War in Ukraine: MEPs unlock emergency funds for refugees

- More than €10 billion for refugees’ needs
- EU to pay all of 2021 and 2022 cohesion bills
- Up to €420 million of unspent 2014-2020 home affairs funds to be made available

Parliament gave the green light to redirect EU regional and asylum funding to EU countries sheltering people fleeing from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, on Thursday.

Only two weeks after the European Commission presented its proposal, MEPs adopted the Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE) measures under the urgent procedure, with 562 votes to two and three abstentions.

Cohesion funds for refugees

The update to current cohesion policy rules will allow available funding to be reallocated quickly to help EU countries and their regions to provide emergency support (temporary accommodation, food and water supplies, medical care or education) to people fleeing from the Russian aggression in Ukraine. This could include 2014-2020 Cohesion policy funds that have not yet been allocated or spent, as well as an additional €10 billion from “REACT-EU” funds.

EU countries can apply to the EU to get back money they have spent to help Ukrainian refugees retroactively as of 24 February, the date on which Russia invaded Ukraine. The EU will be able to finance 100% (instead of the usual 85%) of cohesion funding spent by member states for one more year (from mid-2021 to mid-2022).

The EU cohesion funds support investments that foster the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU by trying to rectify inequality between its regions.

Home affair funds

With 575 votes to four and three abstentions, MEPs also extended for one year, until mid-2024, the period in which both the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund 2014-2020 can be used, in order to give member states quick access to unused
resources. €420 million could be released to be spent on accommodation, food, healthcare or extra staff.

**Background**

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), **more than 3 million people have left the country since Russia invaded Ukraine** on 24 February, most of them heading to neighbouring countries.

**Next steps**

The draft rules will now be passed on to the EU Council for formal adoption. The regulation will enter into force one day after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

**Further information**

Draft rules: Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE)

Draft rules: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

Procedure file on CARE

Procedure file on Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

Committee on Regional Development

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