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[Press release](#) | 03.03.2022

Greens/EFA welcome agreement on special measures for refugees fleeing Ukraine

Today, Ministers in the Justice and Home Affairs Council have agreed, for the first time, to trigger the ‘Temporary Protection Directive’ to support people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Greens/EFA Group are calling on EU Member States and the Commission to ensure that all people fleeing the war are able to find sanctuary in the EU and that family reunification measures are applied generously.

MEPs working on migration for the Greens/EFA Group have prepared policy demands to aid all people fleeing the war in Ukraine, which can be found [here](#).

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA spokesperson for migration in the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, comments:

“As the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues, the number of people fleeing the country continues to rise as well. The unbearable consequences of the war leave many inhabitants with an impossible choice: remain in place amid great uncertainty about their safety, or leave with an uncertain destination.

“Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Moldova and Romania now welcome the residents of their neighbouring countries with open arms. But they cannot handle the expected potential of seven million refugees on their own. That is why it’s very important that the Member States will equally share this responsibility and make concrete pledges to relocate refugees in the case that reception capacities in certain Member States reach their limit.

“It is positive that the Council Decision applies not only to Ukrainian nationals, but also to people with refugee or equivalent status in Ukraine. However, the Decision does not oblige Member States to grant temporary protection status to other third country nationals unless they have a permanent Ukrainian residence permit and are unable to return safely to their country or region of origin. Even for those third country nationals covered, Member States are able to apply a national status, rather than the EU-wide one, leading to varying rights and protection. It is also unclear how countries would assess this and how broadly ‘the region of origin’ will be interpreted. Given the recent news reports about minorities of African descent being turned away at the EU’s external borders, it is essential that guarantees are made to ensure all those fleeing have access to safety.

“It is welcome that family members of Ukrainians and refugees are included in the scope of the agreement. We deeply regret however that there is no such reference concerning other third country nationals. We call upon the Member States to make use of their ability to interpret the provisions of the Directive generously

when implementing the Decision, to ensure family unity is maintained and to grant the unconditional right to family reunification for persons with a temporary protection status, if they are separated during their flight.”

More:

On March 2nd the Commission put forward a proposal to trigger the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which has not previously been used in the 20 years of existence and on March 3rd the Council agreed to launch the Directive under QMV. The proposal grants protection to those fleeing Ukraine for a period of one year (and can be extended automatically by six months for up to one year), meaning that those enjoying temporary protection will have access to housing, education, and the labour market. The Greens/EFA Group have long called for this, also in other crises.

[Russia's attack on Ukraine: EU refugee response: Statement from the Greens/EFA Civil Liberties Working Group](#)

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