

# Box 2. Temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine

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As the military aggression against Ukraine persisted into its second year, millions of people seeking refuge continued to arrive in the EU throughout 2023. By 31 October 2023, over 4.3 million non-EU citizens who left Ukraine had received temporary protection in EU+ countries, with the main hosting countries being Germany, Poland and Czechia.[171](#)

Temporary protection was initially activated until 4 March 2023. It was subsequently extended on two occasions, covering the period until 4 March 2025.[172](#) Throughout 2023, all EU+ countries began to prolong the validity of residence permits issued to beneficiaries of temporary protection or an equivalent status.[i](#) In addition, some countries – namely Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal – allow temporary protection status to be converted into residence permits for employment or family reunification.[173](#)

UNHCR continued to support several EU+ countries in coordinating responses to inflows from Ukraine.[ii](#) The Blue Dot Hubs, managed in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), remained active in 2023 and engaged in providing information and assistance to persons fleeing Ukraine across Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as outside of the EU in Belarus and Moldova.[174](#)

Changes in policies and procedures governing temporary protection were introduced in 2023 in several EU+ countries. The scope of the temporary protection status was extended in 2022 in many countries to Ukrainian nationals who were already outside Ukraine when the military aggression began.[175](#) In 2023, the Constitutional Court in Austria confirmed that temporary protection applies to Ukrainian nationals who left the country shortly before 24 February 2022 but in principle were residing there.[176](#)

In contrast, measures to delimit eligibility for temporary protection were implemented in some countries in 2023, including at the appeal stage. In Finland, for example, third-country nationals who resided in Ukraine on the basis of a temporary residence permit are no longer granted temporary protection.[177](#) This was already the case in the Netherlands in 2022, but the Dutch Council of State ruled in 2024 that the State Secretary cannot end temporary protection for third-country nationals who had resided in Ukraine on a date different than specified in the EU directive. Thus, temporary protection for this group in the Netherlands ended on 4 March 2024, instead of 4 September 2023. However, after the Dutch Council of State referred questions to the CJEU for a preliminary ruling, the legal consequences of ending temporary protection on this date were frozen. This does not mean that this group continues to fall under temporary protection, but they may continue to use facilities as if they were.[178](#)

In *Applicant v State Secretariat for Migration*, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court ruled that temporary protection was not to be granted to Ukrainians who have EU/EFTA+ citizenship. Similarly in Norway, Ukrainians who have citizenship in a safe country no longer receive temporary collective protection,<sup>179</sup> while those who return to Ukraine may risk having their protection status revoked.<sup>180</sup>



The Administrative Court of Munich in Germany [decided](#) in *Applicant v Immigration Office* (M 4 S 23.2442) that unmarried partners of Ukrainians were not eligible to receive temporary protection. The court came to the same conclusion in the case M 4 K 23.2440. This latter decision was reversed by the Bavarian Higher Administrative Court on 31 October 2023, with the decision in case 10 C 23.1793.

### **Data on decisions granting temporary protection**

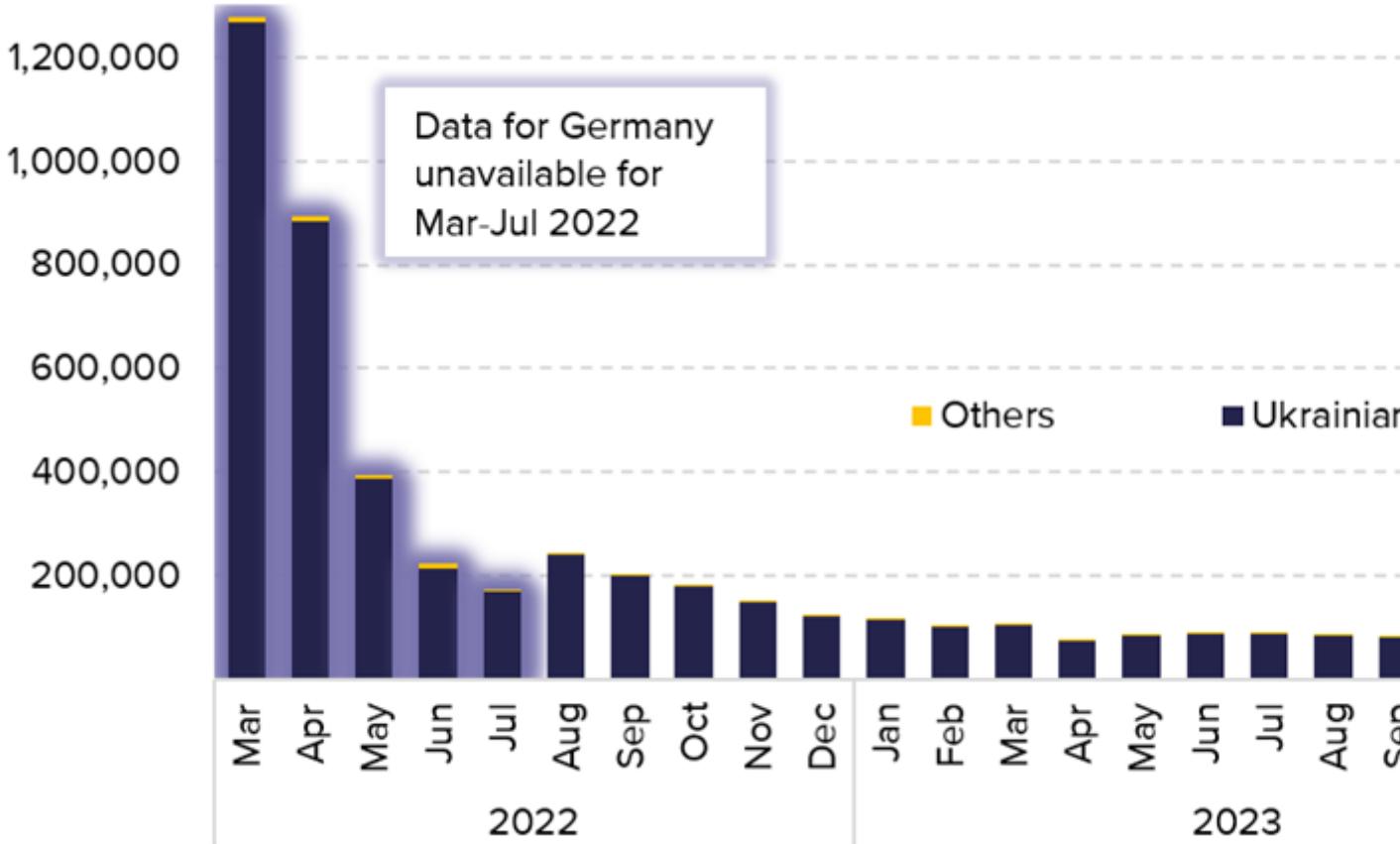
The number of decisions granting temporary protection in EU+ countries is used as a proxy for data on the number of persons registering for temporary protection.

In 2023, EU+ countries issued over 1 million decisions that granted temporary protection.<sup>iii</sup> Since the high levels at the outset of the war, decisions granting temporary protection have been declining and remained relatively stable at a lower level as of the summer of 2023 (see *Figure 1*).<sup>iv</sup>



**Number of decisions granting temporary protection declined and have remained relatively stable**

**Figure 1. Number of decisions granting temporary protection in EU+ countries, March 2022–December 2023**



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asytpfm](#)] as of 5 February 2024.

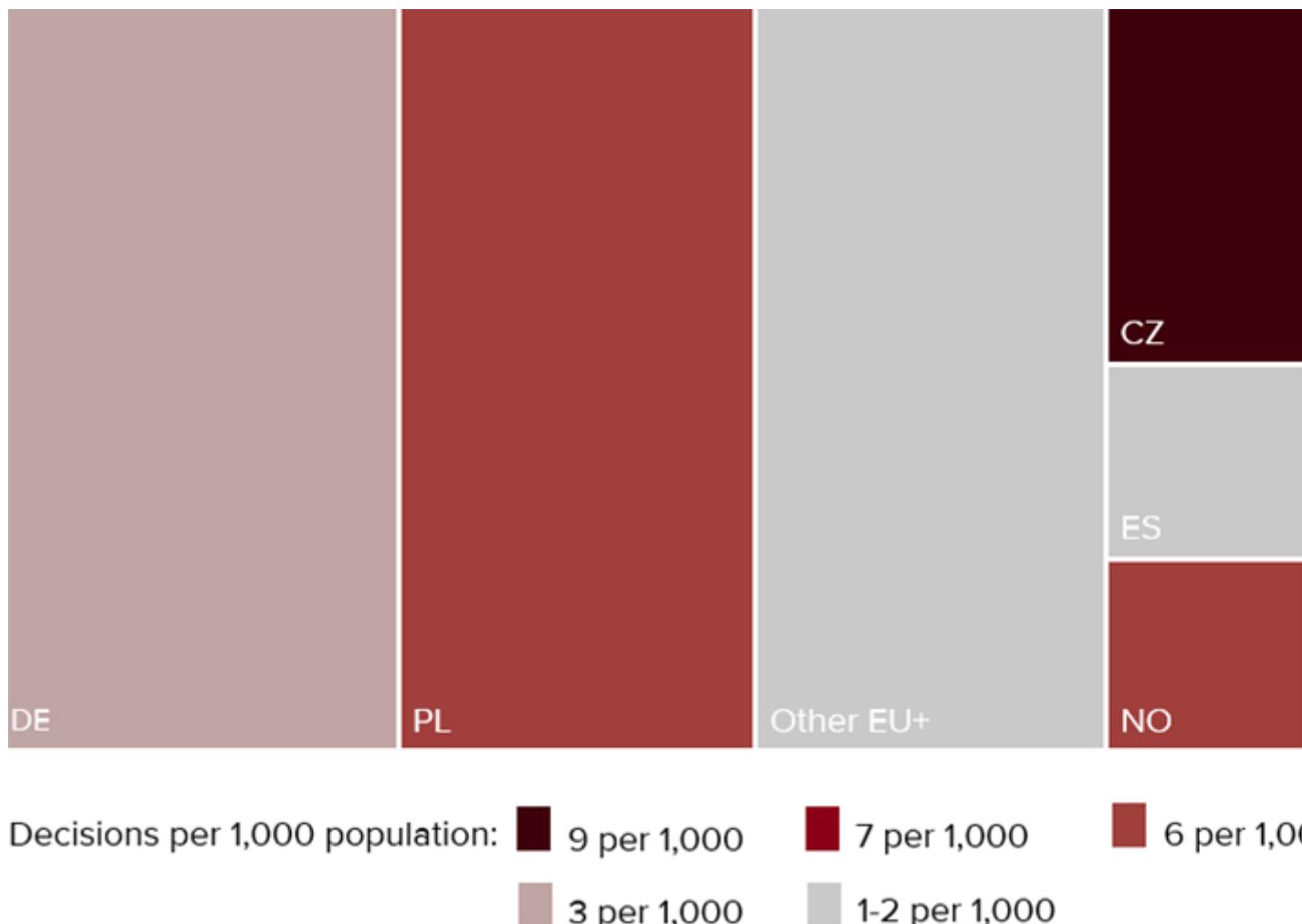
Germany (264,000) and Poland (234,000) issued the most decisions granting temporary protection in 2023, jointly accounting for almost one-half of all decisions issued in EU+ countries (see Figure 2). Many registrations were also carried out in Czechia (99,000), Romania (49,000), Spain (34,000), Norway, the Netherlands and Ireland (33,000 each) and Slovakia (30,000).

The most decisions per capita were granted by Czechia and Cyprus (9 and 7 decisions for every 1,000 inhabitants, respectively). They were followed by Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland and Slovakia (with 6 decisions for every 1,000 inhabitants each).



**Germany and Poland accounted for almost one-half of all decisions granting temporary protection**

**Figure 2. Decisions granting temporary protection by EU+ countries with most decisions in absolute values (rectangles) and most decisions per capita (legend), 2023**



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asytpfm](#)] as of 5 February 2024.

As in 2022, Ukrainians received 99% of all decisions granting temporary protection. In total, over 1 million Ukrainians were granted temporary protection, compared to just 15,000 applications for international protection over the same period.

In much smaller numbers, temporary protection was also granted to Russians (2,100, mainly in Spain and Germany), Nigerians (820, mainly in Portugal, Germany and Finland), Moldovans (680, mainly in Germany, Romania and Spain) and Moroccans (540, mainly in Portugal, Germany and Spain).[v](#)

While women and girls were a minority among applicants for international protection in EU+ countries, they received about three-fifths of all decisions granting temporary protection in 2023. Over one-quarter of all decisions granted temporary protection to minors (26%), practically all of whom were Ukrainian nationals.

## Housing

Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive establishes that Member States must ensure that beneficiaries have access to suitable accommodation, social welfare, medical care, employment and education. The rapid implementation of the directive or comparable schemes across EU+ countries in early 2022 facilitated the regularisation of Ukrainian nationals' residence under simplified procedures and their access to rights associated with the temporary protection status.[181](#) As the military aggression continued in 2023, new challenges emerged in terms of ensuring longer-term solutions for the protection and integration of displaced persons from Ukraine.

Housing continued to be a pressing topic, and accommodation programmes and allowances were extended in Bulgaria,[182](#) Romania[183](#) and Slovakia,[184](#) while new structures and solutions to facilitate access to

accommodation were introduced in Czechia,<sup>185</sup> Cyprus<sup>186</sup> and Germany.<sup>187</sup> In Lithuania, the IOM allocated funding to partially cover the rent of beneficiaries of temporary protection.<sup>188</sup> High occupancy rates and mounting pressure on the reception system in Norway<sup>189</sup> led to increased requirements to access housing.<sup>190</sup> Norway also announced enforcing additional measures in the existing integration programme (valid for all persons who receive some form for international protection) in order to support Ukrainians in finding employment rapidly to allow them to support themselves during their stay in the country.<sup>191</sup> The Irish government amended the accommodation offering for new arrivals in December 2023.<sup>192</sup>

## Employment

The labour market integration of Ukrainian nationals gained increased attention throughout 2023. National labour authorities in Finland,<sup>193</sup> Italy,<sup>194</sup> Romania<sup>195</sup> and Slovakia<sup>196</sup> published studies and statistics focused on the rate of employment and fields of work of displaced persons from Ukraine.

Beneficiaries of temporary protection are generally allowed to work without the need to obtain a separate work permit, facilitating the procedural aspects of their integration in the labour market. However, the demographic composition of displaced persons from Ukraine has posed additional challenges. Almost one-half of temporary protection beneficiaries in the EU are adult women, while children account for almost one-third.<sup>197</sup> The burden associated with care responsibilities and the unavailability of appropriate childcare were indicated as potential restrictions to Ukrainian women's prospects to take up employment in host countries.<sup>198</sup>

There are also indications that Ukrainians often take on lower-skilled positions.<sup>199</sup> Lengthy procedures for the recognition of diplomas or qualifications, particularly in the fields of health and education, were cited as one of the reasons why temporary protection beneficiaries often resorted to lower-level jobs.<sup>200</sup> In 2022, the European Commission issued a recommendation advising Member States to streamline recognition procedures for academic and professional qualifications of displaced persons from Ukraine.<sup>201</sup> Some countries began to implement measures to update the recognition system, including by accepting qualifications on a declarative basis for non-regulated professions.<sup>202</sup>

## Education

Other measures to support the social and economic integration of Ukrainian nationals were put in place throughout 2023, including in the field of education. Spain implemented scholarships to support language training of temporary protection beneficiaries in the reception system.<sup>203</sup> In Lithuania, following announcements that displaced persons from Ukraine will be required to pass a language examination as of March 2024,<sup>204</sup> the IOM committed to provide free language lessons.<sup>205</sup> Facilitating access to education of both children and adults became a priority in Romania<sup>206</sup> and Slovakia.<sup>207</sup>

## Healthcare

Language barriers may also pose obstacles in terms of access to healthcare, which combined with pressure on health systems could restrict beneficiaries' possibilities to effectively use medical services in the host countries. New information provision initiatives, including information on access to medical care, were launched by national authorities and the IOM in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Norway.<sup>208</sup>

With the aim of improving healthcare for beneficiaries of temporary protection in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, the European Commission launched a dedicated project within the EU4Health programme. Together with the IOM and the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Commission aims to reinforce the capacity of national health systems to cope with increasing inflows, improve access to public health services and extend coverage.<sup>209</sup>

While the extension of the temporary protection status until 2025 was a welcomed development, UNHCR reiterated its appeal to increase efforts to integrate people with vulnerabilities. The agency warned that

obstacles to access accommodation, healthcare and employment, as well as administrative barriers to obtain documentation, may prompt vulnerable people to return to Ukraine.<sup>210</sup> Their second Position on Voluntary Return to Ukraine<sup>211</sup> urged host countries to ensure that effective mechanisms for vulnerability identification and referral are in place. In this regard, initiatives to provide information on services available to people with disabilities were launched by civil society organisations in Poland<sup>212</sup> and Slovakia.<sup>213</sup>

Efforts towards a better understanding of the needs of displaced persons from Ukraine persisted in 2023. The EUAA, together with the OECD, continued to implement the Surveys of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine (SAM-UKR) and published two fact sheets in June<sup>214</sup> and October<sup>215</sup> 2023. The surveys show moderate satisfaction with support services and map urgent needs perceived by displaced persons in terms of language learning, financial support and employment. Similar surveys were launched by various stakeholders in Germany,<sup>216</sup> Lithuania,<sup>217</sup> Poland<sup>218</sup> and Sweden.<sup>219</sup>

## Information provision

National authorities, international organisations and civil society organisations continued to tailor information and web pages specifically for displaced persons, for example on registering for temporary protection, accessing the labour market and attending school.

The Directorate for Immigration (UDI) in Norway launched a “New in Norway” [website](#) targeted at newly-arrived displaced persons from Ukraine. The website is available in several languages, including English, Norwegian, Ukrainian and Russian. In addition, the Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) launched a new [website](#) for displaced persons from Ukraine (available in Norwegian and Ukrainian). The information relates to their initial arrival, how to access services and about travel to other countries.

Likewise, the National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ), UNHCR, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the IOM published practical tips on living in Slovenia in Ukrainian.<sup>220</sup> The Legal Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment in Slovenia has been providing [private consultations](#) to Ukrainians on their rights and duties and the procedure for temporary protection.

The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU) in Austria provides information in counselling centres about assisted humanitarian returns to a country of origin for third-country nationals who fled Ukraine. The BBU and the IOM are supporting and preparing these individuals for their onward journeys.<sup>221</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Eurostat. (2023, December 8). *More than 4.2 million people under temporary protection.*

<sup>172</sup> Council of the European Union. (2023, September 28). *Ukrainian refugees: EU member states agree to extend temporary protection.*

<sup>i</sup> Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are not bound by the Temporary Protection Directive but have implemented similar national protection provisions. More information can be found on Who is Who: Temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine

<sup>173</sup> European Labour Authority. (2023). *Overview of the measures taken by EU and EFTA countries regarding employment and social security of displaced persons from Ukraine. Comparative summary report.* <https://www.ela.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-06/Report-on-the-Overview-of-the-measures-taken-by-EU-and-EFTA-countries-regarding-employment-and-social-security-of-displaced-persons-from-Ukraine.pdf>

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residence permits for temporary protection extended until 31 December 2024].

ii For more details on UNHCR's activities in EU+ countries, see Who is Who in International Protection: UNHCR.

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178 State Secretary for Justice and Security | Staatssecretaris van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2024, April 25). *Tijdelijke regels over de opvang van ontheemden uit Oekraïne* (Tijdelijke wet opvang ontheemden Oekraïne) [Temporary rules on the reception of displaced persons from Ukraine (Temporary Act on the Reception of Displaced Persons Ukraine)].

179 The Ministry of Justice and Public Security | Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet. (2023, December 20). Ukrainians with dual citizenship will not be granted temporary collective protection in Norway.

180 Ministry of Justice and Public Security | Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet. (2023, December 12). *Ukrainians who travel to their country of origin risk losing their residence permit in Norway*.

iii Eurostat “Decisions granting temporary protection by citizenship, age and sex – monthly data”, data at the end of December 2023 (last update on 5 February 2024). Data for December 2023 were missing for Switzerland. [migr\_asytpfm]

iv The number of decisions on temporary protection from March-July 2022 is underestimated because data for Germany were only available as a total number. Germany started reporting monthly data on decisions on temporary protection as of August 2022.

v The nationality was unknown for approximately 680 beneficiaries of temporary protection.

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189 Norwegian Directorate of Immigration | Utlendingsdirektoratet. (2023, August 31). *Sterk ?kning i ankomster [Strong increase in arrivals]*. <https://www.udi.no/en/latest/sterk-okning-i-ankomster/>

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190 Ministry of Justice and Public Security | Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet. (2023, December 11). *Endringer i krav til innkvarteringstilbud til asyls?kere [Changes in requirements for accommodation offers for asylum seekers]*.

191 Ministry of Justice and Public Security | Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet. (2023, October 24). *Lenger i mottak, raskere ut i jobb [Longer in reception, faster out to work]*.

192 Department of the Taoiseach | Roinn an Taoisigh. (2023, December 12). *Government approves changes to measures for those fleeing war in Ukraine*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/b5d86-government-approves-changes-to-measures-for-those-fleeing-war-in-ukraine/>

193 Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto. (2023, June 9). *The number of seasonal work permits is declining – many Ukrainians receiving temporary protection work on farms*. [https://migri.fi-/kausityolupien-hakemusmaarat-laskussa-tilapaista-suojelua-saaneet-ukrainalaiset-tyoskentelevat-maatiloilla?languageId=en\\_US](https://migri.fi-/kausityolupien-hakemusmaarat-laskussa-tilapaista-suojelua-saaneet-ukrainalaiset-tyoskentelevat-maatiloilla?languageId=en_US)

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202 European Labour Authority. (2023). *Overview of the measures taken by EU and EFTA countries regarding employment and social security of displaced persons from Ukraine. Comparative summary report*. <https://www.ela.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-06/Report-on-the-Overview-of-the-measures-taken-by-EU-and-EFTA-countries-regarding-employment-and-social-security-of-displaced-persons-from-Ukraine.pdf>

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204 Lithuanian National Radio and Television | Lietuvos nacionalinis radijas ir televizija. (2023, April 5). *Lietuvi? kalbos institucijos kit?met prad?i tikrinti darbuotojus iš Ukrainos* [Lithuanian language authorities

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