

Guide for people / families wishing to welcome into their homes people fleeing the armed conflict in Ukraine.

(16.03.22)

1. Introduction

This guide is intended to inform people or families wishing to welcome in their private properties people fleeing the fighting, in an exercise managed by Caritas Luxembourg and the Luxembourgish Red Cross, regarding :

- the prerequisites to be able to welcome a person / people into your home
- what it means to become a host
- the procedure to be followed in order to welcome people fleeing the armed conflict.

The 2nd part of this guide contains some suggestions as how to make the new arrivals feel safe and welcome in their new accomodation. It also offers some advice on how best to manage this new situation.

2. Requirements to be considered by potential hosts

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the people of Luxembourg have shown themselves to be supportive of those people fleeing the armed conflict. Various sorts of help have been offered, among which is the desire to welcome people / families into Luxembourgish homes. In order to protect the interests of the different parties involved in this great gesture of solidarity, it is essential that the conditions listed here below be met.

- Potential hosts must be financially capable of welcoming a person / people under their roof, because the welcome offered is considered as an act of solidarity and, as such, is not remunerated. That is to say, the host cannot request rent or any other reward for making available part, or all of their living structure.
- Any property offered must be within Luxembourg.
- Lodgings must respect rules governing gas and electrical installations, as well as those relating to fire prevention.
- Rooms must be clean, fit for habitation and offer at least 9 square metres per room.
- Potential hosts must provide criminal record extracts n° 3 and 5, bearing the comment "none".
- Any offer of lodgings must be for a minimum of 3 months. In light of the current situation, longer would be preferable.
- To have one bathroom per group of max. 6 people living together.

- Proposed lodgings must include a beds, bedding and clean storage space for clothes and personal effects, appropriate for the number of people being welcomed
- If the offer is based on shared accommodation, the host(s) must agree to give equal access to facilities such as the kitchen

Potential hosts must

- realise, and accept, that the people they welcome may have lifestyles and opinions different to their own, due to (among others) cultural, religious and educational differences
- be aware that the people they welcome may have suffered trauma relating to combat, or flight, may be mourning for loved ones, and may have lost all their belongings
- promise to cooperate with the person acting as their point of contact with Caritas, the Red Cross or the Office National d'Accueil (ONA)

It should be noted that children travelling alone are vulnerable, and will require specialised care. Because of this, they will not be placed in private homes.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is there a time-limit on the period of support?

- The offer of support should be at least 3 whole months, without breaks. Depending on the evolution of the conflict, it would be preferable if hosts could undertake to shelter people for longer.

2. Is financial aid available to offset expenses incurred relative to hosting?

- The offer to house people is considered to be an act of solidarity and is, therefore, given freely. That is to say, the host cannot request rent or any other reward for making available part, or all of their living structure.

3. Do those fleeing the armed conflict receive any aid?

- When a person fleeing the armed conflict in Ukraine has received their status of “temporary protection”, they are entitled to aid to cover their essential needs (food, clothes and items for personal hygiene). Further information is available via the Office National de l'Accueil (see details under point 6, Useful Addresses).

4. Will there be a contract relating to the lodgings?

- A “Family Welcome” arrangement is not regulated by a rental agreement / contract. However, a document provided by the Office National de l'Accueil, explaining the conditions of the arrangement, will have to be signed.

5. Will insurance for the lodgings be provided?
 - Caritas or The Red Cross will cover the civil responsibility of those welcomed. Nonetheless, the host must insure the lodgings.
6. Will it be necessary to help those welcomed with administrative procedures, or accompany them to the various appointments / offices?
 - It is not obligatory but, given that those welcomed will find themselves in a totally unfamiliar environment, any and all aid that helps them understand how Luxembourg functions will be welcome. For example, letting them know that public transport is free, indicating to them handy applications and helping them find the appropriate services to get the help they need (see “Useful Addresses” later in this document).
7. In case of problems or disagreements, how will the situation be managed?
 - In cases of disagreements between hosts and guests, either can approach their contact person from Caritas or the Red Cross, who will provide mediation. If the cohabitation degenerates to the point of no longer being tenable, the Office National de l’Accueil would remain competent to the beneficiaries of temporary protection.
8. What are the rights / obligations of those fleeing the armed conflict in Ukraine?
 - All displaced persons arriving in Luxembourg from Ukraine should contact the Immigration Service of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, in order to obtain the right to either introduce a request for temporary protection or, if appropriate, initiate some other procedure to normalise their stay in Luxembourg. Those having obtained the status of temporary protection have the right to lodging, access to the job market, the education system, healthcare, and to receive aid to cover their basic needs. For further information, consult:
<https://guichet.public.lu/fr/citoyens/immigration/ukraine/protection-temporaire.html>

4. Procedure for receiving people who have fled the armed conflict in Ukraine

If you are interested in hosting people who have fled the combat, you should register by completing the form here: <https://forms.office.com/r/zG4sZqtbhn>



A member of Caritas Luxembourg or the Luxembourgish Red Cross will then contact you, to make an appointment for an interview and a visit to the accommodations intended to welcome those in need.



This interview and the home visit will allow you to obtain answers to any questions you may have. You will then have time to reflect, before making your decision, as to whether you wish to commit to housing a person or family.



If an agreement is reached, Caritas or The Red Cross will select a person or family from among those having fled the armed conflict, whose needs will best be met by the criteria relating to your housing offer.



You will prepare the accommodation in order to welcome the person or family (see the next section for details).



The reception of the person/family guest will take place at the host person/family.

5. The accommodation framework¹

Preparation will be required before the arrival of those to be welcomed: A roof and goodwill alone are not enough. It is vital that the host, or host family be ready to provide a real opportunity for those to be sheltered to feel welcomed in the accommodation and in society.

- Remove all objects to which you will require access from the room(s) in which your visitors will be housed, thus allowing them to have a sense of privacy.
- Prepare a cupboard or closet in which your guests can leave their clothes and personal belongings.
- Make bedding available.
- Organise space in which your guests can store their food.
- Create a list of house rules. Think about things like security (fire precautions, locking doors and windows at appropriate times etc.), sharing the bathroom and kitchen, lights out and “do not disturb” periods, and any other aspects of daily life that may be impacted by the sharing of your living space. It is important to explain your needs in this context to your guest(s), who will obviously be unaware of your lifestyle and the basic life-rules of your home. (This does not have to be dealt with the second they arrive... See the next section).
- Prepare a duplicate key to give to the person/family staying.

Arrival

- It is possible that your guest(s) will initially be ill-at-ease, or subject to panic. Please, do not be offended if this is the case. It’s not about, or because of you. Any fear and anxiety will, understandably, be due to their situation and recent past. Keeping in touch with your coordinating contact person, as necessary, will help manage any difficulties that may be encountered by guests or hosts.
- A cup of tea or something to eat may be welcome. Be prepared that the guest may not immediately feel comfortable dining with you. If such is the case, don’t take it personally - the thought of eating in an unfamiliar environment, with strangers, may be stressful.
- Take the time to put yourself in their place. Imagine how you would feel, if the situations were reversed.
- Smiles, basic information, and the ability to rest and sleep may be all they need at this time.
- Offer Internet access. It is very important to your guest(s) to be able to contact their loved ones and friends in Ukraine, or elsewhere
- Show your guest(s) where to find their bedroom, the bathroom, toilet and kitchen
- It’s possible that your guest(s) will wish to be alone, or sleep (perhaps for several days). After such tragic events, they will need calm and rest. Once your guests appear calm and settled, you can have a chat about house rules.
- Some guests will be ashamed or embarrassed about being in need. Sensitivity and discretion will be required when determining their needs, and when offering to provide things.
- To help overcome linguistic barriers, you may find Google translate or deepl.com useful, but gestures and pictures may be the fastest method for overcoming obstacles in communicating. Patience will be required, and a willingness to repeat things.

¹This section quotes elements from the “Guide for people supporting Ukrainian refugees in Luxembourg”, made available by, and with the permission of ukraine.ineed.lu

Cohabitation and solidarity: kindness, good treatment and sharing

- Be careful to behave normally towards people you are taking care of, without discrimination of any kind.
- It is important for successful communal living that each person respects the personality of others without judging.
- Offer food - snacks and meals. Sharing food is an excellent way of making contact. Furthermore, people in crisis situations may well not have been eating regularly - helping structure their nutrition will be useful.
- Accompany your guests to the town hall, to register their presence in the commune.
- Offer, without imposing. Respect the limits of all involved.
- Due to the fragility and vulnerability of those being welcomed, it would be inappropriate to expect anything in return for supporting them.
- Exchanging money, a job, goods or services against sexual favours is illegal.
- You may offer essential items to your guests, but it is inappropriate to create financial arrangements between guests and hosts.
- Feel free to discuss equitably cultural similarities and differences that each of you might notice.
- Suggest activities. Just as infants do instinctively, adults need to remain active in order to be distracted from their worries. Inactivity encourages introspection. Going for a walk together, playing parlour games, cooking, for example, all help to pass the time and prevent and distract from lacking information on the developing situation.
- If any conflict arises, it is important to encourage dialogue as soon as all concerned have calmed down, in order to attempt to clearly define what caused the stress or misunderstanding. If language becomes a barrier, seeking a translator is to be encouraged.
- **Take care of yourself.** Helping a person undergoing a crisis can be exhausting, because one may be subjected to compassionate fatigue and / or empathic distress. Be careful to look after your own well-being. Do you need something; are you eating well, and regularly, are you taking “me time”? Even the strongest people need to let go...

Organising intercultural cohabitation with people having fled an armed conflict, and who are very vulnerable raises a number of questions relating to their psychological state.

- People fleeing the armed conflict in Ukraine may feel numb, that they are “drowning in their emotions”, or both. Any and all reactions to this are normal, and to be accepted, including laughing or crying “for no reason”.
- If someone starts to cry in your presence, let them. Witnessing someone cry can be disturbing, you may feel embarrassed. Try to remain sympathetic, put yourself in their position, and remember, “you always feel better after a good cry”.
- Stay alert. Be aware if you become annoyed. Sharing a crisis situation is stressful and emotionally challenging. If you feel annoyed, nervous or stressed, put some distance between yourself and the situation, take a few deep breaths, and find something banal to distract you, until you feel better.

Chronic stress, post-traumatic stress

- Combat situations can provoke symptoms of post-traumatic stress. After being exposed to a traumatic event, chronic stress may result. *This is a reaction, more an emotional state than an illness.* As the armed conflict is recent, and still in progress, what is currently being witnessed is chronic stress which, after weeks, or maybe months, may evolve into post-traumatic stress. *This is an illness, of which a primary symptom is the re-living, by day or by night, of scenes that have been lived, or witnessed. The needs and treatment are not the same as those required by chronic stress.*

What might one see during cohabitation?

- One might witness symptoms of chronic post-traumatic shock, including reviviscences (“re-livings”) of bad memories or shocking events that were witnessed. The symptoms tend to impact people’s mood, and can trigger insomnia, or a tendency for people to seek to isolate themselves. The associated stress can provoke, among other things, anxiety, eating disorders, nightmares and extreme reactions to noise. Some people have an extremely high level of emotional resilience, and not all those coming to Luxembourg have been implicated in extreme situations. You should remain observant in case the situation requires you to request professional support, but also be aware that it is possible that you will not witness any of the above symptoms

What should be my attitude?

When you act as a host, you should be alert for anger and feelings of guilt in your guests, and you should be ready to support them by listening to them.

- Under no circumstances should you question them about what they have lived through or witnessed. However, if they spontaneously start to speak about their experiences, you should try to lend a sympathetic ear.
- Your aim should be to help them re-establish a life as normal as possible.
- If your guest(s) mention suicide, you should immediately request professional help, by informing your contact person at the Red Cross, Caritas or the Office Nationale d’Accueil.
- Support and encourage your guest(s), to the best of your ability, in their day-to-day activities. During the first few days of an emotional crisis, even the simplest of activities can appear difficult, even impossible. Encourage them, gently, to go for walks, to eat regularly and to maintain their personal hygiene.
- The nights are hardest. Remember that the night time is the most difficult for people undergoing an emotional crisis. Make sure that your co-hosts are informed, so that they will be aware of the need for increased empathy, sympathy and understanding. Don't forget that, while you are sleeping, a person who has escaped from a conflict zone may well be re-living their traumatic experiences.
- Do not accept excessive consumption of alcohol, or any other high-risk or anti-social behaviour.
- Above all, be kind. What your guest(s) need most is to be reassured, to have their basic needs met and to find a bit of calm and human kindness.
- Regarding children and adolescents: they do not express reactions to pain and traumatic experiences in the same way as adults, and that can give the impression of having recovered very quickly. While adults may appear shocked, inert, disinterested, children may play, laugh and socialise. Being active is their way of dealing with what they have lived through but, when one

talks with them, one realises that they have nightmares, that they, too, need help. Children are “sponges” - they feel, “soak up” and are impacted by the stress of their parents. If the adults in the family start to feel better, the children will start to feel better. The essentials for them are to feel safe, to sleep well and to eat regularly. Just like adults, they need normality, especially in a situation that is far from normal. Being encouraged to talk, draw or use construction toys can be very helpful.

Protection of children and adolescents

- Treat children and adolescents with respect
- Do not use language or behaviour that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, degrading, sexually provocative or culturally unsuitable in their presence
- Do not involve children under 18 years of age in any form of sexual activity, and do not offer payment for sexual services.
- Be careful to avoid behaviour, which might be construed by 3rd parties to be exploitative or abusive.

6. Usefull adresses

Ministère des Affaires Etrangères

Direction de l'immigration

26, route d'Arlon

L-1140 Luxembourg

Centrale téléphonique : (+352) 247-84565 du lundi au vendredi 9h - 12h et 14h-16h

immigration.desk@mae.etat.lu

For any question concerning the regularization of papers and concerning the arrival in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Office National de l'Accueil (ONA)

5, rue Carlo Hemmer

L-1734 Luxembourg

Tél. : [\(+352\) 247-85700](tel:+35224785700)

Fax : (+352) 247-85720

Courriel : info@ona.public.lu

For any question concerning accommodation and living together

CASNA - SECAM – Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse

SECAM – CASNA

38, rue Philippe II L-2340 Luxembourg

for English: (+352) 247 - 76570

for Ukrainian: (+352) 247 – 76976

For any questions about the education of children and young people

Service Accueil Social Caritas

29, rue Michel Welter, L-2730 Luxembourg

Tél. : +352 40 21 31 – 534

Courriel : wellkomm@caritas.lu

To receive general information on temporary protection and integration in Luxembourg

La Ligue d'hygiène mentale a.s.b.l.

Psychological consultation

11, rue du Fort Bourbon

L – 1249 Luxembourg

Tél. : [49 30 29](tel:493029)

ADEM – Agence pour le Développement de l'Emploi

13A Rue de Bitbourg, 1273 Luxembourg

Tél. : 24788888

Info@adem-etat.lu

For all work-related questions, given that beneficiaries of temporary protection who have had a work residence permit can go to work.

Caisse Nationale de la Santé (CNS)

125 Route d'Esch

L-1471 Luxembourg

Tél : +352 27 571

For medical consultations with an interpreter:

Maison médicale du Val Fleuri :

23, Val fleuri L-1526 Luxembourg

Opening hours : du lundi au vendredi

Schedule : 8h30 – 12h / 13h – 16h30

Lignes de bus :222, 262, 22, 21 230, 16, 31

Arrêts de bus : WANDMILLEN et VAL FLEURI

Société Nationale du Contrôle Technique

11, rue de Luxembourg

L-5230 Sandweiler

For registration of cars from Ukraine

Ombudsman (Médiateur du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg)

36, rue du Marché-aux-Herbes

L-1728 Luxembourg

Tél: +352 26 27 01 01

info@ombudsman.lu

Ombudsman fir Kanner a Jugendlecher (Ombudsman pour enfants et jeunes)

65, route d'Arlon
L-1140 Luxembourg
Tél : 28 37 36 35

www.okaju.lu – contact@okaju.lu