

## SURVEY OF NATIONAL RECTORS' CONFERENCES

# Support to Ukrainian higher education

State of play 4 July 2022

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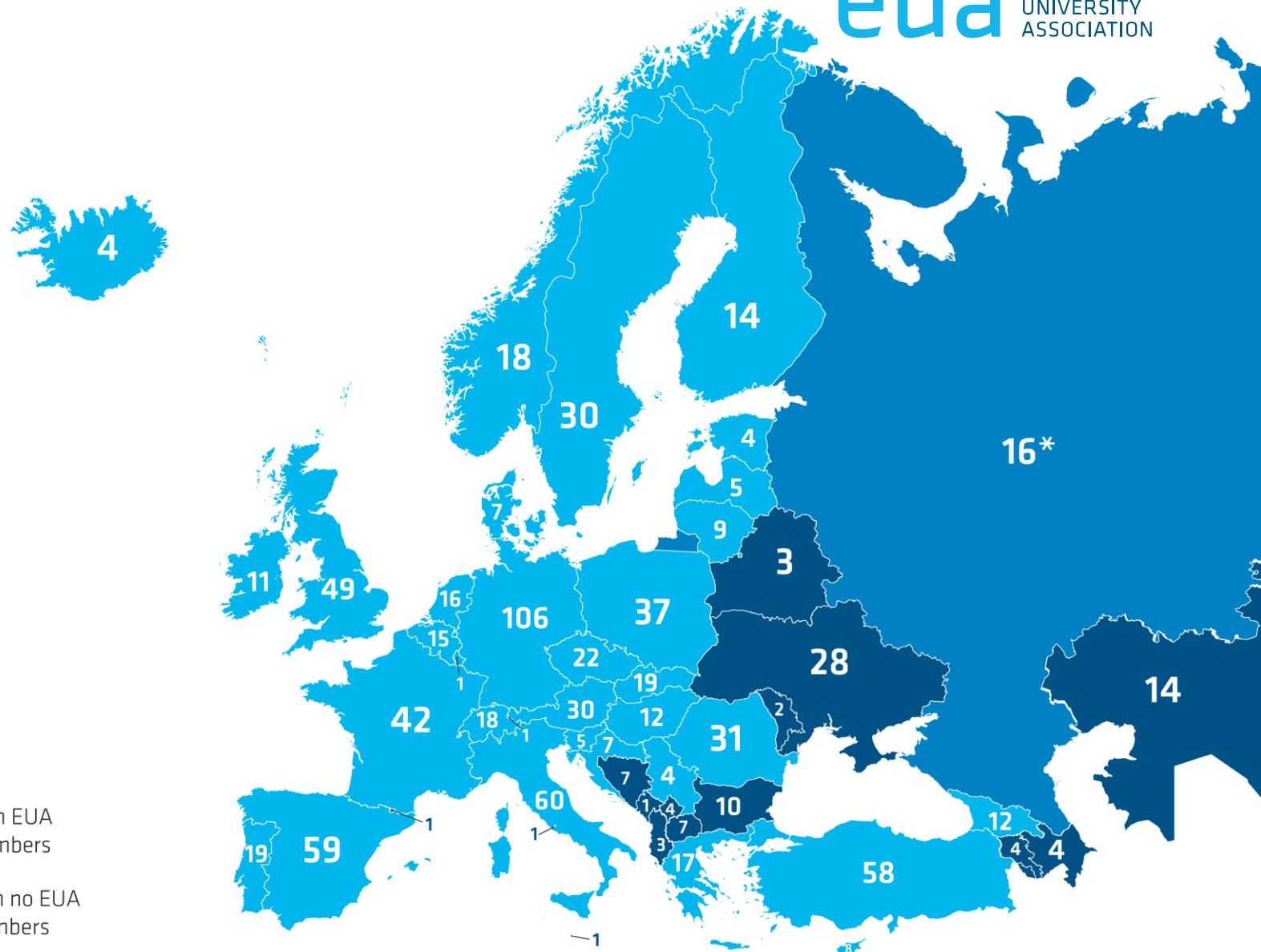
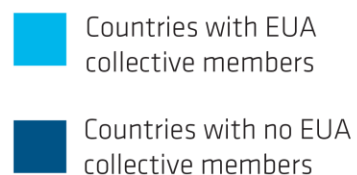
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## SUPPORT TO UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Survey of national rectors' conferences

### The European University Association

EUA brings together more than 850 members in the higher education systems of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), including national university associations from 34 higher education systems. It also has 28 members in Ukraine, and in response to the Russian invasion, established a fast track for Ukrainian universities to become members.



\* Following a statement by the Russian Union of Rectors (RUR) supporting the invasion of Ukraine, EUA suspended Russian member universities whose leaders signed the statement.

## Survey background

In late April 2022, EUA published a first briefing paper on the [Impact of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine on the Ukrainian higher education sector](#) to provide information and to step up support to Ukrainian universities and their members, both immediately and in anticipation of the post-war period.

As a follow-up, the present survey among EUA member national rectors' conferences provides an overview of the concrete sector-wide support measures undertaken in several countries.

The survey looks at hosting arrangements for Ukrainian students and academics abroad, support to universities in Ukraine and partnerships formed between Ukrainian and other European universities.

All the data is up-to-date as of 4 July 2022. This publication either does not, or only partially reflects new measures for the 2022/23 academic year, which are in the planning or discussion phase in some countries.

## Survey sample

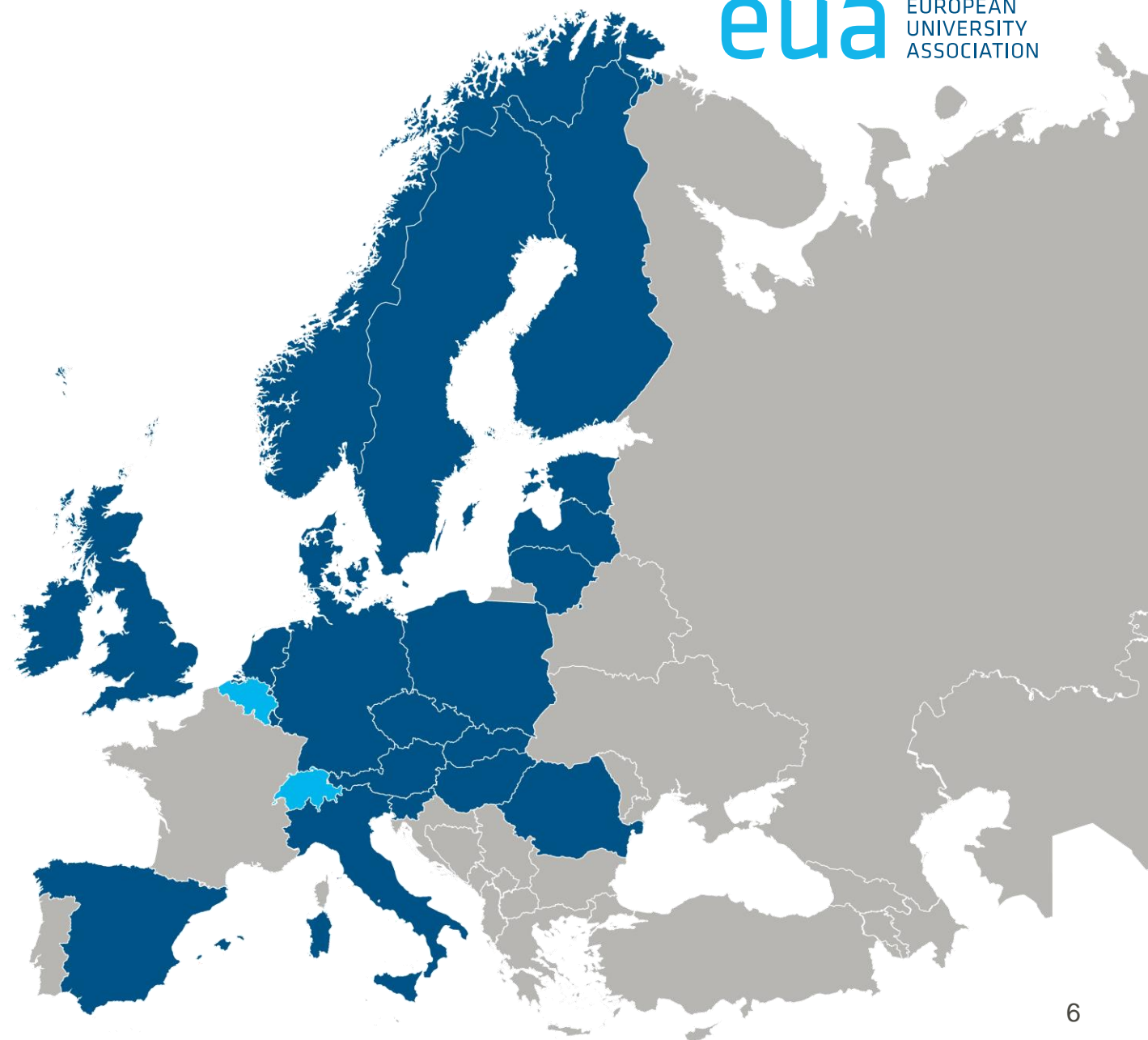
National rectors' conferences from 24 higher education systems participated in the survey.

Country	Name of the NRC
Austria	<a href="#">Universities Austria - UNIKO</a>
Belgium	<a href="#">Rectors' Conference, French Community of Belgium - CREF</a>
Czech Republic	<a href="#">Czech Rectors Conference</a>
Denmark	<a href="#">Universities Denmark</a>
Estonia	<a href="#">Universities Estonia</a>
Finland	<a href="#">Universities Finland - UNIFI</a>
Germany	<a href="#">German Rectors' Conference – HRK</a>
Hungary	<a href="#">Hungarian Rectors' Conference</a>
Iceland	<a href="#">Icelandic Rectors' Conference</a>
Ireland	<a href="#">Irish Universities Association - IUA</a>
Italy	<a href="#">Conference of Italian University Rectors - CRUI</a>
Latvia	<a href="#">Latvian Rectors' Council</a>
Lithuania	<a href="#">Lithuanian Universities Rectors' Conference</a>
Luxembourg	<a href="#">University of Luxembourg</a>
Netherlands	<a href="#">Universities of the Netherlands - UNL</a>
Norway	<a href="#">Universities Norway</a>
Poland	<a href="#">Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland</a>
Romania	<a href="#">Romanian Council of Rectors</a>
Slovakia	<a href="#">Slovak Rectors' Conference</a>
Slovenia	<a href="#">Slovenian Rectors' Conference</a>
Spain	<a href="#">The Conference of the Rectors of the Spanish Universities - Crue</a>
Sweden	<a href="#">Association of Swedish Higher Education</a>
Switzerland	<a href="#">Swissuniversities</a>
United Kingdom	<a href="#">Universities UK</a>

## European universities hosting Ukrainian students and academics

By the summer of 2022, institutions in 21 of 24 countries, the national authority, the NRC, or both provided some system level measures to host students/ academics from Ukraine.

*Q1. Does your NRC/national authority provide support for universities in your country to receive students/academics from Ukraine?*  
N=24



## Examples of funding support for hosting arrangements

Common ways of supporting hosting arrangements were reported to be:

- compensating/covering additional study and research places at universities for Ukrainian students and academics (EE, IT, LV, LT, PL, RO, SK),
- granting Ukrainian students fee waivers (AT),
- offering language learning courses (ES, SI, SK),
- subsidising accommodation and meals (RO).

Often support is co-funded by different parties: In the Netherlands, all 14 universities committed to reduce their tuition fees for Ukrainian students for the 2022-2023 academic year, while the NRC is advocating for additional financial support from the government.

In Spain, the Ministry of Universities announced a plan to launch a [University-Shelter Action Plan](#) for supporting students and academics who fled the war. In addition, some regional governments are exploring the possibility to offer grants to support incoming students and academics.

While most measures are specific to Ukraine, the Norwegian government provides 1000 study places for the 2022/2023 academic year for refugees, which may also benefit people who fled the war in Ukraine.

It is also important to recall that not all displaced students are Ukrainians: in Hungary, the vast majority are actually international students from Ukraine (4,024), with a third country nationality.

## Other measures related to hosting

**Collection of reliable information and dissemination** to universities is another measure undertaken by national authorities and NRCs (AT, DE, DK, FI, HU, NO, PL, SE).

In Latvia and Slovakia **legislative changes** have taken place in order to facilitate the admission of students from Ukraine, and recognition of their qualifications.

Several NRCs established **coordination** among national stakeholders, and sometimes also with international partners (IR, NL, PL & UK). For example, the Irish University Association (IUA) led on establishing a National Student and Researcher (NSR) Helpdesk to address the needs of third-level students and researchers fleeing the war. Funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), with admissions experts and research advisors seconded from Irish universities. In May 2022, IUA established an English Language Competency Working Group (WG) to examine the issues around English language competency assessment for persons displaced by the war in Ukraine. The WG managed to get 3,500 free tests from Duolingo, the results of which are then recognised by most IUA members.



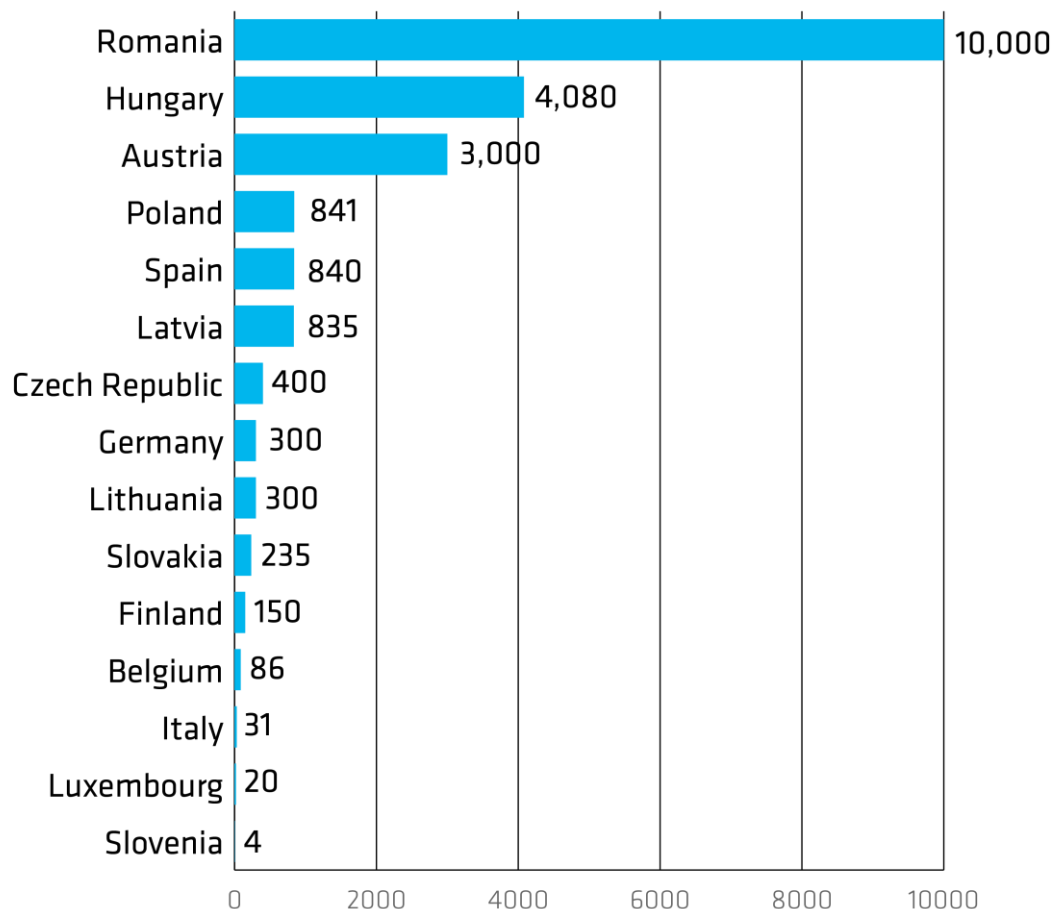
## How many Ukrainian students have been hosted?

Numbers of displaced Ukrainian students were available for 15 systems, and usually not on the basis of a systematic system-level data recording, but based on information and, in some cases, estimates provided by the NRC and their members.

Figures range from four students hosted in Slovenia to 10,000 students in Romania.

Most respondents assume that the actual numbers might be significantly higher.

Currently no figures are available for DK, EE, IE, IS, NL, NO, SE, SK, UK.



Q3.1. As a result of the Russian invasion, approximately how many Ukrainian students and academics do universities in your system host at present (situation as of May/June 2022)? - Students - Approximate number. N=24

## Student enrolment expected for the academic year 2022/3

At this stage, it is not easy to predict how the numbers will evolve. Students might decide to move to another institution or country. A significant number of Ukrainian students, even when abroad, appear to continue study at their home institutions, i.e. to finish the academic year. Others are currently taking language classes.

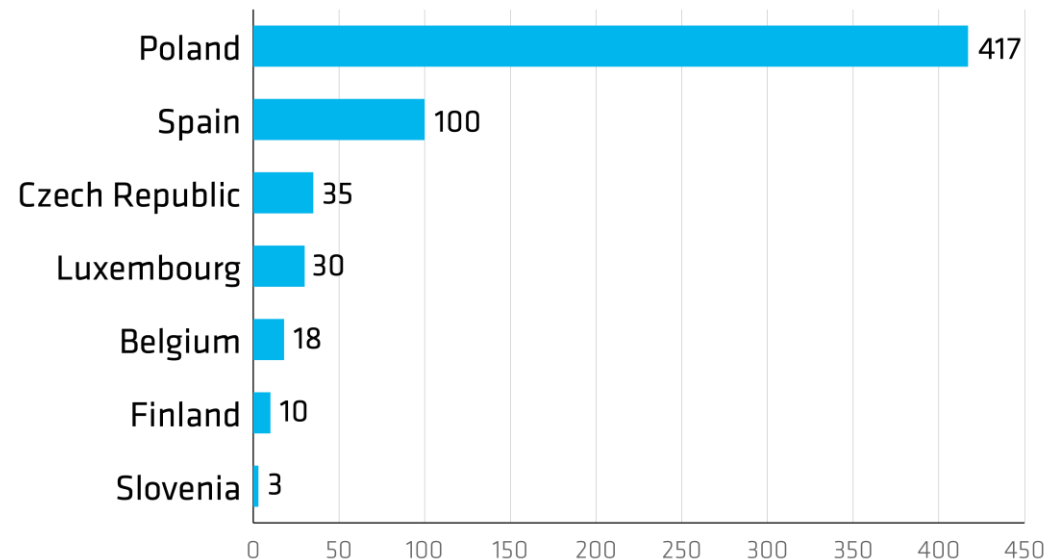
For all of these reasons, and also possibly anticipating new arrivals, respondents expect enrolment numbers to increase for the 2022/3 academic year. There are some indications for this:

- While in Italy, only 31 students are currently enrolled, a much higher number joined "single courses" as it was not possible to enrol in a regular study programme. The procedure to enrol for the next academic year (2022/2023) is now open.
- In Slovenia, at the University of Ljubljana alone, 100 applications have already been received for the 2022/2023 academic year.
- The Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) currently hosts 35 students and 9 academics in the framework of the Help Ukraine Project at ULB. But the total number of applications received is 712.
- Many inquiries from interested students are received. In Ireland, the National Research and Student Helpdesk has received 1,837 queries so far. The European Studies Portal reported that due to the invasion in February, portal activity from Ukraine increased by 400%.

## How many Ukrainian academics have been hosted?

For hosted academics, less information is available. Only nine higher education systems have approximate numbers of academics hosted, with variations between three in Slovenia to 417 in Poland.

An example of what this might entail is provided by the Spanish universities: they host 100 academics, and hired an additional 26 researchers and two administrative staff. The universities provide them with access to language courses, legal services, tutoring/mentoring programmes, summer camps for their children and psychological support.



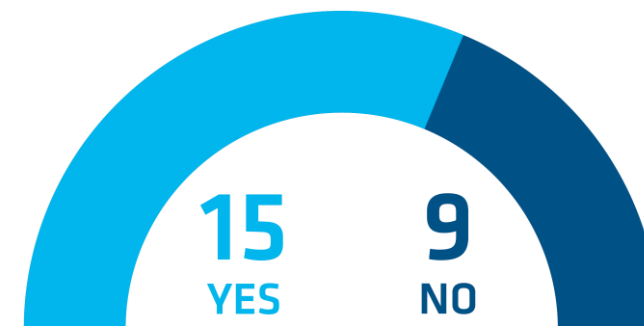
Q3. As a result of the Russian invasion, approximately how many Ukrainian students and academics do universities in your system host at present (situation as of May/June 2022)? - Academics - Approximate number. N=24

## Sector-wide support to universities in Ukraine

In addition to receiving students and academics, nine systems offer a sector-wide support to Ukrainian universities (CZ, DE, DK, ES, HU, IE, PL, RO, UK). Denmark is planning to have a dedicated support scheme for researchers from Ukraine. Hungary is supporting Hungarian language degree programs in Ukraine with donations. Romania subsidises costs for Ukrainian students who are in Romania but attend courses online in Ukraine.

Three respondents (DE, IE, PL) report that the sector-wide support is currently expressed, among others, by organising university entry exams in cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science for Ukrainian applicants.

From other sources, EUA is aware of at least 13 higher education systems (AT, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SI) where such exams are organised. Numbers of applicants vary between 50 in Finland and 5,748 in Poland. Normally it is the ministries who lead the organisation of the exams in cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, Ukrainian embassy, local universities and/or other public bodies that have capacity and resources to assist in conducting the exams.



*Q6. Does your NRC/national authority provide sector-wide support to universities located in Ukraine (other than receiving students/academics)? N=24*

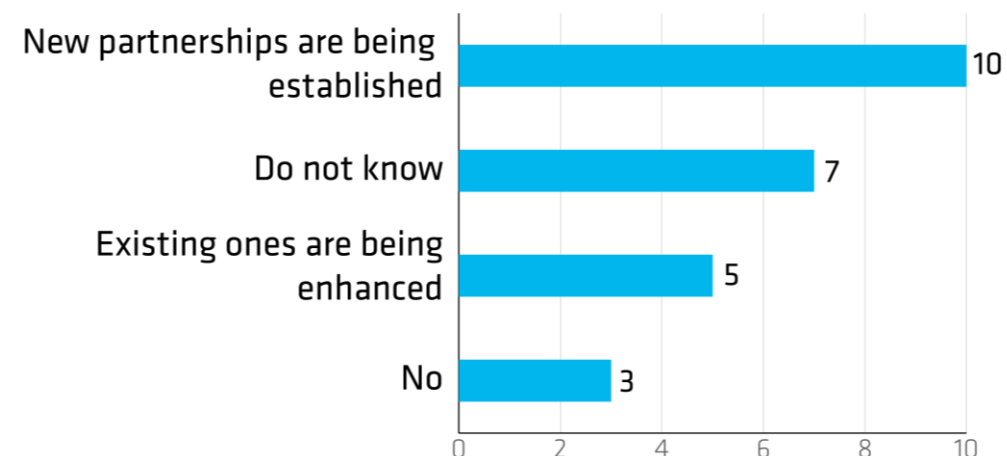
## Partnerships with Ukrainian universities

Partnerships between Ukrainian universities and universities in other parts of Europe existed before the war. But since the start of the war, they have become a notable means for providing support. In 10 systems new partnerships have been established (CZ, DK, ES, FI, IT, LV, PL, RO, SE, UK), while five existing ones have been enhanced (DE, ES, LT, NL, SI). This represents more than the half of the survey respondents.

Universities UK International in partnership with Cormack Consultancy Group supports matchmaking between the UK and Ukrainian universities with a similar profile, to support academics, students and university leaders, affected by the conflict. As of June 2022, a total of 71 Ukrainian HEIs have been twinned with counterparts in the UK, the US, Canada and Belgium as a result of the initiative.

The Conference of Italian University Rectors - CRUI and the Union of Rectors of Ukraine have agreed on setting up an advisory working group to better promote bilateral cooperation and partnership actions in the framework of the academic autonomy.

The Université libre de Bruxelles looks into such cooperation with a network of other universities, in this case the CIVIS University Alliance. The latter has created a Task Force on Ukraine and is considering a twinning project with one or two Ukrainian universities.



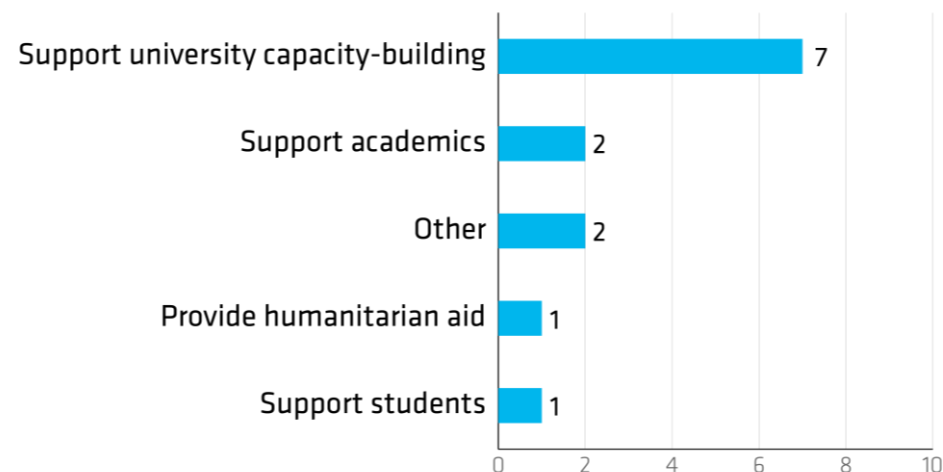
Q8. Are any bilateral partnerships being formed between your country's and Ukrainian universities since the Russian invasion? N=24

## Partnerships: challenges and benefits

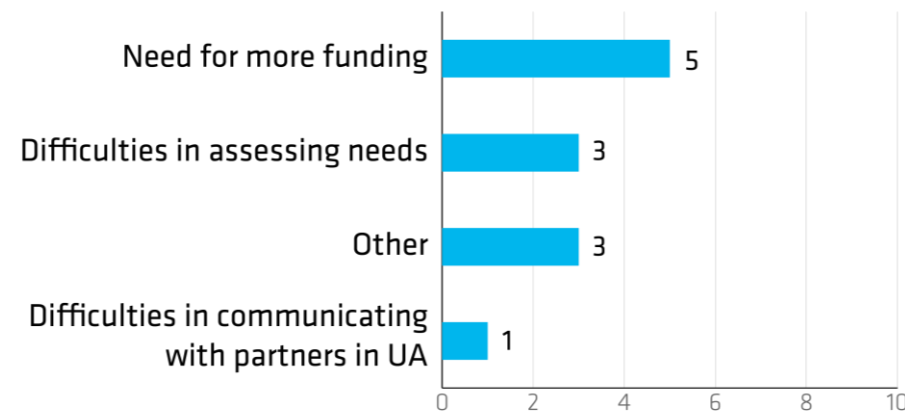
Most respondents confirm these partnerships as a suitable means for capacity building at Ukrainian HEIs (DE, FI, LV, LT, NL, PL, RO). But there are benefits, and in particular the NRCs of Sweden and the UK stressed the point that all the suggested options would apply to their partnerships with Ukrainian institutions.

But there are also challenges for establishing these partnerships, with the lack of funding identified as the most common one by five of the responding NRCs (DE, LV, LT, PL, SI).

Others report difficulties in assessing the needs of Ukrainian HEIs (IT, RO, SE) and communication challenges (CZ).



Q9. Do you think such partnerships are a good way to... ? N=13



Q10. What sort of challenges do universities in your country face in establishing/maintaining such partnerships? N=12

## Conclusion

Some higher education institutions and systems have prior experience from hosting displaced academics and students, and the 2015 arrival of Syrian refugees has also resulted in a considerable enhancement of institutional measures. But the present situation caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine is quite unprecedented, in terms of the emphasis on supporting higher education institutions in Ukraine and the shared commitment across Europe to assist citizens of Ukraine under the [4 March Directive](#), temporarily granting them similar rights to EU citizens, including access to the labour market and education.

In this regard, the survey results provide a snapshot on immediate measures that different national systems and organisations have launched in support of Ukrainian higher education institutions and their members. It cannot provide a full picture, and is subject to changes, but it would help to exchange experience, and learn from each other.

Legislative adjustments, including the overdue implementation of the articles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention on access of refugee students, enable recognition of Ukrainian qualifications with less bureaucracy and delay.

But there is an indication that the diverse implementation of the Directive does not always play out to the advantage of academics and students.

Despite all of the hope placed on the war soon coming to an end, for the 2022/2023 academic year European universities must prepare to host more Ukrainian students and academics. Additional funding sources are under exploration in some, but probably not all countries – leaving it open as to how institutions can sustain their support in the longer term.

Bilateral university partnerships are on the rise. There might be scope for interinstitutional learning, on how to enhance them as a strategic means for capacity building. This might also be one of the means to mitigate the brain drain risk and ensure a sustainable system level support for the reconstruction of Ukrainian universities, and of the country in general.

More reflection on this is needed on national, EHEA and European Union levels.

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the voice of European universities is heard wherever decisions are being taken that will impact their activities.

The Association provides unique expertise in higher education and research as well as a forum for exchange of ideas and good practice among universities. The results of EUA's work are made available to members and stakeholders through conferences, seminars, websites and publications.

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