

ECA: Crisis-Related Measures Must be Accompanied by Appropriate Monitoring System

Anna Pingen

On 12 February 2025, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published its [Special Report 05/2025](#), titled *Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe*, examining how EU cohesion policy funds have supported Member States in managing the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis. The report evaluated whether these funds, specifically the CARE (Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe) initiative and the REACT-EU programme, provided timely and effective support and whether the resources were used efficiently and appropriately.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, over four million displaced persons, mostly women and children, were granted temporary protection across the EU. In response, the European Commission introduced the CARE initiative in March 2022, allowing Member States to reallocate cohesion policy funds and simplify procedures to support refugees. This followed the broader REACT-EU initiative launched during the COVID-19 crisis.

The ECA found that the flexibility granted by CARE helped Member States respond quickly to the refugee influx. However, due to the retrospective nature of the funding and the delayed implementation of some projects, the immediate needs of refugees were often met with pre-existing national resources. The auditors noted that Member States mainly used EU funding for short-term support, such as accommodation, food, and healthcare, but invested less in longer-term integration measures like language training or employment assistance.

The report revealed that, although cohesion policy funding provided useful support, the Commission could not fully assess the extent of CARE's actual contribution. The lack of targeted reporting requirements made it difficult to measure/monitor the results and effectiveness of this financial assistance.

The ECA recommended the following:

- The Commission should improve its ability to track and assess how cohesion funds are used to support displaced persons by establishing clearer reporting and evaluation mechanisms;
- In the event of future crises, better preparedness should include mechanisms to track funding allocations and outcomes more precisely;
- Member States should be encouraged to use EU funds not only for emergency needs but also for longer-term integration measures to ensure sustainable support for refugees.

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