



STEFAN
**BATORY
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Human capital for mutual welfare

Recommendations for Polish and Ukrainian migration policies

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Oleksii Pozniak**

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Migration for the Development and Reconstruction of Ukraine

In Polish public debate, the topic of migration from Ukraine, driven by Russia's full-scale invasion, is all too often centred around the cost-benefit balance. Time and again, articles appear in the media questioning whether granting Ukrainian refugees temporary protection – which includes access to the Polish education system, healthcare and social benefits – places a burden on the state budget that exceeds the revenue from social security contributions and taxes paid by people from Ukraine residing in Poland. These rushed calculations, usually based on incomplete data, fire the imagination and fuel discussions on justice, hospitality and the gratitude (or lack thereof) of the new residents of our country. For example, in 2024 one commentator hostile to hosting people from Ukraine in Poland asked the Ministry of Finance about the budget revenue from taxes paid by Ukrainian nationals. Upon receiving the reply that in 2023 it amounted to PLN 997.5 million from PIT, PLN 492.5 million from VAT and PLN 3.7 billion from VAT on consumer goods, he concluded that these revenues were far lower than the state's expenditures related to hosting people from Ukraine – but did not specify the basis for this conclusion. He did not take into account either the contributions paid by Ukrainians to ZUS (Polish Social Insurance Institution), or the data on how much it costs the Polish state to provide them with access to healthcare and education.

Leaving aside the fact that these discussions are usually based on, at best, fragmentary knowledge and, at worst, emotions and stereotypes, they overlook a key aspect that must be considered when assessing the impact of any migration on the host society, the society of origin and the situation of the migrants themselves. That aspect is time. Research conducted in European countries that have received large migrant communities – for example, France and the United Kingdom – shows that while in the initial period after arrival newcomers fare worse economically than existing residents and their presence entails additional costs for the state, over time these income disparities tend to even out, and sometimes even reverse, with migrants becoming not a burden but an asset to the state. Data from a report published in March 2025 by the National

Development Bank of Poland confirms this pattern. Based on data from Statistics Poland, National Bank of Poland and detailed reports from other institutions, experts estimated that from 2013 to 2024 the contribution made to the Polish economy by people from Ukraine working in Poland reached 2.4% of GDP. Their contributions to the Polish budget in 2024 amounted to PLN 15.1 billion – significantly higher than in previous years, with growth continuing steadily year on year. Of course, the increasing contribution of people with migration experience to GDP does not ease social and political tensions surrounding migration – these can be addressed by good integration policy, but when the debate is focused on the current balance of profits and losses, it is very difficult to convince governments, as well as citizens of host countries, that it is worth investing time and resources in such a policy.

This report, prepared by a Ukrainian team specialising in demography – particularly in migration trends – provides an overview of data from various Polish and Ukrainian sources on population flows between Poland and Ukraine following the full-scale Russian invasion. The authors analyse this data in terms of the demographic, economic, social and political challenges faced by both countries, and formulate recommendations both for further studies on those aspects of migration that remain unexplored and for which data is lacking, as well as for the coordination of population policies between Ukraine and the countries receiving Ukrainian migrants, among which Poland is one of the most important. The analysis of available data and what it reveals about trends in population flows to and from Ukraine is intended to add that key element – time – to the ongoing, fragmented discussions about migration. It is only by adopting a medium- and long-term perspective that one can answer the question of whether a given migration is beneficial for the country of origin, the host country – and for the migrants themselves.

There is no doubt that forced migration due to war is unique not only because of the dramatic circumstances faced by those compelled to leave their homes, but also due to the difficulty of forecasting how the situation will develop. Decisions to leave or return are largely dependent on the situation on the front and the scale of war-related destruction, on the relationships between those who left and those who stayed, as well as on how the conflict is perceived by the host society. There are numerous factors that increase the uncertainty and provisional nature of migration decisions in such circumstances – and all of them significantly hinder the ability to forecast future population flows.

War also creates an additional dimension of pressure. On the one hand, the authorities of the devastated country of origin are determined to pursue an

effective return policy, as hands are needed for the reconstruction of the country. On the other hand, the economy of a country at war or recovering after its end is heavily dependent on the funds sent by its citizens working abroad.

War also exerts pressure on the host country. On the one hand, its authorities are generally keen for a significant portion of those forced to migrate by the war to return to their country of origin, as they fear social tensions, integration problems and the costs of providing assistance to this group. On the other hand, in countries where, as in Poland, the share of working-age people in the total population is declining (in an April 2025 report Statistics Poland stated that since 2010 almost 3 million working-age people have been lost) – the arrival of a large group of people capable of working is an opportunity for development, as it raises hopes of filling job vacancies and reducing the demographic burden on the social security system, since there is an additional pool of people paying pension and health contributions.

Responding effectively to the migration pressure caused by war is not possible without cooperation between the host country and the country of origin of the migrants. A unilateral migration policy may solve one dilemma, but at the expense of another – if the host country decides not to allow new residents to remain on its territory, or makes this possibility significantly more difficult or limited, it will forfeit the benefits arising from migrants' work and participation in social life. If the country of origin opts for a very aggressive return policy, it will gain hands for labour and reconstruction (though not all – some people will likely never return to their country and may even prefer to forfeit their citizenship), but at the cost of remittances from the diaspora.

Ukraine's membership in the European Union and the associated prospect of free movement of people between Ukraine and EU countries, including Poland, presents an opportunity to address these challenges and turn them into mutual benefits. Free movement of people supports circular migration, meaning working in one country – in this case one of the Member States – and returning frequently to the country of origin. Before the outbreak of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, this was a very common model among Ukrainians working in Poland (according to April 2022 estimates, before the full-scale invasion 1.35 million people from Ukraine resided in Poland).

The unique situation in which people from Ukraine found themselves after Russia's full-scale invasion – and their subsequent temporary protection under the EU directive – offers insight into what their circumstances might look like once granted freedom of movement and residence within the EU. The position that migrants find within the host society depends on specific integration

measures, as well as on existing social networks, such as family or friends, and the state of the labour market in the respective country. Over 70% of working-age people who arrived in Poland after the full-scale Russian invasion are employed. In Germany, that figure is several times lower (according to data from the Federal Employment Agency, out of over 855,000 Ukrainians of working age in Germany, just under 300,000 are employed, which is almost 35%). At the same time, however, Ukrainians who moved to Germany after staying in Poland are significantly more likely to say they do not plan to return to Ukraine, compared to those still residing in Poland. According to a survey conducted by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, among Ukrainians who arrived after the full-scale invasion, 59% of those who arrived in the first months after the invasion, up to May 2022, plan to stay in Germany longer term, while among those who arrived earlier, the proportion is even higher at 68%. For comparison, data from the International Organization for Migration shows that 43% of Ukrainians in Poland plan to stay longer. There are many factors influencing these decisions – the ease of returning, relocation costs, access to social services, social networks, level of support and the possibility of finding satisfying employment.

The experience with temporary protection shows that the mere possibility of staying in a host country does not determine much on its own. It offers a certain opportunity. Whether that opportunity is used in a way that allows migrants to live with dignity, contributes to the development of the host country and, at the same time, does not drain the war-torn country of its most valuable resource – its people – depends on the specific solutions adopted in migration policy. This report aims to help assess the needs in this area as well as to identify the key directions where coordinated action is required from Ukraine and one of its most important host countries – Poland.

Migrations of Ukrainians

Migration Trends During the Full-Scale War

Ukraine has been a supplier of population and labour for centuries. Residents of the western territories that were part of Austria-Hungary and/or Poland migrated westwards to the New World. Those living in the Russian Empire moved eastwards to Siberia. Later, after the formation of the USSR, many Ukrainians took part in the Virgin Lands campaign to cultivate Siberia and Kazakhstan, including the construction of Komsomolsk on the Amur, the Baikal-Amur-Main-line, etc. And it was Moscow that attracted the most promising and intelligent young people, engineers, and scientists with its opportunities. Of course, some of them, especially those who worked in difficult conditions, for example in the north, returned to Ukraine after reaching retirement age, which led the total population to even increase, but at the same time, migration exacerbated the ageing of the population.

After the collapse of the USSR and the lifting of the Iron Curtain, Ukrainians began to leave, not only for Russia but also for other countries, and Poland gradually became the centre of gravity for migrants. In 2019, about 972,000 Ukrainians received a working permit in Poland. Since a significant percentage of migrants in almost every country did not register, we do not have an accurate estimate of their number, and the deviation ranges from 1.5–3.0 million people before the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

The situation changed dramatically on 24 February 2022, when hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians sought protection from the Russian invasion in neighbouring countries, primarily Poland. Despite the apparently well-established system for registering border crossings, estimating the scale of the migration was challenging, especially in the first days of the war. For example, according to the Ukrainian border service, between 24 February 2022, and 24 May 2023,

¹ E. Libanova, 'Die demografische Krise in der Ukraine: Ursachen, Auswirkungen und Zukunftsperspektiven', *Ukraine-Analysen*, 14 June 2024, no. 300, <https://laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/300/demographie-krise-ukraine/> (available here and after: 21 March 2025).

1.7 million more people left the country than entered.² The data relate to the borders with the EU and Moldova because checkpoints on the borders with Russia, Belarus and the Transnistrian section of the border with Moldova have been closed since the beginning of the war. However, at the same time, 200,000 men returned to Ukraine to take part in the fight against the aggressor,³ meaning that the balance of migration was somewhat smaller.⁴

The intensity of out-migration was particularly high in the first weeks after the invasion. Since April, a number of forced migrants have been returning due to difficulties in adapting to life abroad, as a result of the liberation of their pre-war place of residence or the cessation of hostilities in the vicinity. According to the official website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the daily volume of cross-border movements from 24 February 2022 to 3 June 2023 included 32.3 million departures and 30.4 million entries.⁵

The data of the State Border Guard Service de facto reflect the number of border crossings rather than the number of people. A person may cross the border three to five times, or even more than 10 times in both directions, and thus be repeatedly counted in these figures. In fact, as early as mid-March 2022, a large proportion of border crossings showed the signs of various forms of pendular migration, i.e. entry/exit for a short period with return trips.

On the basis of various sources of information – in particular, analysis of the daily dynamics in the number of crossings on the state border – it is possible to define the following types of pendular migration in the border regions of Ukraine:⁶

2 Calculated according to data on the official website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, <https://dpsu.gov.ua/ua/news/>.

3 'Ukrayins'ki Choloviky Prodovzhuyut' Prybuvaty z-za Kordonu, shchob Staty na Zakhyst Bat'kivshchyny', 8 March 2022, <https://dpsu.gov.ua/uk/news/32052-%20VIDEO%20-Ukrainski-choloviki-prodovzhuyut-pribuvati-z-za-kordonu-shchob-stati-na-zahist-Batkivshchyni>.

4 At the end of January 2024, the number of Ukrainian citizens with valid residence permits in the territory of the Republic of Poland was 1,477,854, which at that time accounted for 79% of the foreign population in Poland. It is not easy to verify the number of Ukrainian citizens still in Poland as part of ongoing proceedings, in visa-free travel or on the basis of extended visas and temporary residence cards (editor's note).

5 Calculated according to data on the official website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, <https://dpsu.gov.ua/ua/news/>.

6 O. Pozniak, 'The Situation of Forced Migrants from Ukraine in Europe after Russian Military Aggression and the Problems of Ukraine's Migration Policy in These New Conditions', *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 12(1), 2023, pp. 159–181, doi: 10.54667/ceemr.2023.17, http://ceemr.uw.edu.pl/sites/default/files/Pozniak_2023.pdf.

- The temporary return of external labour migrants for the celebration of Easter (which, in 2022, fell on 17 and 24 April) with subsequent re-departure. On Friday–Saturday, on the eve of Catholic Easter according to SBGSU daily data, 74,000 persons entered Ukraine, an average of 37,000 per day; on the eve of Orthodox Easter, this number amounted to 73,000 persons or 36,500 per day while, during the period from Monday 18 to Thursday 21 April, an average of 32,000 persons entered the state per day.⁷ In 2023–2024, there was no pronounced trend of increasing arrivals before Easter.
- The arrival of Ukrainian women/children to meet their husbands/fathers (in April this flow partially overlapped with arrivals to celebrate Easter). This explains the significantly higher number of entries to Ukraine on Saturdays in the period from 28 March to 17 July 2022 – on average, 38,700 persons; on Fridays, 37,700 persons arrived while, on other days of the week, 31,700–37,300 persons).⁸ The arrival of women in Ukraine on a Saturday is the optimal solution; in this case, their husbands can come to the border regions, spend the weekend with them and return to the workplace by Monday morning. On the other hand, the peak values of exits during this period were not so strongly tied to the days of the week, as the duration of the short-term stay of women/children in Ukraine varied from one to several days. After mid-July 2022, the intensity of this type of pendular international migration declined sharply.
- The process of pendular migration for the purpose of withdrawing cash abroad using Ukrainian bank cards – so-called ‘card tourism’ – which is quite profitable given the exchange rate difference when withdrawing cash in Ukraine and abroad.⁹ This included, where possible, further resales of foreign currency on the black market. Card tourism was active until October 2022, when the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) introduced limits on cash withdrawals abroad, which led to the elimination of this practice.¹⁰

7 Calculated according to data on the official website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, <https://dpsu.gov.ua/ua/news/>.

8 Calculated according to data on the official website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, <https://dpsu.gov.ua/ua/news/>.

9 Sundries, “‘Kartkovym Turystam’ Pochaly Blokuvaty Kartky za Nepidverdzhenni Dzherela Dokhodiv – Bankir’, 27 July 2022, <https://sundries.com.ua/kartkovym-turystam-pochaly-blokuvaty-kartky-za-nepidverdzhenni-dzherela-dokhodiv-bankir/>.

10 O. Tucha, I. Spivak, O. Bondarenko and O. Pogarska, *Impact of Ukrainian Migrants on Economies of Recipient Countries*, Staff Discussion Note, National Bank of Ukraine 2022, https://bank.gov.ua/admin_uploads/article/Migration_impact_2022-12-15_eng.pdf.

- So-called ‘automobile pendulum migration’ related to the import of used cars for personal use and for sale without paying excise duty starting on 5 April. During the validity of the permit (April–June 2022), on average 1.2–1.3 times more cars crossed the state border of Ukraine per day in both directions than before and after the expiration of the permit (unfortunately, the SBGSU does not provide information separately on the number of exits and entries of automobiles). According to media reports, ‘Ukrainian women went abroad en masse to purchase cars because their husbands could not leave Ukraine during the war’.¹¹
- Light cross-border traffic: border crossing by residents of territories located within 30 km of the common border with Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary, for various social, cultural, family and economic reasons not related to paid work. This includes the delivery of products in small batches (i.e. within the limits that are not subject to customs duties); in the longer term, the delivery of construction materials, which was common before the war, continues. From the middle of July, the peak of arrivals shifted from Saturday to Sunday and, on Saturdays, noticeable peaks of departures began to be observed. This obviously indicates that the temporary return of women who received protection in EU countries began to give way numerically to small cross-border traffic. For such participants, it is simply convenient to return on Saturday (i.e. by the beginning of the working week), leaving again on Friday evening, Saturday or Sunday morning.
- Movement of people who have received UKR status in Poland but for various reasons lead a cross-border lifestyle, making trips from Ukraine to Poland in order to update their UKR status and receive the 800+ benefit (this applies to the parents of minor children).
- Movement of volunteers associated with periodic trips abroad and back.¹²

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of Ukrainians who have received temporary protection in European (except for Russia and Belarus) and North American countries exceeds

11 O. Shevchuk, ‘Velichezni Chergy na Polsko-Ukrayinskomu Kordonu. Ukrayintsi Chekayut po Try Dni shchob Vvezty Avto’, *InPoland.net*, 16 May 2022, <https://inpoland.net.pl/novosti/glawnoe/veli-chezni-chergi-na-polsko-ukra%D1%97nskomu-kordoni-ukra%D1%97nci-chekayut-po-tri-dni-shchob-vvezti-avto/>.

12 For those who have acquired UKR status in Poland but, for various reasons, lead a cross-border lifestyle, making trips from Ukraine to Poland in order to update their UKR status and receive the 800+ benefit (this applies to the parents of minor children) (editor’s note).

5.2 million as of 16 May 2024.¹³ In addition, a significant number of Ukrainians have been deported (less often – have left voluntarily) to the aggressor country. Their number cannot be determined, and reports by Russian officials (at different times, up to 3 million people were mentioned) do not inspire confidence. Data from the border services of the aggressor country are not publicly available. Therefore, it seems impossible to determine the number of deported Ukrainians with a high degree of accuracy. The UNHCR, again relying on reports from Russian official sources, reports more than 1.2 million Ukrainian forced migrants in the aggressor country and almost 50,000 more in Belarus.¹⁴

If we do not take Russia into account, the largest number of Ukrainian citizens were granted temporary asylum in Germany (almost 1.2 million), Poland (almost 1 million), and Czechia (almost 350,000).¹⁵ Countries with more than 100,000 Ukrainian forced migrants also include the United Kingdom, Spain, the United States, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Moldova, and Ireland.¹⁶ Until the beginning of 2023, Poland ranked first in this indicator. In Germany and Czechia, the number of forced migrants has been steadily increasing, while in Poland it has been gradually decreasing since October 2022. Presumably, the reversal of these trends is due to differences in benefits, opportunities to find a decent job,¹⁷ the chance to improve language skills, and the presence and strength of the Ukrainian diaspora, etc. Obviously, when a person receives a temporary or permanent residence permit, they lose the right to temporary protection and are accordingly removed from the register; and if this person had a residence permit, they could not be covered by temporary protection.

At the same time, as of mid-September 2022, Czechia and Estonia shared first and second place in the EU in terms of the relative number of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine per 1,000 inhabitants (41.1 beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine per 1,000 inhabitants), outstripping Poland (which ranked third in the respective indicator with 36.1 beneficiaries per 1,000 inhabitants) and Germany with 12.1 beneficiaries per 1,000.¹⁸

13 UNHCR, *Ukraine Refugee Situation*, The Operational Data Portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

14 Ibid.

15 *Temporary Protection for Persons Fleeing Ukraine – Monthly Statistics*, Statistic Explained, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Temporary_protection_for_persons_fleeing_Ukraine_-_monthly_statistics (website data updated on an ongoing basis).

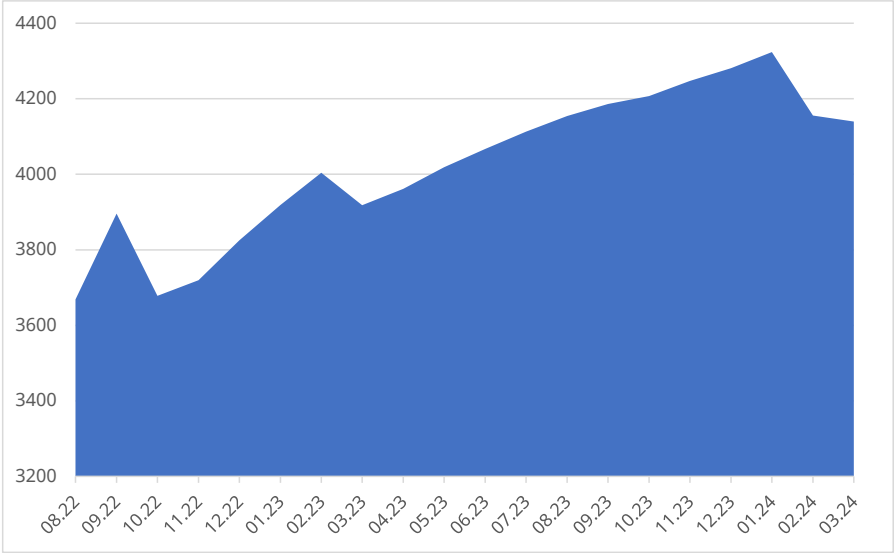
16 Ibid.

17 Status as a beneficiary of temporary protection doubles as a residence permit (editor's note).

18 *Number of Ukrainian Refugees per Thousand Inhabitants in OECD Countries as of Mid-September 2022*, Statista, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1342702/ukrainian-refugees-per-thousand-inhabitants-by-country/>, accessed: 5 September 2024.

From 31 August 2022 to 31 January 2024, the number of Ukrainians who sought protection in the European Union increased by 654,800 people (by 36,400 people per month), reaching 4.3 million (Figure 1).¹⁹ In February–March 2024, there was a slight decrease in the number of Ukrainian refugees in the EU (by 105,000 people over two months). After a slight increase in April–June 2024, a new decline occurred in July.

Ukrainian Refugees in the European Union (end of month)



Source: Official website of the European Commission²⁰

Forced migrants chose their destination countries partially in random fashion, and partially based on the presence of relatives and friends, distance, cost of living, as well as on any previous experience of staying in the country in question or a desire to visit it. Some migrants chose Moldova because it is a similar country to Ukraine.²¹ The main motive for coming to Poland is proximity (territorial, cultural, linguistic), while Germany was chosen due to better social conditions for refugees, and Czechia due to wider employment opportunities.²²

19 E. Libanova, 'Die demografische Krise...', op. cit.
20 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asytpsm_custom_10559172/default/table?lang=en.
21 O. Pozniak, 'The Situation of Forced Migrants...', op. cit.
22 4Service Group, *Ukrainian Refugees in Europe. A Study of the Behavior and Attitudes of Ukrainians Who Were Forced to Leave for Europe as a Result of the War in Ukraine*, 10 September 2023, <https://4ser->

Women, children, and the elderly represented the most common groups leaving Ukraine. In particular, of the total population that left Ukraine between 24 February 2022 and 10 April 2022, the proportion of women, according to the State Border Guard Service, constituted 66%, people under 18 represented 31%, and people over 60 – 13%. In terms of the structure of each emigration group, the first day of the war (24 February 2022) stands out sharply, when the ban on the departure of men aged 18–60 who could be mobilised had not yet been enacted. Accordingly, among those who left Ukraine on 24 February 2022, men of the corresponding age accounted for more than 40.5%, compared to 11.2% from 25 February 2022 to 10 April 2022. In June 2022, according to one survey, women comprised 82% of adult Ukrainians in European countries, with only 14% of respondents travelling abroad without children, while 29% had two children and 9% had three or more children.²³ According to a number of surveys conducted by IOM, UNHCR and recipient country organisations in 2022, women made up 80–90% of adult forced migrants from Ukraine in Eastern European EU countries and Moldova.²⁴

However, the proportion of men among forced migrants from Ukraine gradually began to increase in mid-2022, due to illegal exits²⁵ (primarily to Moldova) or exits through the border with Russia (primarily to Finland).²⁶ According to Eurostat,²⁷ of the 4.4 million Ukrainians who were in EU and EFTA countries (including Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein) at the end of February 2024, 61.9% were women. In these countries (excluding Hungary), 32.3% of forced migrants were under the age of 18, 61.6% were between the ages of

vice.group/ukrayinski-bizhentsi-v-yevropi-doslidzhennya-povedinki-ta-nastroyiv-ukrayintsiv-shho-vi-musheni-buli-viyihali-v-yevropu-vnaslidok-vijni-v-ukrayini/.

23 Ibid.

24 IOM, *Displacement Survey: Ukrainians and Third-Country National Crossings to Ukraine*, 2022a, *Displacement Survey_Crossings to Ukraine_Ukrainians and TCNs_16 April to 27 May 2022_IOM_UN-Women_Final.pdf*; IOM, *Ukraine Response 2022 – Poland Refugee Flows to Poland: Needs and Intentions Survey*, 2022b, *IOM DTM Poland Refugee Flows to Poland-Needs and Intentions Survey – Warsaw-04-11 April.pdf*; IOM, *Ukraine Response 2022 – Romania. Profiles and Inclusion Survey*, 2022c, 25 March–23 May 2022, *IOM Romania Profiles and Inclusion 23-5-22.pdf*; UNHCR, *Ukraine Situation Flash Update #15*, 2022b, *Ukraine Situation Flash Update No 15 30 05 2022.pdf*; UNHCR, *Lives on Hold: Profiles and Intentions of Refugees from Ukraine*, 2022c, *Lives on Hold – Profiles and Intentions of Refugees from Ukraine.pdf*; EWL, *Special Report on Sociological Research 'Refugees from Ukraine in Poland, Czech Republic and Romania'*, 2022.

25 A significant number left legally, taking advantage of the exceptions provided for, for example, large families, disabled people and their carers (editor's note).

26 O. Pozniak, 'The Situation of Forced Migrants...', op. cit.

27 *Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection at the End of the Month by Citizenship, Age and Sex – Monthly Data*, Eurostat, last update 12 September 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asytspm_custom_10748394/default/table?lang=en, accessed: 16 September 2024.

18–64, and 6.1% were 65 and older. The share of men aged 18–64 stood at 19%. According to the Open Data portal operated by the Minister of Digitalisation of Poland, among registered applicants for UKR status due to the conflict in Ukraine, the share of men aged 18–65 increased from 4.9–5% in March 2022 to 9% in early September 2022 and to over 13% in April–May 2024.²⁸

Extrapolating the sex and age structure of refugees registered in the EU to the entire population (including other countries) provides an estimate of the total number of migrants at an economically active age at 4 million, and children and adolescents at 2.2 million. Thus, we can confirm at least a twofold increase in migration losses within the economically active population compared to the period before the full-scale invasion. That means that almost a third of residents of the territories controlled by the Ukrainian government between the ages of 18–64 (more than 25% of Ukrainian residents before the large-scale invasion) are now abroad. During the same period, more than 2.1 million children and adolescents left Ukraine – 30% of those who lived in Ukraine before the full-scale invasion (and 40% of those who currently live in the government-controlled territory). Of course, such changes in the population structure are almost impossible to overestimate, especially considering the current balance and demand for labour and the need to restore Ukraine's demographic structure.

As of 31 December 2023, the number of immigrants in Ukraine, according to the State Migration Service of Ukraine, equalled 305,700,²⁹ which is slightly higher than at the end of 2021.³⁰

However, it is likely that most of these persons do not actually reside in Ukraine, but have moved abroad without deregistering. The number of foreigners and stateless persons who had a temporary residence permit (this status needs to be renewed regularly) decreased from 189,200 at the end of 2021 to 69,000 at the end of 2023, i.e. by 2.7 times. The number of permanent

28 *Registered applications for UKR status in connection with the conflict in Ukraine. As of 11 June 2024*, Open Data portal, 11 June 2024, <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/2715,zarejestrowane-wnioski-o-nadanie-statusu-ukrtusu-ukr/resource/58440>, accessed: 8 September 2024. (Note: during this period, some of the people who entered Poland to obtain temporary protection have already been removed from the register as a result of legalising their stay by obtaining a temporary residence permit. Men of conscription age were much more likely to have difficulty presenting a valid passport and therefore less likely to take advantage of this opportunity; men applied for international protection more often than women for UKR status with an almost 100% success rate – editor's note).

29 State Migration Service of Ukraine, Official Site, *December 2023*, 2024, https://dmsu.gov.ua/assets/files/statistic/year/2023_12.pdf.

30 State Migration Service of Ukraine, Official Site, *December 2021*, 2022, https://dmsu.gov.ua/assets/files/statistic/year/2021_12.pdf.

residence permits issued (including both first-time permits and document renewals) in 2023 more than halved compared to 2021, while the number of temporary residence permits issued (first-time permits and renewals) decreased almost five-fold. Generally speaking, the dynamics of the number of foreigners and stateless persons with a residence permit in Ukraine and the number of residence permits issued indicate a decrease in the attractiveness of Ukraine for migrants in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and especially in the context of full-scale war.

According to the leaders of the African, Vietnamese and Syrian communities in Ukraine, 90–95% of these communities left Ukraine in the first weeks of the full-scale war. Those who remained in Ukraine were mostly foreigners with Ukrainian citizenship, families, and businesses. According to community leaders, those who remain include Ukrainian patriots, and a number of immigrants engaged in volunteer activities.³¹

The situation of forced external Ukrainian migrants in Poland

The full-scale military aggression against Ukraine has led to forced migration on a scale not seen since World War II: residents of Ukrainian territories adjacent to the war zone or those subject to occupation have begun to move en masse not only to relatively safer regions of Ukraine, but also to other countries, primarily to the European Union.

Most of the departures recorded by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine occurred on the Polish section of the State border of Ukraine. This share was especially high in the first weeks after the full-scale invasion (in particular from 3 March to 10 March 2022, accounting for more than 70% daily). Starting from April 2022, the monthly Polish share in the total number of exits across the western border of Ukraine has ranged from 58% to 64%.³² It is unclear whether those who left through the Ukrainian–Polish border consider Poland as their final destination, especially since Warsaw (the Polish capital) has quickly become the main transfer point for flights to other countries.

Realising the scale and complexity of the problem, in response to the appeal of ministers of internal affairs, the European Commission proposed to activate the directive on temporary protection, and the Council of the European Union

31 O. Pozniak, 'The Situation of Forced Migrants...', op. cit.

32 Calculated according to data on the official website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, <https://dpsu.gov.ua/ua/news/> (the data is updated on an ongoing basis).

activated the mechanism of Directive 2001/55/EC³³ on 4 March 2022, just one week after the start of the Russian invasion. This Directive was adopted by the European Council in 2001 on the basis of the experience gained by European states as a result of the massive arrival of forced migrants from the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, primarily from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. On 4 March 2022, the Council unanimously adopted the Council Implementing Decision based on the existence of a massive influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC and resulting in the introduction of temporary protection,³⁴ granting anyone who had been permanently residing in Ukraine and left the country to escape the war in Ukraine no earlier than 24 February 2022³⁵ the right to temporary protection in any EU country for one year, with the possibility of extension depending on the situation in Ukraine.

In general, Ukrainians who leave their homeland because of the war can choose to receive one of three statuses:³⁶

- refugee – after crossing the border into Poland, Ukrainians have the right to apply for refugee status; while the application is being considered, the applicant must surrender their Ukrainian passport³⁷ and stay in the country where the application was submitted (the procedure sometimes takes several months); the advantage of this status is its practically indefinite character;
- a beneficiary of temporary protection – according to the special mechanism of ‘temporary protection’ for Ukrainian citizens who fled due to the Russian invasion, approved by the European Commission on 4 March 2022, all Ukrainian citizens, as well as certain foreign nationals living in Ukraine,

33 Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/55/oj/eng>, accessed 14 October 2024.

34 Council Implementing Decision (UE) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/382/oj/eng.

35 Currently, the act has been extended until 4 March 2026.

36 H. Horbal, ‘The Status of Ukrainians Leaving the Country Because of the War: Important Explanations’, *Obozrevatel*, <https://news.obozrevatel.com/ukr/politics/status-ukraintsiv-yaki-poki-dayut-krainu-cherez-vijnu-vazhlivi-poyasnennya.htm>, accessed 8 September 2024.

37 The passport does not need to be surrendered if the foreigner has a temporary residence permit; in practice, in the case of Ukrainian citizens, even residence permits issued before the COVID-19 pandemic are valid as of at least 14 March 2020 (editor’s note).

who left the country on or after 24 February 2022, automatically acquire the right to live and work in the EU, and receive social security, medical and educational services;³⁸ the mechanism was supposed to be in effect until March 2023, but the EU Council extended it; temporary protection is granted on the basis of an application submitted by the party concerned to the competent authorities of the Member State, in accordance with national legislation;³⁹

- tourist – this status is valid for 90 days from the date of entry, does not give the right to work, or to receive social and medical care, or education; if desired, a person with this status may later apply for one of the statuses above.

The status of beneficiary of temporary protection in EU countries has gained the most popularity among Ukrainian forced external migrants, because it is consistently extended.⁴⁰ Rights provided under the EU Temporary Protection Directive include a residence permit, access to the labour market and housing, healthcare and education for children, as well as the right to open a basic bank account.⁴¹ At the time of writing, the Council of the European Union has extended the temporary protection status for those who entered the EU after the start of the Russian invasion. In view of the ongoing conflict, that has been extended until 4 March 2026.⁴²

However, in addition to the common European practice of obtaining the status of a person in need of temporary protection, there are also national laws that regulate the stay of Ukrainian citizens, as well as foreigners fleeing Ukraine due to the war, in these countries. Of course, in different countries, assistance is provided in different forms and costs. Thus, according to the Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the

38 Council Implementing Decision (UE) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/382/oj/eng, accessed 8 September 2024.

39 P. Kravchuk, 'Asylum in the EU: What You Should Know About the Rules of Temporary Protection for Ukrainians', *European Truth*, 7 March 2022, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2022/03/7/7135403/>.

40 Member States provided information about this opportunity most often and it also ensures a wider range of social rights (editor's note).

41 Fleeing Ukraine: Your rights in the EU. European Commission, https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine/fleeing-ukraine-your-rights-eu_uk.

42 V. Kravtsov and S. Nazarenko, 'Ukrainian Refugees: Council Extends Temporary Protection Until March 2026', <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/25/ukrainian-refugees-council-extends-temporary-protection-until-march-2026/>, accessed 8 September 2024.

armed conflict on the territory of this state,⁴³ with respect to the conditions for residence and social support for beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine, all those who entered Poland after 24 February 2022 and members of their families without Ukrainian citizenship, including those born in Poland, are guaranteed legal residence in Poland until 30 September 2025, students can continue their education in Polish educational institutions, all Ukrainian citizens and persons with UKR status have the right to run a sole proprietorship and enjoy immediate access to the labour market, as well as access to medical care and a one-time cash allowance of PLN 300 (approximately EUR 63) per person. The act also provides compensation benefits to Poles who have provided food and accommodation to beneficiaries of temporary protection.⁴⁴

This kind of support at the beginning of the war was unprecedented. Poland was one of the first recipient countries to introduce free rail travel for Ukrainians. Along with other western neighbours of Ukraine, as well as Ireland, Poland allowed Ukrainians to enter without a foreign passport.⁴⁵

In addition to state structures, non-governmental organisations and the local population began to provide significant assistance to Ukrainian forced migrants. The activities of civil society, non-governmental and international organisations in helping Ukrainians were sometimes more effective than the activities of central and local authorities.⁴⁶ An unprecedented activation of society took place. Poles, along with representatives of other European countries, immediately felt solidarity with Ukrainians affected by the Russian–Ukrainian war. The Ukrainian diaspora was also actively involved in helping new arrivals. Representatives of the so-called ‘old’ diaspora, as well as migrant workers who left during Ukrainian independence, are helping to create centres of

43 Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of this state, <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/the-law-on-assistance-to-ukrainian-citizens-in-connection-with-the-armed-conflict-on-the-territory-of-the-country-has-entered-into-force>.

44 ‘The President of Poland Signed the Law on Ukrainian Refugees. What Does It Mean?’, *Suspilne*, 13 March 2024, <https://suspiilne.media/216932-duda-pidpisav-zakon-sodo-perebuвання-u-pol-si-ukrainskih-bizenciv/>.

45 ‘6 Countries Where Refugees from Ukraine Can Enter Without a Foreign Passport’, *Obozrevatel*, 9 March 2022, <https://news.obozrevatel.com/ukr/travel/journal/7-krain-kudi-mozhna-vihati-bizhentsyam-z-ukraini-bez-zakordonnogo-pasporta.htm>, accessed 8 September 2024. (This is a reference to the Ukrainian ‘foreign passport’, as opposed to the ‘internal passport’. De facto, it was possible to enter the country and obtain UKR status on the basis of any ID – editor’s note).

46 O. Pozniak, ‘The Situation of Forced Migrants...’, op. cit.

Ukrainian life in recipient countries, in particular by organising holidays and integration meetings.⁴⁷

According to a survey conducted in Poland by the international organisation Ipsos for OKO.press in September 2022, the question 'If people from Ukraine who are currently in Poland stayed in Poland for many years, would it be good or bad for Poland?', the majority of respondents agreed that it would be good: 14% chose the 'definitely good' option, and 51% 'rather good'.⁴⁸ Only 27% of respondents answered negatively.

Aid efforts for Ukrainians were particularly energetic in the first months. However, it was clear from the beginning that such solidarity could not last forever. Gradually, fatigue began to rise, in particular against the background of increasing inflation in European countries. Dissatisfaction began to increase within poorer sub-sections of the population in recipient countries, based on the fact that aid was given to Ukrainians, and not to them.

These processes were reflected in changes in the support system for Ukrainians in Poland. The act on assistance for Ukrainians has been amended several times and, at the time of writing, the temporary protection period has been extended four times – most recently until 30 September 2025. Citizens of Ukraine have retained the opportunity to enjoy benefits in Poland such as free access to the labour market, the right to receive family benefits, access to healthcare, and the right to carry out economic activities. The expansion of special rights for Ukrainian medical workers is also foreseen (permission for this category of employees to carry out professional activities was extended to 28 months, starting from 24 February 2022).⁴⁹ Having received a certificate of temporary protection, Ukrainians also retained the right to receive a PESEL number (an analogue of the Ukrainian taxpayer identification number). The PESEL number can be issued free of charge in local administrative offices. For Ukrainians, the PESEL number has a special UKR mark. The PESEL UKR is valid for 18 months with the possibility to leave the country for up to 30 days. Receiving a PESEL UKR gives Ukrainians the opportunity to enjoy social benefits, use state medi-

47 This is a reference to the period from 24 August 1991 to 23 February 2022 and migrants who arrived during this period (editor's note).

48 J. Theus, 'Czy po pół roku wojny niechęć do Ukraińców rośnie? "Tego się obawialiśmy" (After Six Months of War, Is Dislike of Ukrainians Growing? "That's What We Were Afraid Of")', *OKO.press*, 16 September 2022, <https://oko.press/czy-po-pol-roku-wojny-niechec-do-ukraincow-rosnie-tego-sie-obawialismy-sondaz-oko-press/>.

49 'Poland Extended Temporary Protection for Ukrainian Refugees: New Terms of Stay', *VisitUkraine.today*, 12 February 2024, <https://visitukraine.today/blog/3344/poland-extends-temporary-protection-for-ukrainian-refugees-new-terms-of-stay>, accessed 8 September 2024.

cal services, and officially work and study. In addition, a so-called trusted profile can be obtained with a PESEL number. As explained on the Legal Portal for Refugees from Ukraine, a trusted profile is a digital tool that allows you to complete certain administrative processes online without leaving your home. A trusted online profile works like an identity document and has the same legal force. It enables the user to sign an electronic document with a signature that is legally equivalent to a handwritten signature.⁵⁰ As of February 2024, adult Ukrainians of working age in Poland did not receive cash payments – only one-time assistance of PLN 300 (about UAH 2 800) when crossing the border and obtaining temporary protection. At the same time, the ‘40+’ programme continued to operate in Poland, which provides that Poles who offer housing and food for Ukrainian citizens free of charge can receive daily state assistance in the amount of PLN 40. The programme could only be extended beyond 120 days for representatives of vulnerable population groups: pregnant women, women with children under one year old, pensioners, persons with disabilities, etc.⁵¹

In May 2024, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland adopted amendments to the act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of this state. Based on these amendments, the legal stay of Ukrainians who have received a PESEL UKR has been extended until 30 September 2025. Starting from 2025, the 800+ programme of State aid will only apply to children attending schools and kindergartens in Poland. The amendments define a maximum 36-month period during which students can attend additional free Polish language lessons. This also applies to students who started attending classes in the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 academic years. The law provides first and foremost for the introduction of new rules for confirming the identity of a citizen of Ukraine applying for a PESEL UKR on the basis of a valid passport issued by Ukrainian authorities. From now on, only a valid travel document can be used to confirm one’s identity. In addition, the amendment changes the deadline for applying for a PESEL number with UKR status. Previously, Ukrainians had to do this within 30 days of arrival in the territory of the Republic of Poland, and as of 1 July 2024, this must be done ‘immediately upon arrival’. According to the adopted amendments, from 1 July, funding for support in the form of accommodation and food for refugees from

50 ‘Profil Zaufany – Co to Jest? (What Is the Trusted Profile?)’, *Legal Portal for Refugees from Ukraine*, 2022, <https://ukraina.interwencjaprawna.pl/profil-zaufany-co-to-jest-do-czego-sluzyc-jak-go-zalozyc-i-jak-uzywac/>, accessed 8 September 2024.

51 ‘Temporary Protection, Housing and Payments in 2024: What Will Be the Conditions for Ukrainian Refugees in European Countries and the World’, *Suspilne News*, 5 February 2024, <https://suspilne.media/667778-timcasovij-zahist-zitlo-ta-viplati-u-2024-roci-akimi-budut-umovi-dla-ukrainskih-bizenciv-u-ukrainah-evropi-ta-svitlu/>.

Ukraine with UKR status who are in a particularly difficult situation will be possible only on the basis of a signed agreement with a local voivode or local government. The rules for paying for accommodation and meals in collective centres will also change. The law provides for the abolition of a one-time financial assistance in the amount of PLN 300 as of 1 July 2024. The payment of 40+ for persons who provide accommodation and meals to Ukrainians will also be terminated.⁵² Citizens of Ukraine need to update their PESEL UKR data if there are any changes or if they have obtained a new travel document.

One of the goals of introducing restrictions on support for Ukrainian forced migrants is to encourage them to find work and meet the needs of their families through their own earnings. Urban residents dominate among forced migrants from Ukraine, and most of them have higher education or an academic degree, though they are sometimes unable to provide relevant documentation or a university diploma.⁵³ This is obviously the basis for their fairly high competitiveness in the labour market, even if they have to work in a profession other than their chosen one. Already in late March/early April 2022, according to the study 'Refugees from Ukraine in Poland'⁵⁴ conducted by the EWL Migration Platform, the EWL Foundation for Migrant Support in the Labour Market and the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw, 63% of forced migrants from Ukraine in Warsaw and Krakow wanted to find a job in Poland due to special decisions of the Polish government, with 55% claiming to know English and 26% Polish at least at a conversational level.⁵⁵

According to the 19th round of the monthly longitudinal survey of people who left Ukraine due to the escalation of hostilities, conducted by the NGO Initiative-IMPACT at the end of 2023, 61% of respondents aged 18 to 64 reported working full-time in Poland. This is similar to the share of those employed in Ukraine before the conflict within this group (62%). The total share of employed respondents, including those working remotely, freelancers and business owners, reached 69%. However, many Ukrainians work in positions that do not match their qualifications. In particular, among respondents who worked

52 'Andrzej Duda Signed Amendments to the Special Law: Residence Permits for Ukrainians Will Be Cancelled in Poland', 10 June 2024, <https://inpoland.net.pl/novosti/obshchestvo/andzhejj-duda-pidpis-av-zmini-do-speczakonu-u-polshhi-anulyuvatimut-posvidki-na-prozhivannya-dlya-ukra%1%97nciv/>.

53 Refugees often do not have their diplomas with them (editor's note).

54 *Refugees from Ukraine in Poland*, EWL, 12 April 2022, <https://visitukraine.today/blog/3344/poland-extends-temporary-protection-for-ukrainian-refugees-new-terms-of-stay>.

55 Galinfo, 'The Centre for Eastern European Studies Has Painted a Portrait of a Ukrainian Refugee in Poland', 6 May 2022, https://galinfo.com.ua/news/tsentr_shidnoievropeyskyh_studiy_sklav_poret_ukrainskogo_bizhentsya_v_polshchi_385102.html.

full-time in Poland, 48% were employed in the simplest professions – before the forced migration, almost 10 times fewer respondents in Ukraine were engaged in such professions. Every seventh respondent who started working in the simplest professions in Poland held a managerial position before the armed conflict. And only 11% of respondents held specialist positions. This gap indicates the difficulties that beneficiaries of temporary protection face in finding a job in their specialty. Women with children, who make up the majority of Ukrainian refugees, reported obstacles to employment, including the inability to find a job with a flexible schedule.⁵⁶

As of December 2023, 71% of respondents with temporary protection status in Poland were renting a flat, which is twice the percentage of refugees living in other European countries (30%).⁵⁷ This is slightly lower than the share of Ukrainians who rent their own housing in Poland, as surveyed by Gremi Personal (76%).⁵⁸ At the same time, this share features a gradual increase. It is noteworthy that a third of respondents who started renting in January–December 2023 had previously lived with volunteers.⁵⁹

On the one hand, the growing share of persons who rent housing among forced migrants from Ukraine indicates their successful integration into host communities in Poland, but on the other hand, this situation results in an increased burden on Ukrainian household budgets. In general, the incomes of Ukrainians in Poland remain low. More than half of households, especially those with persons with disabilities, elderly members, and children, continue to face financial constraints and acute unmet needs for money, healthcare and goods, as well as material assistance (non-food items, clothing, etc.). The overwhelming majority (92%) of Ukrainian households reported that they are unable to save money every month. Among the remaining 8% of households, the average amount of savings was EUR 116 per household or EUR 46 per person.⁶⁰

In these circumstances, the decrease in the number of Ukrainian forced migrants in Poland (see the previous point) is natural. Every fifth respondent who was included in the sample of the longitudinal study by the NGO

56 *Economic Integration of Ukrainians in Poland by the End of 2023: Insights and Challenges, Ukraine Longitudinal Study – Round 19*, IMPACT-Initiatives, https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/document/impact/c88242dd/IMPACT_Longitudinal_Study_Situation_Overview_Poland_Round19.pdf.

57 Ibid.

58 'The Number of Ukrainians Renting Housing in Poland at Their Own Expense Increased by 18% Compared to Last Year', Gremi Personal, 2023, <https://gremi-personal.com.ua/ukrainciv-shho-vinajma-jut-zhitlo-u-polshhi/>, accessed 10 September 2024.

59 *Economic integration of Ukrainians in Poland by the end of 2023...*, op. cit.

60 Ibid.

Initiative-IMPACT in January 2023 returned to Ukraine by December of the same year.⁶¹ In addition, some migrants who initially settled in Poland began to move to Germany. According to a study on Ukrainian emigrants from Poland to Germany conducted by the EWL Migration Platform and the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw, an important factor in the migration was the recommendation of friends and acquaintances, with 43% of respondents deciding to move based on such recommendations. Material factors also play an important role: according to Ukrainians, Germany offers more attractive social benefits, higher salaries, greater opportunities to save, and better chances for professional and personal development.⁶²

Although there has been a recent deterioration in the attitude of the Polish public toward Ukrainian forced migrants, the level of support for them remains quite high. According to a survey conducted on behalf of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) by Opinia24 and YouGov in May 2024 in six European countries, including Poland, 79% of Poles believe it is necessary to continue to provide assistance to Ukraine in the form of food, water, and medical care. 72% of respondents support access for refugees from Ukraine to various public services (including medical care and education). Similar results have been reported in Germany, with the French showing slightly more support for Ukrainians, and the Swedes and the British showing the most support. 42% of respondents are in favour of the long-term stay of refugees from Ukraine in Poland, while 44% of respondents believe that Poland should not provide such support to Ukrainians. In turn, 14% did not express an opinion on the matter.⁶³

According to an Opinia24 poll conducted in early June 2024, the mood of solidarity and selfless assistance to forced migrants from Ukraine has deteriorated. Two years ago, 75% of Poles actively helped Ukrainians fleeing the war, 76% were not concerned by the presence of foreigners in Poland, and 82% did not believe that they could threaten Polish culture, traditions, or values. Today, however, as many as 42% of Poles strongly agree that the country should no longer accept refugees. And while 35% agree on granting asylum to citizens of neighbouring countries, such as Ukrainians and Belarusians, only 14% of Poles

61 Ibid.

62 *From Poland to Germany. New Trends in Ukrainian Refugee Migration*, a report from a study conducted by the EWL Migration Platform and the Centre of Eastern European Studies at the University of Warsaw, commissioned by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 2023.

63 'In Poland, the Attitude Towards Ukrainian Refugees Has Changed', *inPoland.net.pl*, <https://inpoland.net.pl/novosti/obshhestvo/u-polshhi-zminilosya-stavleniya-do-ukra%d1%97nskikh-bizhenciv/>, accessed 10 September 2024.

agree that Poland should also open its doors to refugees from other countries.⁶⁴ In general, the level of positive attitudes towards Ukrainians is higher among Polish men than among women and increases with the size of the respondent's settlement, personal income and social status.⁶⁵

Thus, despite widespread fatigue with the flow of migration from Ukraine, the Polish government and public opinion continue to express readiness to receive and support refugees from Ukraine.

The intention to return

Solidarity from Poles and residents of other European countries has helped to protect millions of civilians and significantly ease the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. At the same time, the massive outflow of the population, most of whom are women of working age with a high level of education and children, threatens to drain part of the State's human potential.

For this reason, researchers and officials are primarily interested in the percentage of forced migrants who will return to Ukraine. However, determining the behaviour and intentions of forced migrants is problematic due to the practical impossibility of ensuring the relevance of face-to-face sample surveys conducted by sociological research centres. International organisations, as well as a number of Ukrainian sociological institutions, are trying to obtain information through sample surveys by phone. However, in a time of war, the likelihood of ensuring the representativeness of a telephone survey sample is low. Some phone respondents are unavailable, phones can be lost, some are unwilling to answer calls from unfamiliar numbers, etc. In particular, experts from the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, when publishing the results of their own surveys, usually use the following description of the sampling error: 'Formally, under normal circumstances, the statistical error of such a sample (with a probability of 0.95 and taking into account the design effect of 1.1) did not exceed... In war conditions, in addition to the above formal error, a certain systematic deviation is added'.⁶⁶

64 H. Chalimonik and D. Kortko, 'Uchodźcy? Polacy Są Przeciw, a Nawet Za (Refugees? Poles Are Against, and Even For)', *Wyborcza*, 20 June 2024, <https://katowice.wyborcza.pl/katowice/7,35063,31069931,uchodzca-niemile-widziany-chyba-ze-bylby-naszym-lekarzem-sasiadem.html>, accessed 10 September 2024.

65 Ibid.

66 See the website of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&page=1>.

Thus, despite the availability of a significant number of surveys, reliable information about Ukrainian forced external migration supported by credible data remains woefully insufficient. Each information source should be viewed critically. The difficulties of organising a representative survey are compounded by uncertainty about the actual future migration behaviour of respondents. Some forced migrant respondents are afraid to admit even to themselves that they want to stay in the recipient country. In addition, as the global experience of studying migration processes shows, the longer the migration lasts, the smaller the share of migrants who return to their homeland.

Surveys conducted by various sociological organisations in Ukraine in 2022–2024 show a downward trend in return orientation (Table 1). If we look at the dynamics in the share of those who intend to return, according to different rounds of surveys conducted using the same methodology by the same sociological organisation (in particular, for a number of survey rounds conducted by Gradus, 4ServiceGroup, and the Centre for Economic Strategy – CES), this indicator decreases by an average of 2 percentage points per month. In particular, according to a study by the CES, the share of Ukrainian forced migrants who are definitely or probably planning to return to Ukraine decreased from 74% in November 2022 to 63% in May 2023 and to 52.5% in January 2024. At the same time, forced migrants staying in Poland are more likely to return than those who have found refuge in Germany and Czechia.⁶⁷

The share of those who intend to return and those who intend to stay in the host country according to data from various surveys of Ukrainian sociological organisations, %

	April–June 2022	July–September 2023	January–February 2024
Share of those who intend to return	65–92	49–66	52–53

67 H. Wysz et al., Centre for Economic Strategy (CES), *Ukrainian Refugees. Future Abroad and Plans to Return*, 16 March 2024, https://ces.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/refugees_wave_three.pdf.

Share of those who intend to stay in the host country	2–14	18–33	17–23
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Source: summarised on the basis of [68;69;70;71;72;73]

According to the 19th round of the longitudinal study conducted by the NGO Initiative-IMPACT at the end of 2023, the majority of Ukrainian forced migrants in Poland (88%) plan to stay in their current place of residence for at least the next six months. A significant proportion (70%) of respondents expressed their intention to return to Ukraine in the future, 19% had doubts, and 11% had decided not to return.⁷⁴

According to a nationwide online survey of Ukrainian citizens in Poland conducted by the Centre for Migration Studies (OBM UW) and the Centre of Excellence in Social Sciences (CESS UW) of the University of Warsaw in July–September 2022, the vast majority of forced migrants perceived their stay in Poland as temporary. Only one fifth planned to stay in Poland for more than a year, and less than one-tenth planned to stay forever. At the same time, 40% of the contingent had no definitive plans with respect to staying in Poland.⁷⁵ Another study, titled “Competencies and professional aspirations of Ukrainian migrants in Poland”, conducted in February 2023, showed that the share of Ukrainian forced migrants who expressed a desire to stay in Poland permanently has barely changed compared to the first survey. However, there has been a decrease in the number of those who are undecided, while the share of those who would like to stay in Poland for several years has increased by

68 *Public Access Reports*, Gradus, <https://gradus.app/uk/open-reports/>.

69 *Quantitative Research with 4Service: Evaluation and Analysis of Results*, International Research Holding 4Service, <https://4service.company/uk/quantitative-research>.

70 ‘Ukrainians Want to Go Home: 86% of Citizens Who Left Are Planning to Return’, *Work.ua*, 8 June 2022, <https://www.work.ua/en/articles/work-in-team/2900/>.

71 *Research on the Situation of Ukrainian Refugees Abroad and Their Plans to Return to Ukraine*, Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives, 15 September 2023, <https://parlament.org.ua/analytics/socziologich-ne-doslidzhennya-chy-povernutsya-v-ukrayinu-bizhenczi-pislya-zavershennya-vijny/>.

72 Rating Lab. Pan-European Study of Ukrainians in Europe: A Comparative Study, August 2023, https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rl_refugees_from_ukraine_in_the_eu_082023_ua.pdf.

73 H. Wysz H. et al., *Ukrainian Refugees...*, op. cit.

74 *Economic Integration of Ukrainians in Poland by the End of 2023...*, op. cit.

75 *Polska Szkoła Pomagania. Przyjęcie Osób Uchodźczych z Ukrainy w Polsce w 2022 Roku (The Polish School of Assistance. Accepting Refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022)*, ed. S. Jarosz and W. Klaus, Konsorcjum Migracyjne, Warsaw 2023, <https://konsorcjum.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Polska-Szkola-Pomagania-raport.pdf>.

one and a half times.⁷⁶ Such an increase in the orientation towards long-term stay may eventually lead to the consolidation of a significant part of forced migrants in Poland.

When assessing the intentions of Ukrainian forced migrants, it should be borne in mind that not all of them will find it easy to find acceptable work abroad, financial assistance is never sufficient to maintain average living standards, and these payments will not always be made. Therefore, the plans of migrants, even those who do not currently plan to return to Ukraine, may change. Most migrants will make their final decision after the war, based on the situation in the post-war period, and on their assessment of the disadvantages and advantages of living in Ukraine and the recipient country.

According to a survey conducted by the Gradus Research Company, forced migrants note that, compared to EU countries, mentality and way of life are better in Ukraine, as is the digitalisation of public and commercial services, the level of bureaucracy in government bodies, the size of utility tariffs, the opening hours of shops, food establishments, pharmacies, the ratio of quality/cost of services in the field of beauty, the ease and convenience of connecting and mobile phone charges, the speed and convenience of money transfers, the prevalence and quality of food establishments/cafes, the quality and speed of the internet, the speed and quality of the logistics sector and of postal/courier shipments. On the other hand, compared to EU countries, respondents rank considerably lower the quality of public transport work, urban infrastructure development, drinking tap water, waste sorting and disposal, the creation of special conditions for people with disabilities, social protection from the state, wage levels and compliance with law and order.⁷⁷

The decision to return is influenced more strongly by the situation in Ukraine rather than the situation in recipient countries. According to CES research, the most important factors for the return of Ukrainian forced migrants to their home country will be related to security: the final end of the war (54%) and the cessation of hostilities and airstrikes in their native city (37%); the quality of life in Ukraine (40%) and the availability of decent employment (35%).⁷⁸ Factors limiting the possibilities of staying in recipient countries (loss of tem-

76 A. Górny, 'Potrzeby Osób Doświadczających Przymusowej Migracji z Ukrainy (The Needs of People Experiencing Forced Migration from Ukraine)', CMR Spotlight, 2023, no. 12(57), <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publikacje/potrzeby-osob-doswiadczajacych-przymusowej-migracji-z-ukrainy/>.

77 Gradus Research Company, 2022, https://gradus.app/documents/240/GradusResearch_War_w5_Ukraine_vs_Abroad_ENG_b8yh9l.pdf.

78 H. Wysz et al., *Ukrainian Refugees...*, op. cit.

porary shelter, cancellation of social benefits abroad, the lack of affordable housing abroad) are considered less significant than the cessation of hostilities in the respondents' regions of origin and restoration of their infrastructure. However, at least some forced migrants are ready to return to Ukraine even if it is impossible to return to their region of origin.

An additional constraint on the return of migrants is the possible division of Ukrainian society over who was where during the war. According to the Eighth All-Ukrainian Municipal Survey in April–May 2023, residents of 21 regional centres had a clearly positive attitude only towards displaced women with children: in different cities, 66 to 79% of respondents defined their attitude towards them as very warm or warm, while only 2 to 4% as cold or very cold.⁷⁹ At the same time, 39–59% of people expressed a friendly attitude toward women who left the country without children, 33–35% toward men of military age who have legal benefits, and 9–18% and 10–19%, respectively, expressed an unfriendly attitude to these groups (as can be expected, the attitude toward men who crossed the border without legal grounds was very negative). If negative prejudices against forced migrants continue to prevail in society during the post-war rebuilding phase, causing potential conflicts between different groups of Ukrainian citizens, even migrants who are determined to return may abandon the idea.

According to the Centre for Economic Strategy, based on a number of surveys, at the end of the war, depending on further developments, between 1.4 and 2.3 million people, mostly young people and people with a high level of education, will remain abroad.⁸⁰ Possible economic losses from refugees not returning to their homeland will represent a decrease in both consumption and production that will amount to, according to CES estimates, 3.9% of Ukraine's pre-war GDP under the optimistic scenario to 6.31% under the pessimistic scenario.⁸¹

The prospects for the return of forced migrants, especially external migrants, are directly related to the duration of their stay in another country, which, in turn, is a function of the duration of the active armed conflict – the longer it lasts, the greater the destruction in Ukraine, and thus the more families lose their housing and jobs, and the more migrants find work abroad and generally adapt to a new life in a new society.

79 *The Eighth All-Ukrainian Municipal Survey*, Center for Insights in Survey Research, April–May 2023, <https://www.iri.org/resources/eighth-annual-ukrainian-municipal-survey-april-may-2023/>.

80 H. Wysz et al., *Ukrainian Refugees...*, op. cit.

81 Ibid.

Assessment of future migration trends between Ukraine and EU countries, especially Poland

Despite all the advantages of Ukraine's potential membership in the EU, European integration would also bring a number of problems, including a growing outflow of people who, along with European citizenship, will have the right to live, work and study freely in the united Europe.

Public opinion polls are quite revealing in this context. Thus, according to the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, in 2005–2015, the greatest advantage of European integration, which was proclaimed as a political goal, was the free movement of people abroad (35–40%). In 2018, a year after the visa-free regime with the EU was introduced, this issue lost its relevance, with 26% of respondents mentioning freedom of movement as a priority. At the same time, the main negative consequence of Ukraine's membership in the EU, according to respondents, could be the emigration of Ukrainians, and the level of concern has increased dramatically – from 33% in November 2015 to 46% in August 2018.⁸²

Although it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to predict the development of Ukrainian migration to the EU while the war is still ongoing and Ukraine's aspirations for EU membership are still far from being realised, the dynamics of migration processes in Central European countries after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, particularly in Poland, as well as general theoretical considerations of migration patterns in the context of deepening economic and political integration between countries, allow us to identify the most likely development of the migration situation in Ukraine in the context of European integration.

According to neoclassical macroeconomics, the main driver of migration movements is uneven economic development. International migration arises from disparities in labour productivity and earnings as a manifestation of the desire to improve one's financial situation by moving to a region with better income opportunities. Given that Ukraine lags behind EU countries in terms of wages and welfare, a situation that has been significantly exacerbated by the war, migration of Ukrainians to the west would be a natural outcome. If Ukrainian citizens are given the opportunity to work freely and indefinitely in Europe, instead of under temporary protection status, it will intensify. However, it should be borne in mind that providing Ukrainian citizens with full labour and social rights through full membership in the European Union will

82 Fund of Demographic Initiatives named after Ilko Kucheriv, *European Integration in the Dimension of Public Opinion*, 28 September 2018, <https://dif.org.ua/article/evropeyska-integratsiya-u-vimiri-gromadskoi-dumki>, accessed: 10 September 2024.

facilitate their access to education and better-paid jobs, i.e. it will help them to acquire new knowledge and experience, increase their earnings and, consequently, savings as well as remittances to their homeland and, therefore, foster the conditions for return. However, in the short term, an additional incentive to go abroad for work may be the growing imbalance in the labour market in Ukraine as a result of its accession to the European Economic Area, increased competition, and economic restructuring. At the same time, European integration, which brings with it the prospects of an improved business climate, foreign investment, as well as higher labour and social standards, will contribute to social security, creating conditions for reduced emigration and the return of Ukrainians abroad to their homeland.

According to the new economic theory of migration, another well-known scientific explanation for the causes of migration movements, the decision to migrate is not made by an individual but by a household, which sends a member to work abroad to reduce the risks associated with low and unstable incomes at home or to meet vital material needs. As the migration experience of Ukrainians shows, labour migration has long been a fairly common strategy for survival in adverse conditions. Thus, it is likely that war time, the destruction of housing, job losses, problems with obtaining a full education, etc. are quite good reasons for many Ukrainian families to ensure their well-being by having one of their members work abroad.

Free access to the European labour market and educational services facilitated by European integration will create greater opportunities to avoid the risks of unemployment and poverty by travelling, working and educating children and young people abroad. Of course, there is a serious danger that, having received a European diploma that does not require verification and provides access to the European labour market, young Ukrainians will decide to continue residing outside of Ukraine, especially if the war continues. However, some of them will undoubtedly return home for various reasons. As the new economy of migration makes both leaving and returning a joint family strategy, the dynamics and direction of movement will largely depend on whether a migrant's stay abroad or at home is more in the interests of those closest to them.

Even today, sociological surveys show that the main motivations for refugees to return home, in addition to the desire to live in their homeland, are family circumstances and the desire to reunite with their families. If, after the war is won and Ukraine joins the EU, the powerful financial and organisational resources of the European Union are directed to help the country, as well as conditions for decent employment and successful self-realisation are created,

households will need the efforts of all their members to establish a normal life. At the same time, a European diploma, knowledge of languages, foreign experience and connections of returnees can become an important additional factor in accelerating Ukraine's development.

Another noteworthy set of theoretical explanations of migration is the theory of social capital, in particular migration networks, i.e. social ties that connect the country of origin and the country of residence of migrants, facilitate the exchange of information, provide assistance in relocation and settlement abroad, thus reducing the risks of displacement. Over decades of labour migration, Ukrainians have already developed strong migration networks, which have been significantly strengthened by massive forced migration abroad as a result of the war. Not only does it involve personal ties, but also the development of transport links, telecommunications, remote employment, and transnational financial services. Ukraine's European integration will, of course, facilitate the development of all these and other forms of interaction and, thus, human mobility. At the same time, the latest technologies and digitalisation make it possible to handle many processes virtually without changing one's physical location. In addition, migration networks that facilitate migration operate in both directions, i.e. not only in the direction of departure, but also in the direction of return.

Sociological theories of migration also include the theory of cumulative causation, according to which migration is a dynamic process in which each decision to leave triggers changes in the social environment and leads to new migration. As a migration flow unfolds, it creates more and more motives for each subsequent decision to migrate. The demonstrable effect of improving the welfare of those families whose members have left or are temporarily working abroad is of great importance. However, the same mechanism also applies at the stage of return. Examples of successful returns and evidence of support for returnees contribute to the spread of repatriation. It is also worth noting that in the process of European integration, numerous advisers, managers, and specialists will come from abroad to assist in reforming the Ukrainian economy and society. The immigration of highly skilled foreigners will also include representatives of the diaspora, migrants who left the country earlier. Public recognition and financial support for their contribution to Ukraine's development may encourage fellow citizens who have left the country to realise their potential at home.

Thus, theoretically, Ukraine's European integration should, in the short term, lead to increased migration towards the EU. However, over time, as its positive

effects gradually manifest themselves, the push factors will weaken, while the conditions for reducing out-migration and returning migrants to their homeland will improve. However, based on theoretical models, we can only conclude that the migration process is likely to develop, but its dynamics, directions, and composition will depend on specific demographic, socio-economic, and political realities.

One of the most important factors that will influence the intensity of migration among Ukrainians in the context of European integration is, of course, the migration policy of the European Union. It is worth remembering that each of the previous enlargements of the European Union caused considerable disturbances in migration and migration policy in Europe.⁸³ The ‘old’ Member States were most concerned about the possibility of a massive influx of citizens from the accession countries, which they perceived as a threat to the labour market, creating the risk of increased unemployment and putting an excessive burden on the social security system. The reasons for this were convincing, as wages in the new EU members were significantly lower and unemployment higher than in the old ones, which could only motivate citizens of these countries to take advantage of the opportunities for free movement across Europe. This was equally true for the 1980s enlargement, when Greece, Spain and Portugal joined the EU, and even more so for the 2004–2007 enlargement, when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe became members of the community.

The EU has a history of setting restrictions for citizens of new Member States on free movement and employment in the European Union. In the 1980s, they were mandatory; in 2004–2007, Member States could decide on their own. The permit system for admitting citizens from new EU Member States could be maintained for a maximum of seven years. However, from the very beginning, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden abandoned the restrictions, and other countries gradually opened their labour markets. In 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU, ten Member States opened their labour markets at once. The earlier easing of restrictions was due, firstly, to the fact that alarmist forecasts of mass immigration from the newly admitted countries proved to be overstated, and secondly, to the realisation that Western European economies would benefit from the arrival of additional labour.

83 Under the terms of the Temporary Protection Directive, the rights of Ukrainian citizens are very similar to those of citizens of other EU countries, e.g. Poland, and in some respects even broader. I would argue against the assumption that Ukraine's accession to the EU will intensify migration from Ukraine to EU countries. The intensification will not occur until men aged 18–65 are allowed to leave the territory of Ukraine (editor's note).

As for the volume of migration of “new Europeans” after their countries joined the EU, it is true that in the early years the migration wave grew rapidly. Every year, approximately 250,000 people from the region arrived in the West, compared to about 60,000 in the early 2000s. Despite this, people from CEE accounted for only about 0.5% of the EU-15 population.⁸⁴ At the same time, the benefits of migration were demonstrated convincingly, primarily in those countries that opened their labour markets to immigrants from the East. In particular, the British government estimated the direct income from immigration in the first year after the expansion at GBP 500 million (approximately EUR 745 million).⁸⁵ The arrival of citizens from new EU Member States contributed an additional 0.2% to GDP growth.⁸⁶

Thus, the experience of previous EU enlargements suggests that migration of Ukrainians in the process of European integration will initially intensify, but soon stabilise. The restrictions that the EU is likely to apply to curb the massive influx of Ukrainians will be only temporary, and their severity will depend on the socio-economic situation of the Member States and the needs of their economies for additional workers.

At the same time, it should be emphasised that due to the war, the circumstances in which the migration process is currently developing in Ukraine are significantly different from those in which other countries were at the time of their accession to the EU. It is obvious that the war and its consequences are and will remain the main cause of migration for the Ukrainian population in the near future. In particular, as a result of the war, the population of Ukraine has sharply decreased, along with the migration potential. This is also facilitated by the fact that the granting of temporary protection to Ukrainians in Europe has enabled many compatriots who had planned or considered emigration before the war to leave and settle abroad. As a result, although European integration will intensify Ukrainian migration to Europe, it is unlikely to increase dramatically after EU accession.

84 *EU Labor Markets After Post-Enlargement Migration*, ed. M. Kahanec and K.F. Zimmermann, Springer, Berlin 2009.

85 Heinen and A. Pegels, ‘The Results Two Years after Enlargement: Preliminary Results’, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1 July 2006, <https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/kurzdossiers/58165/the-results-two-years-after-enlargement-preliminary-results/>.

86 D.M. Iakova, *The Macroeconomic Effects of Migration from the New European Union Member States to the United Kingdom*, IMF Working Paper 2007, no 61, 1 March 2007, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2016/12/31/The-Macroeconomic-Effects-of-Migration-from-the-New-European-Union-Member-States-to-the-20543>.

In this regard, and because Europeans have been able to cope with the arrival of millions of forced migrants from Ukraine and any increase in their numbers after the right to free movement is unlikely to have a significant impact on their labour markets or social protection systems, it is hoped that restrictions on the free movement of Ukrainians will be minor. At the same time, the benefits for host countries stemming from the presence of Ukrainian citizens are already becoming increasingly apparent, which is an important argument in favour of granting them wider opportunities for movement and employment in Europe. The working age and high level of education of most forced migrants have enabled many of them to successfully adapt to their host countries and find work.

According to projections made by the OECD, the labour force in European countries was expected to increase during the first year of the Russian–Ukrainian war by about 0.5%. For individual countries, the largest increase was expected in three countries: Czechia (2.2%), Poland (2.1%), and Estonia (1.9%). Employment statistics show a similar ranking of countries, with Czechia, Poland and Estonia exhibiting a relative positive change of at most 1.9% while the overall impact across all host countries was estimated at 0.4%.⁸⁷

Ukrainian experts predict that as Ukrainians enter the labour and consumer markets, their contribution to GDP growth in Czechia, Poland and Estonia will amount to about 1.2 percentage points per year, and almost 0.8 percentage points in Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, Lithuania and Romania. The output of goods and services in Estonia, Poland and Czechia in 2026 will be 2.2–2.3% higher than in the baseline scenario without migration, and in Germany by 0.6–0.65%.⁸⁸

Given the positive effects of the arrival of Ukrainians, as well as the significant costs of their adaptation and resettlement against the backdrop of a difficult demographic situation as well as a natural decline in their national labour forces, European countries are likely to be interested in retaining specialists, young people and workers needed by the economy. Having made considerable efforts to integrate Ukrainians, European countries naturally expect to obtain a positive result in the form of replenishing their population and labour resources. It can be assumed that they will not only facilitate a longer stay of Ukrainian refugees who have successfully adapted, but will also create

87 OECD, *The Potential Contribution of Ukrainian Refugees to the Labour Force in European Host Countries*, OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine, OECD Publishing, Paris, 27 July 2022, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-potential-contribution-of-ukrainian-refugees-to-the-labour-force-in-european-host-countries_e88a6a55-en/full-report.html, accessed: 14 October 2024.

88 O. Tucha, I. Spivak, O. Bondarenko and O. Poharska, *Impact of Ukrainian Migrants on the Economies of Recipient Countries...*, op. cit.

conditions for family reunification, youth education and specialist internships, etc. on their territories.

Freedom of movement in Europe will create better working conditions for Ukrainians, wider opportunities for education, knowledge of best practices and cultural achievements, and in times of war, provide security guarantees,⁸⁹ fostering unambiguously positive results for individual citizens. At the same time, the consequences of population outflows for the state and society are far from clear. The risk of new Member States losing the labour and intellectual potential necessary for their development was also evident during previous EU enlargements. Within four years of joining the EU, Lithuania lost 3.1% of its working-age population, Romania – 2.5%, Poland and Slovakia – 2% each, and Bulgaria – 1.7%. At the same time, the outflow of people from Czechia did not even reach 0.5%.⁹⁰ Thus, the attractiveness of freedom of movement in Europe varied for citizens of different countries and depended not only on the opportunities gained through EU membership, but also, above all, on the situation at home, the structure of the economy and the situation on the labour market, etc. In other words, the outflow of people to the West was not a universal phenomenon. This leads to an obvious conclusion about Ukraine's European future: after joining the EU, the situation in Ukraine will be decisive for the intensity of out-migration.⁹¹

Assessing the consequences of migration movements requires consideration not only of quantitative but also, above all, qualitative characteristics. It is important to note that accession to the EU triggered a boom in temporary travel, primarily for labour purposes, while resettlement migration grew much more slowly.⁹² For example, 62% of CEE workers registered in the UK planned to stay in the country for less than three months.⁹³ Moreover, the share of short-term

89 The right to freedom of movement – these rights have already been introduced by the Temporary Protection Directive: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XC0321\(03\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XC0321(03)) (editor's note).

90 M. Governatori et al., *Employment in Europe 2008*, European Commission, October 2008, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=681&langId=en>.

91 And potential return migration (editor's note).

92 With a few exceptions, migration regulations in the EU start with the registration of temporary residence and only once many other requirements have been met, proceed to the registration of permanent residence. Lack of temporary registration hinders and often completely prevents obtaining long-term status (editor's note).

93 The study cited plans for work in the UK under the Worker Registration Scheme, which was dictated by the conditions of access to that labour market. Although migration plans by foreigners depend on available legal solutions, researchers should take a broader context into consideration (including the difference in living standards, the level of unemployment in the countries of origin, alternative migration regimes, etc.) (editor's note).

migrants was increasing: in 2006 it stood at 55%, and in 2007 it reached 59%.⁹⁴ Short-term migrants were responsible for the rapid increase in the number of Eastern Europeans in the EU-15.

Since the most typical model of migration behaviour for the population of pre-war Ukraine was circular labour migration abroad, i.e. temporary employment in foreign countries with periods of staying at home, it can be assumed that this model will not lose popularity after joining the EU. Moreover, households will need additional funds to restore their war-ravaged prosperity, and destination countries will meet the need for labour without exerting additional effort to resettle and integrate migrants.⁹⁵

Accession to the EU has led to changes in the geography and mode of migration of CEE citizens, including the diversification of destination countries, with the UK, Ireland and other EU countries taking a prominent place in addition to traditional destinations for Eastern Europeans. The regions where migrants originate have also diversified. Whereas previously migrants were mostly recruited from areas with strong migration traditions, primarily from the borderlands, after enlargement, it was residents of regions with less mobile populations that moved increasingly. In contrast to the previous period, when migrants traditionally relied on help from relatives or friends abroad, the right to free movement facilitated independent, individual decisions to migrate. We can expect the geography of foreign travel to expand, as well as coverage of wider segments of the population by migration, to occur in Ukraine after joining the EU. Moreover, as a result of Russia's aggression, Ukrainians who had not previously planned to move were forced to migrate.

People who have the physical, psychological, and financial resources to move and are not burdened by family and other obligations at home are naturally more mobile. This was clearly reflected in the composition of migrants from CEE countries after their accession to the EU: 63% of them were aged 15–34, mostly men, who migrated for employment purposes and were not accompanied by their family members.

It should also be noted that traditionally, well-educated citizens have migrated abroad from the CEE region. However, after the accession, the share of people with higher education among emigrants decreased, while the share of people with secondary and low education increased. The educational structure of

94 M. Kahanec, A. Zaiceva and K.F. Zimmermann, *Lessons from Migration after EU Enlargement*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 4230, June 2009, <https://docs.iza.org/dp4230.pdf>.

95 This effort and expense is typically borne by migrants themselves (editor's note).

migrants reflected the needs of the European labour market, where representatives of blue-collar occupations⁹⁶ had the best chances of finding employment. However, the share of educated professionals among out-migrants remained higher than in the labour force of their countries of origin, which raised fears of negative consequences related to brain drain. For example, according to data from the Ministry of Health, by 2006, almost 5% of these professionals had expressed a desire to obtain the relevant certificates to work abroad (among anaesthesiologists, this percentage reached almost 16%, plastic surgeons – almost 15%, radiologists – 8%).⁹⁷ However, in general, the emigration of specialists was moderate and, according to experts, did not cause serious problems. Moreover, some authors believed that it involved economically redundant specialists.⁹⁸

At the same time, educational migration by young people was a cause of brain drain. After citizens of the new Member States gained free access to education throughout the EU, this trend intensified significantly. Thus, immediately after the enlargement, in the 2004/2005 academic year, the number of Polish students abroad increased by a quarter compared to the previous year.⁹⁹ The previously rapid spike in the number of Ukrainian students at foreign educational institutions accelerated during the war and will likely continue thanks to the free access to education in Europe that Ukraine's accession to the EU would provide. For this reason, as with the departure of specialists, the risk of a brain drain after Ukraine's accession to the EU cannot be ruled out.

The outflow of people from the new Member States after their accession to the EU also resulted in a decrease in unemployment and an increase in wages. At the same time, certain industries and regions suffered a shortage in personnel. For example, at the end of 2005 Lithuania recorded roughly 12,000 unfilled vacancies, primarily in industry and trade.¹⁰⁰ In Poland, the shortage of workers was particularly noticeable in industry, trade, hotels and restaurants, as well as construction. In particular, government officials signalled a shortage of at least

96 Blue collar describes those who do not work in an office, regardless of the qualifications needed for a specific job (editor's note).

97 P. Kaczmarczyk, *Highly Skilled Migration From Poland and Other CEE Countries – Myths and Reality*, Reports & Analyses 17/06, Centre for International Relations, Warsaw 2006, pp. 16–17, http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00004820/01/rap_i_an_1706a.pdf.

98 *EU Labor Markets After Post-Enlargement Migration...*, op. cit.

99 K. Iglicka, *Free Movement of Workers. Two Years After the Enlargement: Myths and Reality*, Reports & Analyses 11/06, Centre for International Relations, Warsaw 2006, http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00004813/01/rap_i_an_1106a.pdf.

100 M. Kahanec and K.F. Zimmermann, *Migration in an Enlarged EU: A Challenging Solution?*, Economic Papers 363, European Commission, March 2009, https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/pages/publication14287_en.pdf, accessed 11 September 2024.

150,000 construction workers, prompting businesses to lobby for workers from abroad.¹⁰¹ It would be inaccurate to attribute these changes solely to migration, as they mainly pertained to economic restructuring and accelerated economic growth, but the impact of out-migration by part of the working population should not be dismissed. In the case of post-war Ukraine, where the need for labour in reconstruction efforts will grow, the shortage of workers caused by outflow to the EU could be much more significant.

Another consequence of migration processes after EU enlargement has been an increase in remittances from migrants to their home countries, especially in Lithuania and Poland, as well as in Romania and Bulgaria. In particular, the volume of migrant remittances to Poland increased by 60% in the year after EU accession alone.¹⁰² Ukraine – where thanks to labour migration, the volume of private remittances grew steadily and even in 2022, in the face of a full-scale war, decreased by only 9% compared to the pre-war year, but remained higher than in 2020 – can also receive additional funds for development from citizens employed abroad. Moreover, if Ukrainians employed abroad gain full rights, they will have access to more prestigious and better-paid jobs. However, we can only count on positive dynamics of remittances if the circular model of migration is maintained, when the centre of gravity of vital interests for migrants remains at home.

Accession to the European Union has affected not only emigration from CEE countries, but also immigration to their territories. Although the number of people arriving from the ‘old’ EU was incomparably smaller than the number leaving, it was primarily highly qualified specialists, managers of foreign companies, experts, advisers, and repatriates returning to their homeland. For example, in Poland, returnees accounted for more than half of the new arrivals, and in reality, according to experts, that share could be even higher, as some migrants did not register their arrival (or departure for that matter). In CEE countries, measures were developed to facilitate the return of migrants at both national and local levels. For example, Wrocław despite existing unemployment, attracted Poles from abroad,¹⁰³ not only from the city but also

101 M. Kupiszewski (ed.), *Demographic Developments, Labor Markets and International Migration in Poland – Policy Challenges*, CEFMR Working Paper 3/2007, Central European Forum for Migration and Population Research, 2007, http://www.cefmr.pan.pl/docs/cefmr_wp_2007-03.pdf, accessed 11 September 2024.

102 K. Iglicka, *Free Movement of Workers. Two Years after the Enlargement...*, op. cit.

103 The Lower Silesian Voivodeship has been successful in repatriating Poles, but mainly with respect to Kazakhstan, and later on, holders of the Pole's Card (Ukraine). The special economic zones in Lower Silesia are again rather not a case of Polish citizens who have returned from the EU (editor's note).

from other regions, due to a lack of workers in certain specialties needed to implement investment projects. Special attention was paid to encouraging the repatriation of highly qualified specialists. The Foundation of Polish Science introduced two-year scholarships for returning scientists roughly equivalent to a professor's salary.¹⁰⁴

The shortage of labour in certain industries and regions was eased by foreign workers. For example, in 2007, Poland significantly simplified the procedure for temporary employment of citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries, who were able to work in the country for 6 months within a year without obtaining a work permit,¹⁰⁵ based only on an employer's declaration of readiness to hire them. A number of amendments were made to the law on foreigners, which simplified the procedures for obtaining a residence permit for those who worked or studied in Poland. The repatriation of people of Polish descent whose families were deported to the Asian part of the USSR was considered a moral obligation. The repatriation law and introduction of the Pole's Card were intended to facilitate the repatriation process. The card is a document that confirms a foreigner's affiliation with the Polish people that grants a number of privileges in terms of employment, starting a business, studying in Poland, and acquiring Polish citizenship.¹⁰⁶ In 2017, the law of 2000 was supplemented, improving the rights of repatriates and financial assistance, but this did not contribute to a significant increase in repatriation interest or the number of repatriates. In the event of a shortage of workers to rebuild the war-torn country, Ukraine will also have to turn to external sources of labour, which will require a balanced policy of returning refugees and labour migrants, engaging the diaspora, creating conditions for the arrival of foreign specialists, developing a policy of integration for the newcomers, and educating society in the spirit of tolerance.

Thus, both theoretical considerations and the actual experience of previous EU enlargements indicate that Ukrainian migration will intensify in the short term after joining the EU. Poland is likely to remain the main destination country for Ukrainian migrants. This assumption is supported by geographical, linguistic and cultural proximity, long-standing migration ties, a large Ukrainian diaspora, Poland's need for additional labour, and migrant-friendly legislation.

104 M. Kupiszewski et al., *Demographic Development, Labour Markets and International Migration in Poland...*, op. cit.

105 In 2006, this period was 3 months, and now it is 2 years; the programme evolved for 12 years before it was enshrined in law (editor's note).

106 The card was established by the Act of 7 September 2007 on the Pole's Card (Journal of Laws 2007, No 180, item 1280) (editor's note).

Ukraine's Migration Policy

Developing Ukraine's Migration Policy and Its Evolution During the Full-Scale War

Artificially separated from global migration processes in Soviet times, Ukraine joined them only after 1991. Openness to the world, on the one hand, provided new opportunities for its citizens, but on the other, created new risks, primarily related to the mass migration of Ukrainians to work abroad. The state is faced with the task of developing a migration policy that can minimise these risks and, at the same time, promote the positive potential of migration. The creation of public administration mechanisms for the migration sphere has become a prominent element of state-building. During the period of independence, the state's migration policy has evolved along with changes in the migration situation, the accumulation of experience, and the implementation of international standards. This process can be divided into several stages.

The first dates back to the early 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR, a period marked by rapid repatriation movements (Ukrainians and people of other nationalities, including Crimean Tatars illegally deported from Crimea in 1944, returned en masse from other post-Soviet states), as well as increased migration of Ukrainian citizens abroad for employment or shuttle trade due to the opening of borders and the lifting of restrictions on foreign travel, as well as the arrival of foreigners in Ukraine, including for the purpose of seeking asylum or transit to Europe, often in violation of legal norms.

When developing the foundations of the state's migration policy, the main focus was eliminating restrictions inherent in the Soviet system, as well as ensuring the right of citizens to freedom of movement and choice of residence, free travel abroad and return to their homeland, which was enshrined in the Constitution and special laws. New political approaches to migration regulation were part of the overall process of democratisation of society and implementation of recognised international human rights standards.

In order to restore the rights of victims of totalitarian repression, significant financial and organisational resources were allocated to the resettlement and

integration of former deportees among the Crimean Tatars and representatives of other nationalities who returned to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Since forced migration due to armed conflicts in a number of post-Soviet states was a significant component of migration processes at that time, the law on refugees was adopted (1993). The process of repatriation was supported by establishing a simplified procedure for the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship by immigrants from Ukraine and their descendants.

Simultaneously with the development of legislation, administrative structures were created to implement it. The first specialised public administration body in the field of migration was the Ministry of Nationalities and Migration (1993) and local migration service bodies (1994), which were subordinated both to the Ministry and local authorities.

Since the mid-1990s, as a result of the systemic economic crisis of the transition period, repatriation flows have slowed down and out-migration from Ukraine has intensified. Against the backdrop of market reforms and the deep economic crisis during the transition period, and in the absence of administrative restrictions on movement, migration has become a survival strategy for many Ukrainians. The geography of movements has diversified, and their vector has gradually shifted from the only possible eastern direction in Soviet times, i.e. to Russia, to the west and European countries, where earnings are higher and working conditions better. The replacement of political and ethnic migration factors by economic ones led to a significant reduction in the number of emigrants leaving Ukraine for permanent residence in other countries as well as to the spread of short-term but systematic trips abroad to earn money. At the turn of the century, labour migration abroad became the largest and most socially significant migration flow. Ukrainians went to work in Russia, Poland, Czechia, and Southern Europe.

In 2003, the Ukrainian Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights issued a special report on the situation of Ukrainian citizens abroad, in which she cited numerous cases of violations of migrant rights and human trafficking, for the first time voicing an official estimate of the scale of labour migration abroad – over 4 million people.¹⁰⁷ The issue of labour migration across borders has taken centre stage in migration policy. The Parliament instructed the government to strengthen control over business entities that provided mediation

107 N. Karpachova, *State of Observance and Protection of the Rights of Ukrainian Citizens Abroad: Special Report*, Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Intertekhnologiya, 2003; Виступ Уповноваженого з прав людини Ніни Карпачової в Верховній Раді України під час представлення Спеціальної доповіді Уповноваженого, <http://www.golos.com.ua/>.

services for employment abroad as well as continue negotiations with foreign countries to conclude international agreements on labour migration and social protection of citizens employed abroad. In addition, in the early 2000s, legislative acts adopted in the first years of independence were actively improved. They needed to be aligned with the provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine and international legal documents on human rights protection to which the country had acceded, taking into account the practical experience gained in the process of their application. New versions of the laws on citizenship, the legal status of foreigners and refugees were adopted, as well as laws on immigration and on freedom of movement and free choice of residence in Ukraine.

The development of the legislative framework and increased attention to migration issues has allowed Ukraine to intensify international cooperation. In 2002, the country acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and in the same year it became a full member of the International Organisation for Migration, where it had previously been an observer.

At the same time, several attempts to adopt a law on the conceptual framework of the state's migration policy, as well as on the creation of the State Migration Service as a single executive body to manage migration processes, failed in Parliament. The legislative process began to stall, with migration policy conceptually undefined.

This situation apparently resulted from the fact that the task of abolishing Soviet restrictions on population movements and ensuring the right to free movement of people had already been accomplished by that time. At the same time, both society and politicians were not fully aware of further short- and long-term strategic goals and objectives of state migration management. To a certain extent, this is also explained by the fact that the revival of Ukraine's economy at the beginning of the 21st century slowed down emigration. The volume of temporary labour migration abroad also decreased. Some migrant workers were able to successfully find a job or start their own business in their homeland with the money they earned.

The global financial and economic crisis of 2008, the aggression of the Russian Federation and its socio-economic consequences, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, brought back crisis conditions for the development of migration processes and led to another intensification of international mobility of Ukrainians. Migration caused by economic problems was compounded by forced migration due to the hostilities and the occupation of part of the country. Difficulties in finding decent work, significantly lower wages than in the

countries of destination, as well as uncertainty about the political stability and economic prospects of the state formed the key motivating factors for going abroad. The vector of migration movements gradually shifted from the east, i.e. Russia, to the west, i.e. European countries, due to both Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine and the country's European integration aspirations.

Ukraine and the EU signed a Visa Facilitation Agreement and a Readmission Agreement,¹⁰⁸ and an agreement was reached with neighbouring EU Member States on so-called 'small border traffic', i.e. visa-free entry of border residents to the border areas of neighbouring states. In 2010, the EU provided Ukraine with a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, which included numerous provisions on migration.¹⁰⁹ During the first stage of its implementation, in May 2011, the Concept for a State Migration Policy of Ukraine was approved, the need for which had been discussed for years. In the same year, a new version of the Law on the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons, a collection of basic regulations concerning migration, was adopted, as well as a new Law on refugees and persons in need of additional or temporary protection, which introduced so-called complementary forms of protection for asylum seekers in addition to the conventional ones, i.e. in accordance with the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951. The new law on employment of the population (2012)¹¹⁰ contained fundamental norms for regulating labour migration, which for the first time defined labour migration and enshrined the right of citizens to work abroad.¹¹¹ In the last package of laws, the adoption of which was necessary for the acquisition of a visa-free regime with the EU, the Law of Ukraine on external labour migration¹¹² was adopted in November 2015, which laid out the rights of migrants, and the state's obligations to protect them, support their associations, and facilitate their return and reintegration into Ukrainian society.¹¹³ In 2017, the government adopted the Strategy of the State

108 *Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on the Facilitation of the Issuance of Visas – Protocol – Declaration – Joint Declarations, Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on the Readmission of Persons – Annexes – Declaration – Joint Declarations*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A22007A1218%2802%29>.

109 Mission of Ukraine to the European Union, *Visa Liberation Dialogue*, 30 October 2020, <https://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/2633-relations/dialog-u-sferi-yusticiyi-svobod-ta-bezpeki/pro-rozvitok-bez-vizovogo-dialogu-mizh-ukrayinoyu-ta-yes>.

110 *Закон України, Про зайнятість населення*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5067-17#Text>.

111 *Закон України, Про зайнятість населення*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5067-17#Text>.

112 *Закон України, Про зовнішню трудову міграцію*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/761-19#Text>.

113 *Закон України, Про зовнішню трудову міграцію*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/761-19#Text>.

Migration Policy of Ukraine for the period up to 2025,¹¹⁴ which defines the basic principles, priorities and specific goals of the state in regulating migration processes. Thus, the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan was a significant factor in improving Ukraine's migration policy.¹¹⁵

The large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 affected all aspects of life in Ukraine without exception, dramatically changing the migration situation and causing the most massive internal and external forced migration since World War II. The war has significantly increased the requirements for the state to perform its functions in regulating migration processes, and the need to coordinate migration policy with the state economic policy, regional policy, employment policy, social protection and education, while taking into account its tasks in foreign policy and cooperation with international partners.

The state and society perceived the departure of millions of Ukrainians abroad as the most acute problem. In April 2022, a presidential decree established the National Council for the Reconstruction of Ukraine from the Consequences of the War, and a number of specialised working groups, including a working group on the return of citizens temporarily displaced abroad and their integration into social and economic life. The proposals developed by this group emphasise that the state should create conditions for the return of external and internal forced migrants and interest them in returning, while leaving the final decision to citizens.¹¹⁶ Moreover, this will take place under conditions when, as a result of deeper integration with the EU, Ukraine will compete with European countries for qualified specialists, and the likelihood of increased migration, at least in the medium term, is high. The working group proposed to: establish registers, conduct research into needs and promptly provide forced migrants with the necessary assistance, support those who find themselves in difficult life situations; improve employment mechanisms, including remote employment; create information campaigns to encourage migrants to

114 Кабінет Міністрів України, *Розпорядження від 12 липня 2017 р. № 482-р, Київ. Про схвалення Стратегії державної міграційної політики України на період до 2025 року*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/482-2017-%D1%80>.

115 Кабінет Міністрів України, *Розпорядження від 12 липня 2017 р. № 482-р, Київ. Про схвалення Стратегії державної міграційної політики України на період до 2025 року*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/482-2017-%D1%80>.

116 The National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the Consequences of War, *Draft Ukraine Recovery Plan of Ukraine. Materials of 'The Return of Citizens Temporarily Displaced, in Particular Abroad, and Their Integration into the Socio-Economic Life' Working Group*, July 2022, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/recoveryrada/eng/return-of-temporarily-displaced-citizens-eng.pdf>, accessed 12 September 2024.

return; use small business support mechanisms to create conditions for return; conclude agreements with EU countries on migration, social protection of migrants and avoidance of double taxation; and improve Ukrainian migration legislation and migration policy. To ensure cross-sectoral cooperation between the government and local authorities in creating conditions for the return of forced migrants, it was proposed to create a special National Agency. These proposals, however, have not been implemented.

The need to rethink the state's actions in the field of migration in the context of war was underlined in the amendments to the Strategy of State Migration Policy of Ukraine for the period up to 2025.¹¹⁷ The updated document adds new strategic goals, namely: ensuring the protection of the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens who were forced to leave the country because of the war and creating conditions for their return and reintegration into Ukrainian society, as well as ensuring that Ukrainian legislation and administrative practice in the field of migration comply with EU standards. In addition, new tasks were formulated regarding procedures and tools for engaging foreign workers in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

The migration issue is duly reflected in the draft Demographic Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2040, developed by the government, in which mass forced migration abroad is treated as one of the biggest demographic threats.¹¹⁸ The document formulates a strategic goal to achieve growth of the population through migration. To this end, the task is to facilitate the return of Ukrainians living abroad, not only forced migrants, but also those who left earlier and their descendants. The authors emphasise that fulfilling this task will require not only financial incentives, but also cultural and humanitarian ones, to ensure constant communication with compatriots abroad as members of the Ukrainian nation. Immigrants from third countries can also be attracted to compensate for the natural population decline and labour shortages, in particular by providing educational services to foreigners. Labour immigration from abroad requires constant monitoring of the labour market, a clear selection system, effective measures to integrate newcomers, and cultivation of public perceptions of migration not as a threat but as a tool for improving socio-demographic development.

117 *On Amendments to the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Dated 12 July 2017 No. 482*, Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 19 January 2024 № 43-p, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/43-2024-p#Text>, accessed 12 September 2024.

118 *Demographic Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2040*, Міністерство соціальної політики, 2024, <https://www.msp.gov.ua/projects/870/>.

The current Strategy of State Migration Policy of Ukraine for the period up to 2025 will soon expire. Work has already begun on developing a strategy for the state's activities in the field of migration for the future. Generally speaking, it will clearly be aimed at achieving several main goals, including: creating conditions for the return of war refugees and repatriation of Ukrainians who left earlier; strengthening ties with fellow citizens who have long chosen to live abroad; and attracting immigrants from abroad, especially skilled ones, who will be needed within the economy.

Priorities of Ukraine's migration policy during the war and post-war revival

In recent years, migration-related legislative activities have, on one hand, tended to improve the regulation of existing migration processes, and, on the other hand, responded to the dramatic changes caused by the war. The adopted legislative acts were aimed at: countering security challenges that could be caused by migration movements; creating conditions for the return of forced migrants to their homeland; improving mechanisms for attracting foreign workers needed for Ukraine's economy and defence; and implementing EU migration acquis into Ukrainian legislation.

In the first months of the war, it was necessary to resolve urgent problems in the functioning of state structures that arose under martial law. In particular, the government announced that temporary or permanent residence permits for foreigners (except for those issued to citizens of the Russian Federation), which have expired or are subject to exchange in the future (for the period of martial law and within 30 calendar days from the date of its termination or cancellation), will confirm legal residence in Ukraine and permit entry into its territory.¹¹⁹

At the same time, the government suspended consideration of applications for immigration permits, and issuance and exchange of permanent or temporary residence permits submitted by citizens of the Russian Federation.¹²⁰ This restriction, however, did not apply to family members of Ukrainian citizens and

119 *Зміни, що вносяться до розпорядження Кабінету Міністрів України від 12 липня 2017 р. № 482, Кабінет Міністрів України, Розпорядження*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/482-2017-p#Text>.

120 *Some Issues of the Provision of Administrative Services by the State Migration Service under Martial Law*, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1232 dated 1 November 2022, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1232-2022-%D0%BF#Text>.

foreigners permanently residing in Ukraine, close relatives of Ukrainian citizens, and persons whose immigration is of public interest.

The first step towards simplifying the procedure for immigration to Ukraine, especially the removal of obstacles to the arrival of EU citizens, can be considered the law on the establishment of additional legal and social guarantees for citizens of the Republic of Poland staying in Ukraine¹²¹ adopted in the summer of 2022 on the basis of the principle of reciprocity and as a sign of gratitude to the Polish Nation for its solidarity and support.¹²² According to this law, citizens of the Republic of Poland and their family members who have entered Ukraine in accordance with the established procedure may stay in Ukraine for 18 months from the date of entry into force of this law, as well as extend their residence in case of study or employment in the country. Moreover, Poles can work in Ukraine without a work permit for foreigners and stateless persons, and do not need to obtain a long-term visa to obtain a temporary residence permit. In addition, the law guarantees Polish citizens residing in Ukraine: social protection and social benefits, the right to education, including at the expense of the state or local budget and free medical care on the same terms as Ukrainian citizens.

In September 2022, the Parliament adopted the law on amendments to certain laws of Ukraine on the employment of foreigners and stateless persons in Ukraine and the provision of services for mediation in employment abroad,¹²³ which, among others eliminated the requirement for foreigners to be employed only upon payment of a salary of at least ten times the minimum wage (in some cases at least five) and permitted the previously unavailable possibility to obtain a work permit by foreigners who arrived in Ukraine to study at higher education institutions and intend to seek gainful employment in Ukraine during their studies and after graduation (when employed no later than 30 calendar days before graduation). At the same time, the law prohibits foreigners and stateless persons included in the list of persons associated with terrorist activities or subject to international sanctions from engaging in labour activity in Ukraine. With regard to citizens of the Russian Federation, a work permit for

121 Закон України, Про встановлення додаткових правових та соціальних гарантій для громадян Республіки Польща, які перебувають на території України, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2471-20#Text>.

122 *On the Establishment of Additional Legal and Social Guarantees for Citizens of the Republic of Poland Who Are in the Territory of Ukraine*, Law of Ukraine 2471-IX dated 28 July 2022, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2471-IX#Text>, accessed 12 September 2024.

123 *On Amendments to Some Laws of Ukraine Regarding Employment of Foreigners and Stateless Persons in Ukraine and Provision of Mediation Services in Employment Abroad*, Law of Ukraine, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2623-20#Text>.

their employment in Ukraine may be issued only upon approval of the Security Service of Ukraine.

In terms of labour migration of Ukrainians abroad, the law clearly prohibits business entities providing employment agency services in foreign countries from receiving fees, commissions and other remuneration from clients. Payment for employment agency services abroad must be made by the employer to whom such services are provided.

The law on amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on improving legislation in the field of migration adopted in December 2022 is aimed at strengthening control functions in the field of migration and increasing the level of responsibility foreigners bear for violating the rules of their stay in the country.¹²⁴ In particular, it establishes the obligation for foreigners and stateless persons to submit biometric data when applying for an extension of their stay or temporary residence in Ukraine, as well as in cases where a foreigner or stateless person is held administratively liable for violating regulations on the legal status of foreigners.

The following amendments to the laws on immigration and on the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons, which relate to the performance of military service by foreigners under contract, were introduced in January 2023.¹²⁵ First, foreigners and stateless persons who have signed a contract for military service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the State Transport Service, and the National Guard of Ukraine are considered to be legally residing in Ukraine for the period of the contract. Secondly, within the immigration quota, immigration permits should be granted to foreigners and stateless persons who have served in the Armed Forces, the State Special Transport Service and the National Guard for three or more years, and to persons who have been declared unfit for military service by military medical commissions for health reasons as a result of illnesses or injuries sustained during service, regardless of the duration of service.

124 *On Making Changes to Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Improvement of Legislation in the Field of Migration*, Law of Ukraine, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2813-20>, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2813-20#Text>.

125 *On Amendments to Some Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Procedure for Military Service under Contract by Foreigners and Stateless Persons in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the State Special Transport Service and the National Guard of Ukraine*, Law of Ukraine, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2863-20#Text>.

In June 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted significant amendments to the law on immigration,¹²⁶ aimed at improving the mechanisms for granting immigration permits, simplifying the procedure for granting such permits to highly qualified foreign IT specialists, and combating illegal migration of persons who have been denied or whose immigration permit has been revoked. An important innovation is the provision for granting foreigners and stateless persons who arrived for employment purposes, participated in the implementation of international technical assistance projects or worked in representative offices of foreign companies or banks, the right to permanent residence in Ukraine, provided they have continuously resided in the country on the basis of a temporary residence permit for the last five years. The annual immigration quota has been cancelled and will be reinstated only in the event of mass immigration to the country.¹²⁷

The law on amendments to certain laws of Ukraine regarding the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons¹²⁸ adopted in August 2024 introduces further simplifications to procedures for regulating the legal status of foreigners who volunteer to defend Ukraine, if, after completing their service, they decide to live in the country. The law stipulates: the possibility of using an expired national passport to obtain a permit for residence or acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship; in the event of acquiring Ukrainian citizenship, extension of the deadline to renounce the previous citizenship to one year after the end of martial law; expansion of the categories of foreigners who can receive a temporary residence permit in Ukraine, on the basis of a family relationship to members of the territorial defence forces, i.e. persons who did not enter into a contract for military service, as well as family members of foreigners who entered into a contract to serve in the defence forces of Ukraine.

Among the legislative initiatives submitted to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, it is worth mentioning the draft law on amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on improving the procedure for employment of foreigners in

126 *On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On Immigration' Regarding the Improvement of the Conditions and Procedures for the Immigration of Foreigners and Stateless Persons to Ukraine*, Law of Ukraine 3180-IX dated 29 June 2023, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3180-20#Text>.

127 Circumstances under which being married to a Ukrainian citizen or immigrant are not considered a basis for granting an immigration permit (editor's note).

128 *On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Legal Status of Foreigners and Stateless Persons Participating in the Protection of the Territorial Integrity and Inviolability of Ukraine*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3897-20#Text>.

Ukraine,¹²⁹ which is aimed at increasing the attractiveness of Ukraine for foreign workers by implementing a number of provisions of the EU directives on immigration into national legislation. It proposes: to introduce a single permit for employment and residence, issued within the framework of a unified procedure; provide an opportunity for foreign graduates of Ukrainian educational institutions to stay in the country for 9 months after completing their studies in order to find a job or start their own business; make it impossible to cancel the residence permit of a labour migrant in the event of job loss or annul a labour permit due to the fault of the employer.

129 Проект Закону про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо удосконалення порядку працевлаштування іноземців в Україні, <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/44542>.

Conclusions

Evaluating the Results of Statistical Errors

The main source of information on the scale of forced migration from Ukraine as well as the gender and age composition of migrants are administrative statistics on persons covered by the Temporary Protection Act or with refugee status, which are collected and disclosed to the UNHCR. However, certain doubts remain about the reliability of this information due to significant discrepancies in data provided by Ukrainian border guards. Of course, total consistency is probably impossible, but the current scale of those discrepancies is too large.

According to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the cumulative negative balance of crossings on western borders (with Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary) from 24 February 2022 to 15 June 2024 amounted to 2 million people. According to the UNHCR, 6 million Ukrainian citizens are under the protection of the law on temporary protection and similar directives in non-EU countries or who have refugee status.¹³⁰ The negative balance of external border crossing in 2023, according to SBGS guards, is 50,000 people. According to Eurostat, the number of registered Ukrainian forced migrants increased by 405,000 in the same year. It is clear that there is a time lag associated with the duration of temporary protection and/or refugee status, usually 2–3 months.¹³¹ Taking this into account requires comparing the balance of

130 1. It is worth noting that the directive on protection does not prohibit mobility: some of those who are protected in the EU may *de facto* live in Ukraine or travel between Ukraine and EU countries.

2. Due to the number of more favourable solutions offered by the Directive, some labour migrants changed their residence status to temporary protection (also in Poland), which was particularly easy to do after the solutions applied in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Ukrainians benefited from temporary protection regardless of their previous place of residence (they could have come to Poland, for example, from Russia and not from Ukraine).

4. There were also people from Ukraine who crossed the border with Russia.

5. Applying for refugee status does not deprive someone of their status as a beneficiary of temporary protection.

It should also be taken into account that some Ukrainian citizens are resigning from their status as beneficiaries of temporary protection by applying for temporary residence permit (work, family, etc.) (editor's note).

131 Protection is granted immediately (though sometimes there is a wait of up to a month to confirm the document), as is refugee status and other forms of international protection in the EU – from 3 months to a year in the first instance (editor's note).

external migration reported by Ukrainian border guards from 1 October 2022 to 1 October 2023 (129,000 people) with the increase in the number of Ukrainian citizens registered abroad in 2023. Although this somewhat reduces the discrepancy, the difference remains too large (276,000 people).

What explains these discrepancies in the data? The most obvious explanation stems from the shortcomings of primary registration, namely:

- Illegal border crossings from Ukraine by men who are not allowed to leave the territory of Ukraine under martial law – this is the most common and likely explanation, but it is unlikely that hundreds of thousands of people crossed the border illegally in a year; moreover, illegal migrants will inevitably have difficulties registering as refugees or persons covered by the law on temporary protection;
- Departure of Ukrainian citizens through the territory of the Russian Federation – indeed, from certain regions, in particular in the south and east of Ukraine, it is much easier and safer to get to the Baltic States through the territory of the Russian Federation than to get to the borders of Ukraine with Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia or Moldova;
- Double registration in EU countries due to delayed (or a lack of) registration of departure when moving to another country; simultaneous registration in two countries, even for several weeks, at such a scale could significantly affect the total statistics;¹³² in addition, there are cases of citizens who return to Ukraine while maintaining their status as forced migrants and receiving appropriate assistance abroad.¹³³

Each of the explanations above seems logical, but taken together they still do not provide justification for such a significant discrepancy.

Additional explanations for general discrepancies between the data of Ukrainian border guards and administrative statistics of the countries where Ukrainian migrants reside include:

- Unregistered border crossings by Ukrainians during the first most difficult weeks of the war, when adults were allowed to leave with internal

132 It is not possible to be registered as a beneficiary of temporary protection in two EU countries at the same time, as there is a shared EU database. In order to register in another country, protection in the previous country must be waived first, hence there may be an underestimation rather than an overestimation of the scale (editor's note).

133 This is not fictitious; the right to mobility was provided for in the directive. However, national legislation provides for the possibility of waiving protection, which does not happen very often in practice (editor's note).

passports and children with birth certificates.¹³⁴ this period ended in March–April 2022, and differences in the data of Ukrainian border guards and, for example, Eurostat are still observed;

- Some Ukrainian citizens are not reflected in administrative statistics, if, for example, they do not apply for assistance or have other grounds for staying in these countries, such as a residence permit.

Thus, both border crossing data and administrative statistics need to be clarified. It seems that consistent refinement of existing information on this subject is called for.

First, we need to determine the extent of the discrepancies between Polish and Ukrainian data in the daily (or at least monthly) accounts of border crossings between Poland and Ukraine since 24 February 2022. It is unlikely that all cases of illegal departures from Ukraine are recorded by Polish border guards, but at least this would allow us to assess the scale of these discrepancies.

The next task should be to find an explanation for the discrepancies between border records and administrative statistics. When it comes to Poland (or any other individual country), it is understood that the results of the registration of Ukrainian citizens cannot coincide with the total number of crossings on the Ukrainian–Polish border, since some migrants either initially headed to other countries or moved later (most often to Germany). However, comprehensive clarification of the information requires a comparison of the data on departures from Ukraine via the Polish border and entries into Poland via the Ukrainian border.¹³⁵

Approaches to validation of migrants' declared intentions

Determining Ukraine's current and future losses as a result of external migration caused by the war requires proper consideration of the fact that the vast majority of Ukrainian women who left Ukraine since the beginning of war

134 In practice, any form of identification (editor's note).

135 We might also venture to say that, in light of the Polish registration system and the conditions for receiving 800+ benefits, entry into and departures from Poland take place not only via the Polish border, but via other borders (e.g. Hungary, Romania). Entering the Schengen area via the Polish border does not automatically mean that the exit cannot take place via another border with another Schengen country. Given both the costs of assistance for Ukrainian citizens under the auspices of temporary protection and the importance of contributions made by Ukrainian citizens to the labour market, more comprehensive mechanisms for reporting the scale of migration between Poland and Ukraine need to be developed (editor's note).

have a university degree.¹³⁶ Without overestimating the quantitative parameters of educational level, we should take into account the more or less related skills of acquiring new information, analysing, evaluating possibilities, formulating opinions and communicating. It is more likely that the women who left were not afraid to take responsibility for their own and their children's fate, were willing to take risks in searching for work in another country, and were able to learn another language and adapt to different living conditions, including communication. More than half of these women are already working, and some, albeit a small number, have started their own businesses.¹³⁷ Obviously, it would inflict enormous damage on Ukraine's human capital if they did not return. Another risk is related to the possibility of a so-called second wave of forced migration: if living conditions, especially those related to security, decent employment and housing, prevent the return of female forced migrants, a significant number of their husbands will join them abroad after martial law is lifted, meaning that their families will be reunited, but not in Ukraine. This risk is exacerbated by the fact that men usually have at least as much education as their wives, with the ages of modern spouses approximately the same. Thus, not all of the more than 1 million young women (aged 18–34) will be married in recipient countries, but the additional departure of even 300,000 young men with higher education will be a significant component in Ukraine's demographic, social and economic losses. Demographic losses are clearly reflected in the loss of human capital and labour supply, which are already being felt, ahead of the expected post-war boom associated with the development of the Ukrainian economy. In view of this, forecasting the migration behaviour of Ukrainian citizens, in particular the scale of Ukrainian migrant returns from abroad, is an extremely important component of socio-economic policy overall.

The responses migrants express today regarding their future intentions to return/not return to Ukraine and their future fate in general reflect current comparisons of the quality of life in Ukraine and abroad. Such assessments will be crucial during the decision-making period. It is quite possible that such assessments and plans will change.

The prospects for the return of forced migrants, especially external migrants, are directly related to the length of their stay in another country, which, in turn, is a function of the duration of the active armed conflict: the longer it

136 Razumkov Centre, *Attitudes and Assessments of Ukrainian Refugees (July–August 2022)*, 30 August 2022, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/nastroi-ta-otsinky-ukrain-skykh-bizhentsiv-lypen-serpen-2022p>.

137 Ibid.

lasts, the greater the destruction in Ukraine, and as more families lose their housing and jobs, and the more migrants will find work abroad and adapt to a new life in a new society. Thus, the longer the period of emigration, the less forced migrants tend to return home. However, the relationship is not linear – not all migrants adapt and enjoy a standard of living abroad that they consider acceptable. According to numerous reports, which cannot be considered representative, the total population falls into several strata: at one pole are those who were unable to make a life for themselves in another country, and at the other are those who have adapted successfully by finding work (or satisfaction with social support), housing, and a social circle. Contrary to popular belief, the degree of adaptation is not directly proportional to profession or qualifications, but rather a function of a range of characteristics, including language and communication skills, the ability to adapt to change, as well as place of residence (in large cities, all other things being equal, it is easier to find a job and a suitable school, but much more expensive to rent housing, let alone purchase it). Attitudes towards foreigners in different countries also vary considerably.

Decisions to return will ultimately be made based on comparison assessments of the level and quality of life in Ukraine and abroad, taking into account not only the current situation, but also the prospects – real or imagined – for their own lives and the lives (education, career, income, etc.) of their children. In addition, not only material factors will be important, although their weight as a factor in the decision is likely to differ for different categories of migrants.

What works in favour of migrant returns to Ukraine?

Although many women have found jobs, a significant number of them are not very satisfied with their current situation because:

- Their qualifications are significantly higher than those required by the job they perform;
- They had to change professions;
- They lost the social status they enjoyed in Ukraine;
- They are experiencing communication problems with the local population and issues with social adaptation, even if they know the language of the host country.

These factors can play an important role in the decision to return, especially for educated women, for whom the nature of their work and status are of great significance.

Moreover:

- The level of material support of forced migrants is gradually decreasing (in some places, the amount of financial assistance or compensation for the cost of rented housing is reduced, in others, the conditions for receiving assistance are becoming more stringent) and is expected to be completely withdrawn in the near future;
- In quite a few cases, mothers are dissatisfied with the quality of education, attitudes exhibited towards their children (from peers, not teachers) and limited opportunities for specialised education in high school, not to mention that their children want to return to their friends in Ukraine;
- Most are dissatisfied with the quality and accessibility of medical care.

Faced with the realities of life, especially in small towns of Eastern European countries, many migrants (some of whom were outside Ukraine for the first time) overestimated the quality of life, in particular the availability and quality of medical services in Ukraine and abroad, but it should be emphasised that there are very significant differences between the assessments of those who have settled well in new countries and those who have failed to do so for various reasons.

Other arguments:

- Housing and/or other property, including one's own or family business, remains in Ukraine;
- Relatives and friends, often elderly parents, remain in Ukraine.

Ties with Ukraine – material and otherwise – can play an important role, especially in the decision to return/not to return by those who, for various reasons, failed to adapt to life abroad.

And finally:

- Economic growth after the end of the war, or at least its hot phase, will be so rapid and the shortage of labour so significant that the opportunities for earnings and career growth will make returning very attractive, particularly for young people.

What is preventing the large-scale return of migrants today and likely to prevent it in future? The answers are logical and predictable:

- The danger and certainty of further armed invasions by Russia even after the conclusion of a peace agreement;

- The lack of decent jobs and own housing (not only because of war-related destruction – many families were forced to live with their parents before the war).

These two factors are recorded by all surveys without exception, and by a wide margin from other factors.

Other answers:

- Lack of a familiar social environment due to the destruction of their community; the vast majority of evacuees would like to return to their previous place of residence or at least to somewhere that is not too far away – this was evident in 2014–2015, when people from Donetsk and Luhansk regions moved mainly to Kharkiv region or to settlements in the Donbas territories controlled by Ukrainian authorities; the same situation was observed during the evacuation of residents of Kherson, who temporarily resettled in Odesa and Mykolaiv regions; to this should be added the much higher tendency of urban residents to move than rural residents;

In this context, the very fact of mass movement of Ukrainian forced migrants from Poland to Germany can only be worrying – the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that Ukrainian labour migrants returned mainly from neighbouring countries.

Other factors:

- The absence of relatives in Ukraine (the family has left completely);
- The presence in the family of a sick person whose medical care is covered by health insurance abroad, but not in Ukraine.

Since family ties play an important role in the value system of Ukrainians, this can be a strong argument when making a decision.

We should also add:

- Higher earnings abroad than in Ukraine;
- Confidence that, at least for children, life abroad offers much better prospects.

These factors may be offset if the economic situation in Ukraine changes dramatically after the end of the war or its hot phase.

And finally:

- Partially justified, but usually unfounded fears of ostracism upon return, condemnation by those who have consistently remained in Ukraine throughout the conflict, difficulties in finding employment due to a long break in employment, and even a kind of marginalisation (some justification for this can be found in numerous cases of hostility towards displaced persons from Donbas after 2014 and the spread of negative attitudes towards forced migrants on social media);
- Fear of further aggression by the Russian Federation and corresponding waves of mobilisations in the future may lead to the non-return of families with young boys.

When discussing the chances for and scale of the return, we cannot ignore the differences in how those who live in Ukraine and forced migrants assess their situation, the prospects for this situation to change and their own life prospects. It is sometimes very difficult for those who have been living in Ukraine for a long time to understand the psychology of those who have left. Essentially, there are two different groups with different assessments and forecasts. Migrants abroad have little access to objective information about the level of danger in Ukraine, the destruction, injuries and deaths. They rely on information that is posted on social media or reported by the media, which, in pursuit of readers and subscribers, often do not shy away from flashy headlines (even those that do not correspond to the content of the message) or focus solely on shocking cases of deaths, destruction of civilian buildings, etc.

To this we should add the widespread presence of Russian propaganda aimed at Russian-speaking populations in European countries. As a result, Ukrainian forced migrants often believe that it is impossible (dangerous) to return not only to Kharkiv or Odesa, but also to relatively safe locations such as Lviv or Ternopil. These differences in assessments often create misunderstandings in determining the motives for future migration behaviour and contradictions between the conclusions of experts based in Ukraine and the results of surveys of migrants abroad. In turn, this inevitably affects perceptions of the actions that should be taken by and expected from central and regional authorities, businesses, and local communities.

The widespread desire to meet certain social expectations also cannot be ignored. For example, there is reason to believe that not as many respondents actually believe in Ukraine's victory as sociological surveys indicate. The same applies to the population's readiness to endure hardship for as long as necessary and to take up arms to defend Ukraine. It is likely that people are not always sincere about their migration intentions either – which seems

completely feasible during war – and quite possible that most respondents believe their expressed intentions are honest. People are not always ready to admit everything, even to themselves, and they are not prepared to inform the relevant authorities, let alone outsiders.

Therefore, it seems that to obtain a complete picture of future migration behaviour and truthful, sincere answers, research is needed – including by experts – not on the subject of respondent intentions to return/not to return, but to collect subjective assessments of the main factors that influence (or will influence future) decision-making.

Opportunities to harmonise the interests of the two countries through migration regulation and achieve a ‘triple win’

Reconciling the interests of the three main actors in the migration process, i.e. the country of origin, the country of destination and the migrants themselves, requires first of all defining what these interests are.

For those Ukrainians who crossed the Ukrainian–Polish border en masse in the first period after Russia’s large-scale invasion, the main motivation was to seek safety and save their children. However, the community of Ukrainians in Poland was formed much earlier due to numerous labour migrants who came to work, mostly temporarily, who were guided by economic motives. Moreover, the refugees also included people who were already considering labour migration, for whom the war became an additional push factor, and temporary protection status was an opportunity to establish legal status in a foreign country. In addition, at a time when temporary travel to work abroad for men of conscription age has become impossible due to martial law in Ukraine, women have been supporting their families by working abroad, mainly residents of the Ukrainian–Polish border region, where labour migration to Poland has always been commonplace.

We must realise that after the war ends and martial law is lifted, given the level of destruction in Ukraine, the loss of housing, property, jobs, and sharp decline in the level of well-being of the population, labour migration abroad will intensify, and not only among women but also men who do not currently have this opportunity. Ukrainians are interested in working in Poland because of significantly higher earnings and, at the same time, fewer difficulties and risks of migration due to geographical, linguistic and cultural proximity, as well as fairly liberal migration legislation.

For Ukraine, whose population is rapidly declining as a result of unfavourable demographic trends and massive forced migration abroad caused by the war, the return of compatriots to their homeland is a strategic task with the potential to counteract the depopulation trends that pose a clear threat to the integrity, independence, and sovereignty of the state, its geopolitical interests, the political functioning of the Ukrainian nation, ethnic and cultural development, economic growth, and post-war reconstruction. While internal forced displacement leads to significant changes in the distribution of the population, it also risks degradation of regions close to the front line and the border with Russia and an increase in population density in the centre and west of the country beyond the ecological capacity of these areas – migration abroad leads to direct losses.

The shortage of workers, which is already noticeable in a number of industries and professions, will become more acute during the post-war reconstruction period, as labour demand grows. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Economy, over the next 10 years, an additional 4.5 million workers will have to be hired.¹³⁸

The International Labour Organisation has provided forecasts of the labour input required to achieve the GDP figure envisaged by the government of Ukraine for 2032.¹³⁹ According to the baseline scenario, if labour productivity returns to pre-war levels by 2032, the number of people employed in Ukraine would have to increase by 67% compared to 2022 and by 37% compared to pre-war 2021 to reach the target GDP level. This means that 8.6 million additional workers would be needed, 60% of whom would be in the service sector, 27.4% in industry, and 12.6% in agriculture. Moreover, more than half (4.73 million) of them would need to have a university degree.

The second scenario developed by the ILO envisaged the growth in labour productivity that would be needed to reach the target GDP level in 2032 if the number of people employed in Ukraine returned to the level of 2021 and then grew at the same rate as before the war.¹⁴⁰ According to these calculations, labour

138 'Restoration of the Labour Market Is the Way to Our Victory', Tetyana Berezhna, 13 July 2023, <https://www.me.gov.ua/News/Detail?lang=uk-UA&id=3741cc27-dbe5-433e-a139-1d480735bc51&title=VidnovlenniaRinkuPratsiTseShliakhDoNashoiPeremogi-TetianaBerezhna>.

139 *Prospects for Achieving Ukraine's GDP Indicators for 2032 in the Context of the Labour Market*, International Labour Organisation (in Ukrainian), September 2023, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k-8KeMjvdKiG8jLIQH6iicXye24qhZPTN/view>.

140 On the topic of the scale of labour migration to Ukraine during the war, see: 'На будівництві в Україні почнуть працювати мігранти з Азії та Африки, дефіцит кадрів сягнув 40%', *Громадське*,

productivity would have to grow by more than 6% annually, which is twice the average for the pre-war period (2.7%).

The third scenario is based on the assumption that the number of employees and labour productivity will grow at the same rate as in previous periods. Under such conditions, it would be impossible to achieve the target GDP level by 2032, and the forecasted figure is 17.8% lower.

Thus, achieving the country's reconstruction goals will require a significant increase in both labour productivity and the number of employed people. To ensure the desired number of employees, the level of economic activity among Ukrainians needs to increase by 7% annually, the participation of women in the labour market needs to increase by 24% by 2030, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities need to be expanded.¹⁴¹ It remains important to align education with the needs of the labour market and to establish close cooperation between the education system and the economy as a customer of educational services. However, the 'super task', as the President of Ukraine put it, is to create conditions for the return of as many people as possible who were forced to flee the dangers of war abroad.¹⁴²

In these circumstances, the Ukrainian state should try to maximise the use of labour migration for the development of society and minimise its possible negative consequences. Under current conditions, the strategic directions of Ukraine's state policy with respect to migration policy should be: increasing the percentage of returns from foreign labour trips and strengthening ties between Ukrainian workers as well as their homeland (in particular, by expanding distance learning opportunities for children of labour migrants who are abroad with their parents), strengthening the social protection of Ukrainian workers abroad (by creating information and consultation centres at diplomatic missions in other countries), as well as providing effective support for small and medium-sized businesses created by migrants or returnees.

The state should demonstrate its readiness for change: ensuring the rule of law and respect for human rights, fighting corruption effectively, meeting EU

13 June 2024, <https://hromadske.ua/ekonomika/225931-na-budivnytstvi-v-ukrayini-pochnut-pratsi-uvaty-mihranty-z-aziyi-ta-afryky-defitsyt-kadriv-siahnuv-40-zmi> (editor's note).

141 *The Ministry of Economy, ILO and IOM Continue to Lay the Foundation for a Strong and Productive Post-War Labour Market in Ukraine*, IOM Ukraine, 8 December 2023, <https://ukraine.iom.int/uk/news/ministerstvo-ekonomiky-mop-ta-mom-prodovzhuyut-zakladaty-fundament-dlya-mitsnoho-ta-produktyvnoho-povoyennoho-rynku-pratsi-v-ukrayini>, accessed 15 September 2024.

142 *Speech by the President of Ukraine in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Day of the Constitution of Ukraine*, 28 June 2023, <https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/238212.html>, accessed 15 September 2024.

and NATO standards, and achieving true improvement in the business climate in Ukraine. Few people will be willing to return to a corrupt Ukraine. It is advisable to establish preferential tax regimes for newly established businesses (at the level of tax exemptions cancelled on 1 July 2023) when reforms begin. Alternatively, tax breaks could be granted after one year of operation, for example, for the next six-month period. For migrants who return with sufficient capital, state subsidies for business activities are worth considering – a similar programme is successfully operating in Moldova.

The provision of housing and employment to potential returnees, as well as residents of Ukraine who have not travelled abroad, will depend on the amount and targets of foreign investments and effective control over their implementation. It is important to focus not only on the reconstruction of residential buildings, but also on the comprehensive restoration of community territories. Even if a person has comfortable housing and decent employment, they will not feel comfortable commuting between home and work through ruins every day. During reconstruction, we should not focus on renovating dilapidated, old buildings, but developing completely new housing and infrastructure networks that meet European standards.

Poland, a neighbour, reliable partner and ally of Ukraine in the fight against the aggressor, has provided shelter to more than a million Ukrainian forced migrants, made significant efforts to accommodate and resettle them, spending huge amounts of money in the process. However, in the long run, the economic effect of these expenditures is positive. Poland's economy is growing and the labour market is experiencing a shortage. Demand for labour over the next five years will require approximately half a million workers.¹⁴³ Currently, these vacancies have been filled by Ukrainians, who are actively integrating into the labour market and paying taxes. According to a study conducted by EWL, a company that provides temporary employment for migrants in Europe, 84% of Ukrainians of working age were employed in Poland a year after the start of the Russian–Ukrainian war.¹⁴⁴ Revenues from contributions and taxes paid by Ukrainians amounted to PLN 12.3–15.2 billion in 2022 and 18.2–22.5 billion in 2023, while the Polish government spent PLN 15 billion in 2022 and

143 'Ukrainian Refugees Saved the Polish Economy', interview with a representative of the Migration Platform EWL, *Radiosvoboda*, 25 March 2024, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/ty-iak-bizhentsi-ekonomika-rynok-pratsi-polshcha/32874526.html>.

144 A. Zymin, *Raport 'Uchodźcy Wojenni z Ukrainy. Rok w Polsce' (War Refugees from Ukraine. A Year in Poland)*, EWL, 21 February 2023, <https://ewl.com.pl/raport-uchodzczy-wojenni-z-ukrainy-rok-w-polsce/>.

about PLN 5 billion in 2023 to support refugees from Ukraine.¹⁴⁵ Newcomers also contribute to the economic development of the host country by increasing consumption. According to calculations by the National Bank of Ukraine, all other things being equal, Ukrainians will contribute 2.2–2.3% more to the output of goods and services in Poland in 2026 than in the baseline scenario without migration, and their contribution to Poland's annual GDP growth will represent about 1.2 percentage points per year.¹⁴⁶ Other researchers have come to a similar conclusion: refugees will ensure the country's GDP grows by 0.7–1.1% in 2023, an effect that will increase in future to 0.9–1.35%.¹⁴⁷

This means that the incorporation of Ukrainian labour is in the interests of the Polish economy. At the same time, the prolonged stay of large numbers of Ukrainians creates some social tensions. In the third year of the war, Polish support for Ukraine is no longer so unambiguous. According to a survey conducted by experts from the University of Warsaw, only 17% of Poles express a willingness to accept refugees from Ukraine with the possibility of settlement (compared to 37% more than a year ago); 61% want Ukrainians to return to their country after the war.¹⁴⁸

Thus, we are dealing with the desire of Ukrainians to earn money in Poland, the Ukrainian state's fears of losing its population as a result of emigration and the desire of forced migrants to return to their homeland, as well as the interest of the Polish economy and business in taking advantage of Ukrainian labour while maintaining moderate support for permanent immigration.

The model of circular migration that was prevalent during the pre-war period between Ukraine and Poland could be one way to reconcile these interests. To preserve it, efforts should be made on both sides to develop migration regulation tools that would satisfy the needs of the Polish economy for workers and the desire of Ukrainians to earn money in Poland, while ensuring that Ukraine remains the centre of their vital interests.

145 *Poland: Analysis of the Impact of Refugees from Ukraine on the Economy of Poland – March 2024*, UNHCR Operational Data Portal, 5 March 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106993>.

146 O. Tucha, I. Spivak, O. Bondarenko and O. Pogarska, *Impact of Ukrainian Migrants on Economies of Recipient Countries...*, op. cit.

147 *Poland: Analysis of the Impact of Refugees from Ukraine on the Economy of Poland – March 2024...*, op. cit.

148 'The Attitude of Poles Towards Ukrainians Has Worsened, According to Research', *Radiosvoboda*, 18 June 2024, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-polshcha-stavlennja-do-ukrajinciv-pogirshylos-ja-doslidzhennja/32997547.html>.

In this context, it might make sense to conclude temporary employment agreements similar to those that Poland had with Germany in the 1990s, when 200,000–300,000 Poles travelled to Germany annually for temporary work. Patterns of seasonal worker migration from Ukraine to EU countries based on intergovernmental agreements that were concluded in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken into account.

Any measures that simplify procedures and speed up crossings on the Ukrainian–Polish border, including the opening of new checkpoints, the introduction of joint control, and the development of transport links, will help to preserve the circular migration model.

Unimpeded mobility between the two countries could be facilitated by Poland’s adoption of regulations on the stay of Ukrainians that are similar to those adopted in Ukraine in 2022 for Poles, i.e. permitting employment without the need to obtain a special permit, long-term residence without a visa, etc. In essence, this is the introduction of a legal regime for Ukrainians in Poland similar to that enjoyed by EU citizens. Among other things, this would help to reduce the flow of Ukrainian migrants from Poland to other European countries, which is in the interest of both Poland and Ukraine, as people who are in a neighbouring country are more likely to return home than those who have left for distant countries.¹⁴⁹

Ensuring full rights and freedoms to Ukrainians in Poland is also a trilateral interest, as it opens up better employment opportunities, social mobility and access to better-paid jobs for migrants, who can accumulate the experience and financial resources they need to succeed, regardless of their future place of residence, i.e. whether they stay in Poland or return to Ukraine.

This will not only help to protect the rights of Ukrainians in Poland, but also allow migrants to achieve the goals they aspire to, including capital accumulation. As part of the legalisation process, it is also necessary to intensify

149 This also depends on:

1. The cost of travel to Ukraine
2. Travel time to Ukraine
3. The availability of residence documents for foreigners and the waiting period to receive them (often the lack of documents is a barrier to cross-border migration – the waiting period for temporary residence in Poland is one year, compared to less than a month in the Netherlands)
4. Which part of Ukraine is the return destination (travel safety, duration and cost)
5. Gender (men are much less likely to migrate, if at all)
6. The composition of the migrant’s household in the country of origin and emigration
7. The place and type of work: not everyone is entitled to vacation days and some have no time to travel (editor’s note).

negotiations on pension agreements with countries where Ukrainian migrants work, and to monitor the implementation of existing agreements.

Since a significant number of Ukrainian students study in Poland and refugee children attend schools, cooperation in the field of education could be effective, e.g. the education of Ukrainian students in Polish universities and vocational schools in specialties that are in demand not only in Poland but also in Ukraine, ideally in cooperation with Ukrainian educational institutions, as well as schooling of Ukrainian children under programmes jointly developed by Polish and Ukrainian educators that would ensure knowledge of their native language, history, and culture.

At the same time, mutual recognition of knowledge and qualifications, both those obtained in Ukraine and those acquired during their stay in Poland, as well as creating conditions for the unimpeded continuation of education of pupils and students regardless of their place of residence, i.e. simplifying procedures for bilateral recognition of acquired knowledge, are extremely important for both integration abroad and eventual return home.

The development and strengthening of migrant ties with Ukraine, organisation of cultural life in Ukrainian communities with Polish support, and political involvement by migrants will contribute to the circularity of Ukrainian migration to Poland. In this regard, an agreement on dual citizenship may be effective, as well as all possible assistance from the Polish state to ensure the participation of Ukrainians in Poland in the Ukrainian elections to be held after the lifting of martial law.

The two countries should also cooperate in preserving and strengthening the financial ties of refugees with Ukraine, help reduce the cost of remittances, and ensure the avoidance of double taxation.

Ukrainian government agencies should explain to Polish authorities, as well as to other international partners, that the benefits for the EU from demographic gains may not be commensurate with the threats that Ukraine's shrinking population will pose. These threats include, among others, a decline in Ukraine's defence capabilities, inevitable economic stagnation due to labour shortages, and the prospect of mass transit of unwanted migrants from third countries, which will be difficult to counteract given Ukraine's low population density. Accordingly, recipient countries should be allowed to set a time limit for the validity of temporary protection, develop criteria that require a migrant to leave the recipient country, as well as provide free travel and return grants. Implementation of circular migration support programmes for Ukrainians returning

to their homeland for permanent residence might be a compromise between the interests of Poland (as well as other EU countries) and Ukraine.

Mutually beneficial cooperation between Ukraine and Poland in regulating interstate migration should become an important component of assistance to Ukraine in its post-war recovery.

Recommendations and avenues for further research

For a long time, and especially since the beginning of full-scale hostilities, external migration has been the main driver of demographic dynamics and labour supply in Ukraine. That is why its trajectory during the war and post-war periods is of paramount importance for the country's reconstruction.

The main incentives for return are security, housing, work, and ties to Ukraine. It is clear that implementing any measures to encourage forced migrants to return during martial law would be naïve, to say the least. However, certain actions should be taken now that will lay the groundwork for post-war returns. In the current circumstances, the Ukrainian government's policy should be aimed at cooperating and maintaining ties with Ukrainians abroad. The peculiarity of the Ukrainian diaspora is that it is formed by both citizens of other states (people of Ukrainian origin) and Ukrainian citizens permanently residing abroad. Today, the Ukrainian diaspora is actually growing due to forced external migrants. The state pays a lot of attention to cooperation with the diaspora, but new realities require modernisation of the existing policy.

It is imperative to establish communication with Ukrainians abroad and systematically provide them with true information about the situation in Ukraine and on the frontlines. Given that not everyone will trust official sources, we should focus on engaging civil society organisations in this work, explaining the importance of such communications with relatives and friends to all those who remain in Ukraine. If the state wants to demonstrate an interest in returning Ukrainians to their homeland and informing migrants about the situation in the country, visits by officials to foreign countries should include meetings with Ukrainian diaspora communities.

The state policy of returning migrants should include the creation of conditions to encourage citizens to return home and reduce the population outflow from Ukraine: constant support and protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens abroad, providing them with reliable and up-to-date information necessary for return and reintegration; expanding and strengthening contacts

with Ukrainian citizens who remain abroad to ensure their potential return to their homeland; influencing public opinion to encourage favourable attitudes to the return of Ukrainian citizens; introduction of monitoring of the needs and attitudes of migrants. It is also important to coordinate migration policy with countries that have granted temporary protection to Ukrainians and international organisations, establishing an information exchange with countries where Ukrainian citizens reside and improving migration statistics in accordance with European standards.

Research into forced migration should certainly rely on migrant surveys, but also take into account that today's responses may not coincide with future decisions and in many cases may even contradict them. Moreover, the answers often do not reflect the true positions of respondents on politically sensitive issues such as returning to their homeland and the desire to meet social expectations. In addition to survey data, expert forecasts of future migrant behaviour should be taken into account. However, when using expert knowledge to predict future migrant activities, we should take into account fundamental differences in perspectives between residents of Ukraine and those who live abroad on the situation in Ukraine. These reservations also apply to measures implemented to motivate forced and economic migrants to return home.

Joint research by scholars from Ukraine and recipient countries to determine the reasons for the divergences in data from Ukrainian and European sources and establish the real scale of forced migration from Ukraine seems promising. Such research should include interviews with forced migrants, especially to explore how they made their way to European countries, as well as with representatives of state authorities in Ukraine and the EU.

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Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine has led to forced migration on a scale unseen since the Second World War. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by mid-2024 the number of people from Ukraine who had received temporary protection in European countries (excluding Russia and Belarus) and in North America exceeded 5.2 million, including nearly one million in Poland. The prospect of Ukraine's European integration brings with it the challenge of a further outflow of people who, once granted European citizenship, will gain the right to live, work and study freely in a united Europe.

For Ukraine, whose population is rapidly declining due to negative demographic trends and massive forced emigration caused by the war, the return of compatriots to their homeland is a strategic task. For Poland, on the other hand, whose significant spending on supporting refugees from Ukraine is already bringing positive economic effects, it is in the national interest to harness the potential of the Ukrainian diaspora in the Polish labour market.

Reconciling the interests of the three main actors in the migration process – that is, the country of origin, the destination country and the migrants themselves – requires a clear definition of those interests, precise data on the scale of migration, and reasonable public policies developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This report aims to contribute to that goal by outlining the current migration situation of Ukraine, analysing possible scenarios for its future development, and providing recommendations for both Polish and Ukrainian migration policy.