this affecting your operations, the new asylum and migration law? Do you see this substantively changing? You know, how UNHCR is approaching its work in Poland? And can you talk a little bit about what this means for you and whether you'll be able to build on on solidarity in this context?

**CHRISTINE GOYER:** Thank you. So as as Kemal said, we we don't know if that's going to be the new the new system. Right. So I think we have to take a step back. And obviously, there's a lot of analysis going on. And indeed, the projects are very ambitious in terms of of of duration. It's true the initial reaction from Poland to the to the discussions in Brussels was not I mean, they voted against basically. So there was a clear, clear position, but it seems to be a bit of misunderstanding because Poland felt unfairly that it would be unfair that they would have to pay for for force items if they don't want to contribute to the solidarity, what they have accepted on the territory of 1.6 million Ukrainian refugees, to which I said the misunderstanding is that there seems to be a provision that would make an exception to countries who face already a mass influx. And I think in the case of Poland, that would be a fairly easy case to make if we were looking at the discussion within those those parameters. I think for any system to work in the in the EU, it has to be on the foundation of of responsibility and solidarity. So responsibility, sharing and solidarity by the fact that by geography, some countries would be more affected by irregular arrivals than others. And that's that's a geographical fact that we cannot do much about. But we need to take into account, obviously, the different capacities of of each country. And it's true that until 2022, Poland was fairly protected from from from arrivals or from irregular flows of asylum seekers. So it was not really a big topic of discussion until until recently. I think what's challenging for us is to have that conversation because the legal systems are so different, right? So there is the Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainians or for refugees from Ukraine who are giving broad protection. When you look at which it is even three systems in Poland working at the same time, which is very challenging for us to have the people under Temporary Protection Directive. You have asylum seekers who come regularly via the border of Poland and who have the opportunity to seek international protection, and you have those who come irregularly and that's where the legal framework is, is is problematic in our view, and does not have all the safeguards it should have. So when discussing this, you know, it's we have to look at very different provisions, very different provision within the Polish domestic system, but also how it speaks to to European law. So in the end, whichever the system becomes in the EU, countries have an

obligation to transpose those measures into their national systems. And countries do it sometimes with a bit of creativity or liberty, I would say. And that's the challenge, right? Because we have seen it even for the Temporary Protection Directive. Each country has transpose it a little bit differently. So on some particular technical aspect, you would have discrepancies of application of certain articles or certain protections from one country to the other, which then in the end again creates an issue because because of the Schengen area, if something doesn't work in one country, if a country decides to have a more restrictive approach or interpretation of certain rules, then of course it very naturally I would say it triggers a movement. So anything within the EU that is not applicable or that is not applied systematically creates a risk of onward movement or secondary movement within the EU. So then that's that's a this balance in itself there is created by, I would say, often political narratives or at least political objectives. So, you know, I think we we have learned the EU has learned tremendous lessons from the Temporary Protection Directive, as as Petra said, it is a unique set up and I think it has to be treated as such. I think is going to be very difficult for us to to compare this to anything else. Hopefully we will never see such a another mass displacement of that kind on the on the in the region. But you know, so it is unique but I think it is it does help to as I was saying, that the even though it was a very broad, generous framework, decided certain provisions were applied differently from one place to another, was a factor of discrepancy and potentially of movement. The fact that obviously some access to social benefits and some countries being more generous than others in the type of of inclusion of social benefits, of course. Plays a role one way or the other, and refugees have access to the information, has high mobility. So obviously, if if there is more generosity here than there may be, that's a factor in the decision making. Other types like accommodation that Marc said. Unfortunately, it's a problem across Europe, so I don't think there's one country that is better off than another when it comes to accommodation. And it is indeed a key, key challenge in Poland with no quick fixes anywhere and nothing that we can, you know, make it happen overnight. So these are issues that need also, you know, to look we need to look beyond the legal status. That's my point, is to say we have learned that often the decision making on where to go is in dealing with the daily life. And for refugees, it's about access to labor. It's the language, it's the proximity with Ukraine and accommodation amongst many others. And that, I think, is the lessons learned. And if there's obviously there's no EU wide accommodation policy, I'm not sure there will ever be, but it's definitely something that was that was missing in the response that existed a bit away from the legal framework, but just wanted to mention that. Thank you.

**REVA DHINGRA:** No, I think that I mean, that's incredibly important. Where we see the legal framework, it's actually differing, you know, on the ground and very practical implications of this and maybe not addressing some of the main challenges that you're seeing, you know, in the day to day. And Marc, Mr. Elxnat, I really would like you to comment on this as well. You know, we're talking about other countries paying to a paying countries to other countries to to host refugees and asylum seekers. But, you know, some of the factors that you mentioned in terms of housing, etc., do you do we see funding as the main issue here? Do we see, you know, other challenges really being the main issue? Do you think that we'll really see a difference being made for localities in this new approach? So could you comment on this?

**MARC ELXNAT:** And if I can just first of all, let me say that we as an association discussed two weeks ago of the agreement on the in of the council, and we totally support that and agree with it. But they come outside. We will see what the European Parliament makes out of it. And we are also quite sure it won't help us in the short or mid-term because there are a lot of open questions to be to be talked about. And Peter already mentioned to you like who will run the border facilities, how well relocation work, how we can ensure that people stay in their assigned states. And like Chris, what Christine said, like how the Ukrainians count into the system like for Poland, that is that is the big issue. And that's what we heard from our border communities and cities and to the Polish border, actually. So concerning the topic of funding, yeah, funding is an issue. Of course you can you can solve a few problems with with money. That's that's probably true. But what what is really what our what we are really missing except for accommodation is human resources in the to shape the integration on the ground. So that's the that are people working and heading the the integration courses but also educators and daycare centers teachers and schools, career counselors. That is the problem. And that's a problem which is not only solved by money. So it may be help in the in the context of maybe building accommodations, building maybe also giving better salaries in in these sectors where you have integration. But it won't solves the big so money won't solves the big question of of the need of more people in the system and also concerning the new framework. And it is important that at the end it's not a system in which the majority of states exculpate themselves from the admission by paying money and you are after the standing system where most of our asylum seekers are concentrated in a few European states. So we believe that it is also important that if you're talking about a new asylum and migration laws on the European level. You have to be have to talk about harmonies, harmonizing procedures and also benefits. So you the other way. On the other way, you want to have a nearly fair system. It's probably the only way, if you're taking this part also into account to ensure equal distribution and of people within the European Union.



**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. And thank you, Marc. And I know Dr. Bendel does need to leave a little bit early. And I want to turn to you with a question from the audience and that we received on you know, we talked about you talked about the rights dimension and there are these other issues that we're facing in terms of, as Marc mentioned, you know, personnel. And there are stories coming of Ukrainians actually being able to serve as doctors, as nurses because of these labor facilitation measures, you know, actually being able to contribute and take part in solving some of these issues. And we have plenty of research on how refugees and asylum seekers can do this in other contexts actually contribute. So could you talk a little bit about, you know, the integration dimension and some practical policy solutions that you might see in this context?

**PETRA BENDEL:** Yes. I think if we if we take Germany as an example, we have a pretty liberal legislation right now with a new government, with a three party coalition and that tries even to attract migrants into into our job market. And there are also job market schemes where both refugees and all the Ukrainian persons could perfectly integrate into it once we open up the schemes. And this is pretty possible that this this will be guaranteed in a very near future, however. It's not only about legislation. You have also. You also have to see that we have a high level of bureaucracy that the people bring a lot of and a lot of diploma and work experience, which is not being recognized very, very easily. So this is also a second part of the of the of the story. I mean, you also have to have the people in the bureaucracy. You have also to create something like a welcoming culture. And let's be honest, we don't always have that in Europe. I'm talking about my own countries, also about other countries. That what is necessary is a more welcoming and more open culture. And it's an easy not so strict and not so slow bureaucracy, which is one of the main obstacles, I think, for people who are already here. And then let's take an example. Ukrainians, teachers, we need them desperately. But then in the lender, which is education, there's a lender competence. Some of the lenders say, well, they have to they have to teach to two different two different disciplines. If they just have studied, say, German or mathematics, they have to study again from the start and learn German, German. How can you manage to do so? I mean, these are people we really need in the education system and many teachers in the university system as people in the in the in the kindergartens, also in health care, people come with it with a lot of education and it's not easily recognized. I think this is something we are still lacking in terms of welcoming culture.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Thank you, Dr. Bendel. And I want to, you know, conclude on on we have a question from the audience on whether the current array of circumstances warranting asylum means. Does that mean that we need a new international convention on subject? And, you know, that's a it's a broad and important question, but I'd like you to to conclude. But with this 2 minutes of, you know, what policy actions do you recommend on this subject? Do we need a new convention or do we need actionable measures on the ground? So, Ms. Goyer, I'd like to start with you on this in 2 minutes.

**CHRISTINE GOYER:** In 2 minutes. Yeah, I would just keep it short. I don't think we need a new refugee convention. I think it's as. As Internet conventions are. It's obviously, it was developed at a different time for a different situation, but it served a purpose, Right? I think throughout the years, the many years. And it's true. It doesn't foresee, obviously, the changes, the context we are seeing. But it's it's flexible enough that it has given broad protection and guidance to countries. And I think that's the most important. If you have a very specific refugee convention that puts things into very narrow application, then then it doesn't serve the purpose. So if a text continues to be applicable 70 years on, I think it's it's a good it speaks for its, its quality. And I think that's usually the case for international law. What is needed I think, yes, is indeed more solidarity. We haven't talked to that outside of Europe. That 75% I was looking was 76%. Syrian refugees in the world are hosted by low and middle income countries, and I think that's the key feature. Of course, we in Europe will, you know, will look at Europe, but Europe has capacities as huge capacities and as demonstrated them through through the Ukraine crisis. So we the question is, how come, you know, most of the refugees are hosted in in countries that are struggling themselves? And this is really where solidarity has to to to be really showing. If you look and the final word, I would say I think Kimmel alluded to that most of the refugees not covered by temporary protection in Europe, they come from where Syria, Afghanistan, countries that are, you know, facing wars and unrest. And obviously, unfortunately and that's beyond our our line of work. But we need just more peace solutions. We need more conflict resolution so people can actually consider a return to their home countries, which they want to do, whether now or later. And this is really, really speaks for the state of the world. Thank you.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. And that gets at, you know, an audience member pose the question of addressing root causes of conflicts instead of dealing with the after effects. And, you know, at the same time, some of these conflicts that you mentioned, Syria, Afghanistan, they're not ending any time soon that people you know, over in the Syria case, as Kemal knows well, over over 95% of Syrians surveyed don't want to go back within the next year. So Kemal, I'd like to just turn to you again on policy recommendations for for EU policymakers in this case.

**KEMAL KIRIŞCI:** In just a couple of very quick point points. Moving forward, I think Christine, having served in in Turkey, might well agree with me. Solidarity doesn't last forever. Yes, I think Europeans have received Ukrainians with open arms. It's commendable. But we are already in polls detecting that this is falling. That solidarity element is falling, though the level is still very high. That needs to be borne in mind. A second point is, is that what I have seen from the discussion so far, especially from Marc as well as from Petra, is that the Ukrainians are integrating really well. Where they're being hosted. But there are serious consequences as far as the future of Ukraine itself goes, because Ukraine, like many European countries, especially western ones and eastern ones as well, demographically is not doing well. And a large chunk of its population, because of the war has had to leave. When we're talking about reconstructing Ukraine and forcing an eventual membership to the European European Union, Ukraine is going to need these people to come back and participate in that reconstruction effort. That needs to be borne in mind. One very quick and two points. Is that as moving forward, European Union decision makers, as they tackle this new pact on migration and asylum, asylum need to pay a little bit more attention to what the Global Compact on Refugees is suggesting, especially in terms of the kind of countries that Christine has referred to. Those countries that are hosting the largest number of refugees in solidarity needs to be expressed in in that context. Whereas where it is embedded in those two proposals that we we talked about adopted by the European Council, embedded in that not that discretely, there is this element of externalization embedded in that. And that's why the President of the European Commission, with the Italian prime minister scrambled to Tunisia right after those proposals were adopted by by the Council. That needs to be quite. Question we cannot expect the European Union to resolve its problems by kind of transferring responsibility to countries in the in the immediate neighborhood of the European Union who are already struggling with not only with their own problems, but also with becoming increasingly buffer zones for irregular migration and asylum. Asylum seekers.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Yeah. Thank you for that important point, Kemal. And Mr. Elxnat, I will conclude with you. So practical policy recommendations from from city and municipal perspective.

**MARC ELXNAT:** Oh, yeah. What? There was a lot of important things that come out. I think if you're looking, you want to solve a refugee crisis on the local level, you just can make sure that you have good accommodation and that you don't. And integration process and that you are welcoming the refugees on the one hand. But on the other hand, don't forget that you have that you have people in your community, in the cities and municipalities, that you are not where you have the duty not to overpower them with this task. And I think if you're if if integration is a goal you are facing and you want to to beforehand, then you have to get a system of solidarity where everybody, like in the European Union, takes the share of refugees and helps each other. So that integration in the local level all across Europe is possible. I think that that would be a common goal. We should we should face and that not all a few states and in the European Union take the burden of hosting the refugees. That's my wish, my conclusion and yeah, solidarity. I don't know how many people are watching, but maybe if everybody does his chair or her chair, it helps.

**REVA DHINGRA:** Thank you all four for joining this discussion and apologies for for going over. So, please, I'd like to thank our panelists. And stay tuned for more events coming from Brookings foreign policy as well. So thank you all and take care.