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Ukrainian Migration Crisis Caused by the War

Abstract

The open Russian military invasion of Ukraine supported by Belarus launched in February 2022 has changed the usual state of affairs and caused the economic, humanitarian, and migration crises. Several millions of Ukrainian people had to move to safer regions of the country, and a significant share of them (mostly women, children, and elderly people) have left abroad in search of safer living conditions, which has become the worst migration crisis since the World War II. Many Ukrainian citizens have been forced to move to Russia. Poland hosts the largest number of Ukrainian citizens among the EU countries (about 60% of all refugees), much less left for Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Germany. Almost every European country helps Ukraine in some way or another, hosting its residents and providing asylum. The aim of this article is to investigate the tendencies and changes of forced migration in Ukraine in the conditions of war.

The collective protection of displaced persons allows immediate assistance to many people in conditions of emergencies and reduces pressure on the system of asylum provision authorities. This decision provides the right to Ukrainians to live, work, and receive assistance in the EU countries avoiding the lingering process of asylum application submission and long waiting for the respective decision. The article highlights the comparison of standards for providing temporary protection of displaced persons in the EU countries that have accepted most of them.

Certainly, the situation with the mass movement of people or leaving abroad will have negative consequences for Ukraine. The return of forcibly displaced from Ukraine will depend on what way of legal stay abroad

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they choose (status of “forced” tourist, refugee, or temporary protection). Moreover, the duration of hostilities and efficiency and complexity of actions taken by state and local authorities to implement economic and social reforms will have much effect. The article offers various development scenarios for Ukraine and ways and incentives for returning Ukrainian citizens to their Motherland.

Keywords: Migration Crisis, Refugees, Forced Migration, Ukraine, Temporary Protection Status, European Union

Introduction

The large-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine that started on 24 February 2022 and the total violation of international humanitarian law and rules of war by the aggressor have caused mass casualties among civilians and the large-scale destruction of civil infrastructure. It has forced millions of people to leave their homes in the search of safety, protection, and assistance. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of people forced to leave their homes from the start of the war till mid-April 2022 was about 12 million (UNHCR Regional Bureau of Europe, 2022), and 5.1 million of them left Ukraine (Natsionalnyi Instytut Stratehichnykh Doslidzhen, 2022). Obviously, most of those forced to flee the country are women and children (90%).

As of 23 April 2022, mostly the countries Ukraine borders were the major recipients of displaced persons from Ukraine. In the first days of the war, these countries simplified the border crossing procedure. Poland hosts most Ukrainian citizens (2.9 million people), which is about 60% of all refugees. Much fewer people have moved to Romania (782,000) and other neighbors (Kulchytska, 2022) (see Table 1). Moreover, according to official data, almost 600,000 Ukrainians have left (or were forced to leave) for Russia and 24,000 for Belarus (UNHCR Regional Bureau of Europe, 2022). Even according to Russian sources, most Ukrainian refugees in Russian Federation are the residents of the so-called LNR and DNR (about 400,000) (Natsionalnyi Instytut Stratehichnykh Doslidzhen, 2022). People are forcibly taken to the aggressor state from the areas of hostilities, as repeatedly testified from Mariupol and other cities suffering consistent Russian attacks. However, according to the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, the figure is much higher, amounting to over 700,000. It's a well-known fact that 113,000 were taken to Russia on February 21–23 from the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Moreover, during the war, the residents of villages

and cities occupied by the enemy were also forcibly taken to the Russian Federation. For the moment, it is hard to control their number. The estimates of Ukrainian authorities indicate that about 40,000 people were taken from Mariupol and its suburbs alone.

Among other countries, most refugees from Ukraine are registered in Germany (331,600), the Czech Republic (300,000), Bulgaria (185,000), and Italy (95,000) (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022). However, these figures show only the fact of border crossing rather than the final destination.

Table 1. Refugees Fleeing Ukraine to Neighboring Countries From 28 February to 25 April¹

Country	People
Republic of Poland	2 922 978
Romania	782 598
Russia	614 318
Hungary	496 914
Republic of Moldova	435 275
Slovak Republic	357 560

Source: based on data of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

Migration Crisis in Ukraine in Figures

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, says that the migration crisis in Ukraine is the fastest growing one since World War II (The Economist, 2022). Over 10% of residents fled the country during a month and a half of the large-scale war alone. On the positive side, Ukrainian citizens have got an opportunity to save their lives and retain mental health. Moreover, almost the entire area of the country is under constant threat of the enemy's air attacks to a certain extent. Meanwhile, the massive fleeing of the population, in addition to military losses (3,000 servicemen) (Rakurs, 2022) and substantial losses of civilians (over 20,000 civilians died in blocked Mariupol alone) (Informatsiine ahentstvo Interfax Ukraina, 2022), poses a threat to demographic, economic, and social security of the country. Therefore, the issue of returning our citizens to their Motherland will be of utmost importance after the end of the war. The solution depends on many factors. Naturally, Ukraine's victory, creation of a safe and peaceful environment, and quick restoration of de-

¹ The total data in the Table is higher than the number of refugees fleeing Ukraine (5.2 million) since it takes into account people crossing the border between Romania and Moldova

stroyed cities and settlements are the first and necessary conditions. Yet, a lot will rest on the motives and initial intentions of displaced persons. At first glance, the results of research of the Razumkov Center Sociology Service conducted in March 2022 at border checkpoints in Zakarpatska oblast seem to be quite optimistic. They show that most people leaving abroad due to hostilities were planning to return to Ukraine after the end of the war (79%) (Razumkov tsentr, 2022). Only each tenth respondent expressed the determination to remain abroad, and the rest (11%) hesitated to answer. There is a reason to believe that the percentage of those eager to return will be much lower (e.g., the survey of forcibly displaced people from Ukraine in Poland conducted by the Polish agency EWL revealed only 58% of those eager to return home) (Mind, 2022). In addition to this, slightly more than half of the respondents are residents of the East and South of the country, 45% – residents of central oblasts, and only 4% – western oblasts of Ukraine. So, the respondents are mostly from areas of hostilities or close to the line of contact, or their settlements have faced shelling and air attacks. Since the same research wasn't conducted at border checkpoints in Lvivska oblast, based on our own observations, we can assume that the percentage of those eager to return might have turned out to be much lower. Because a substantial share of people (mostly from western regions of Ukraine) used simplified entry terms to take children abroad (without a notarized parental consent) or realize their intentions to arrange their lives abroad. Yet, this issue needs detailed research.

How quickly the forcibly displaced people from Ukraine come back depends on the mode of their legal stay abroad (status of “forced” tourist, refugee, or temporary protection). Regarding the first option, it can be used by all holders of biometric passports that allow them to stay in the EU countries for 90 days. If they are provided with housing (stay with relatives or acquaintances), they do not need financial assistance and are not obliged to register in the host country. It is obvious that the category of displaced people will return first, and the percentage of returns in this group will be the highest.

However, most of those fleeing war formalize their refugee status or ask for temporary protection. Under these statuses, a person gets more or less similar rights (accommodation, right to employment, access to housing, medical and social assistance, access to education for children and teenagers), but the ways they get or lose them and regulations are different. It is worth mentioning that on 4 March 2022, the European Union, for the first time, activated Article 5 of the Directive on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons (2001/55/EC as of 20 July 2001) (Council Implementation

Decision, 2022). The directive regulates immediate protection of citizens from third countries that are forced to escape *en masse* war or violation of human rights to the EU territory since it is very difficult to perform the standard procedure of providing asylum that stipulates an individual approach to the review of applications in conditions of the unexpected arrival of many refugees. The collective protection of displaced people allows helping many people without delay in emergencies and reduces the pressure on the system of granting asylum. The solution has given Ukrainians the right to live, work, and receive assistance in 26 of 27 EU countries avoiding the lingering process of asylum application submission and long waiting for the respective decision.

It is worth mentioning that the temporary protection period is one year with an opportunity to prolong it to three years. However, if the war ends and the situation in Ukraine stabilizes, the temporary protection period will cease earlier.

The refugee status guarantees the right to permanent residence in the respective country. Meanwhile, the refugee status application procedure has some peculiarities in different EU countries (passport retention for application processing period that can last for 6–9 months, a ban to leave the country, and impossibility of employment during this period) (Hanziienko, 2022). Taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of each status, the choice of a displaced person depends on the motives mentioned above. So those eager to return home right after the hostilities end choose temporary protection.

On 21 March 2022, European Commission issued Operational guidelines on the Temporary Protection Directive that specifies the categories of persons covered or not covered by the right to temporary asylum and defines family members that can reunite with refugees and the rules for dealing with children and movement between the EU countries, etc. The Council of the European Union approved a 10-point plan for war refugees from Ukraine (Deutsche Welle, 2022c). The first point is the establishment of a unified arrival registration system. Currently, the registration systems of different countries aren't connected, but the information exchange platform is underway (Natsionalnyi Instytut stratehichnykh doslidzhen, 2022). According to Ylva Johansson, the Commissioner for Home Affairs, the platform will help avoid double registration. The platform is being developed by the EU agency that manages large-scale IT systems in justice and security (eu-LISA). The platform will allow national authorities to see who of Ukrainian refugees and where applied for registration following the temporary protection mechanism and who received it (Deutsche Welle, 2022b).

EU countries pay considerable attention to securing access to information, and a single European website for Ukrainian citizens was launched in March. Information hubs were organized on the border, in transport hubs, and in settlements to provide refugees with information on possible move and accommodation.

EU Countries Hosting the Largest Number of Ukrainian Refugees

Poland, which hosts the largest number of Ukrainian citizens, has taken a range of measures to make their movement and stay in the country comfortable. In particular, the entry procedure was simplified as much as possible (they could cross the border even with internal passports), and free travel was introduced for all types of public transport. They don't have to contact assistance centers, they just show their Ukrainian passports with border crossing stamps after 24 February 2022 directly in place of service. It is worth mentioning that almost half of EU countries started to gradually introduce free travel for Ukrainian refugees (Slovak Republic, Austria, Romania, Germany, Hungary, etc.). Other countries provide free travel for Ukrainians for some types of transport (e.g., only railway), transport operators, or in some big cities.

Forcibly displaced persons that have found temporary protection in Poland are assigned an identification number PESEL (Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2022) that grants access to medical care, employment, and education and stipulates a one-time payment of PLN 300 (about UAH 2,100) per adult and PLN 500 (UAH 3,500) per child. Additional one-time financial assistance (PLN 700) Ukrainians can receive under the UN program. Moreover, Poland grants social payments under various programs for support of families with children, including the purchase of school supplies and co-funding the nursery, kids club, or guardianship fees. So even mothers with small children can find employment. Children from Ukraine get an opportunity to study for free in public schools, not even knowing the language (school organizes additional language lessons for them), and students continue their studies. Although Poland has unfolded a broad network of volunteer support to Ukrainians, Poles are also additionally encouraged by the Government. Individuals or organizations providing housing and catering to Ukrainians receive PLN 1,200 a month (UAH 8,500) but only for 60 days.

The President of Poland Andrzej Duda has signed three bills to facilitate the stay of refugees from Ukraine. According to Rzechpospolita (Rzechpospolita, 2022), the first one is the so-called special act on as-

sistance to Ukraine that provides that the refugees arriving from other countries after 24 February can apply for assistance same as those coming directly from Ukraine. The second law outlines the procedure of registration of minor Ukrainians, including those arriving in Poland without legal guardians. The register is designated to secure an opportunity for the Polish Government to give the Ukrainian party information about the fate of children in the country's territory. The third adopted law regulates the validity of the Ukrainian driver's license in Poland and transport registration. In particular, it suspends the requirement for mandatory replacement of a Ukrainian driver's license with a Polish document for 6 days from the receipt of a permanent or temporary residence permit till late 2022.

Romania is the second country by the number of hosted forcibly displaced people from Ukraine. Asylum seekers in Romania have a chance for free accommodation and catering in one of six regional centers managed by the General Immigration Inspection. Ukrainians, same as other foreigners, have the right to work on the same terms as Romanian citizens in three months since applying for temporary protection. The Government and civil society developed the Dopomoha platform that simplifies the asylum procedure and the search for accommodation and job. Ukrainian citizens entering Romania with biometric passport have the right to free medical care and examination for 90 days.

According to the UN, about 570,000 refugees arrived in Hungary from the beginning of the war till May 8 (Telex, 2022). It is a significant number, although the Hungarian Government had previously named an even higher figure. Hungarian policy has also announced the number of Ukrainians entering the country from Romania. According to their information, Hungary has welcomed more than a million Ukrainian refugees already.

On May 6, Hungarian National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing published the data showing that 20,275 Ukrainians have applied for the so-called "asylum status" since the beginning of the war (Infopost. Media, 2022). It is the meager number of arrivals from Ukraine. This status gives the right to medical care, attending school, accommodation, catering, free language courses, and HUF 22,000 (€ 58) of financial assistance a month.

The Hungarian National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing has announced that 10,251 Ukrainians have refugee status as of May 6 (Infopost. Media, 2022). The lack of information and proper communication is the reason why so many Ukrainian refugees have applied for this status. Traditionally, Ukrainians stay in Hungary for several days and go further

to the countries of Western Europe. According to the police, the number of fleeing from Ukraine in the country was from 15,000 to 20,000. Last week this figure stabilized within 4,000–6,000 (Infopost.Media, op.cit.).

The obvious fact is that most refugees go further to Hungary – mostly to Western Europe. However, the Hungarian Government keeps insisting on a significant number of Ukrainians being welcomed by Hungary.

On April 21, the Speaker of the National Assembly Gergely Gulyás announced at the press conference that 625,000 Ukrainian refugees had arrived in Hungary since the beginning of the war, although the UN reports a much lower figure. The difference can be in the fact that the Government also includes in the statistics those arriving from Romania.

The experience shows that the procedure of application for asylum in Hungary goes far from smoothly. For instance, 52 times more people have submitted similar applications in Poland by late April and 19 times more in the Czech Republic. Even in Spain, 2.5 times more people have applied for this legal status than in Hungary (Infopost.Media, op.cit.).

With regard to the Slovak Republic, 56,800 people that have crossed the Ukrainian-Slovakian border have applied for one-year residence, but only 142 people have applied for refugee status. These figures were announced by the Ukrainian Ambassador to Slovakia Yuri Mushka (Ukrinform, 2022). These people can count on medical care, although not entire scope of medical assistance but only emergency care, and they can use transport and motorways for free. Any person that is provided with temporary asylum has the right to free movement in the Slovak Republic, travel to another EU country, and even travel to Ukraine and return to the territory of the Slovak Republic anytime. If you decide to return to Ukraine not planning to return to the Slovak Republic as a refugee, you must reject temporary asylum in writing, addressing it to the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Ua.gov.sk, 2022).

According to Ambassador, 56,800 are legally staying in Slovakia and not going to leave the country. Other forcibly displaced either cross the country to move further to the Czech Republic or the countries of Western Europe or haven't registered yet. Commentating on the intentions of forcibly displaced, Mushka informs that our compatriots mostly want to return to Ukraine, and some are already going back as the situation slightly stabilizes (Ukrinform, 2022).

Germany received the largest number of Ukrainian citizens among the countries not bordering Ukraine (since the beginning of the large-scale war). The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community informs that 266,000 refugees from Ukraine were registered in the country as of late March 2022 (Komisarova, 2022). Ukrainians can get here for free

from Poland, Hungary, Austria, and the Czech Republic. The temporary protection application procedure is simplified as much as possible for Ukrainian citizens in some German regions (they just have to send the scanned passport and completed questionnaires by e-mail to the Office on Foreigners). Temporary protection includes a limited list of medical services. Full medical insurance is granted only to employed refugees. For that matter, Ukrainians have to receive a permit. If people are not accommodated in a dormitory provided by social service agencies and are not getting material assistance (clothes, food, furniture), they have the right to the financial assistance of the state in the amount of € 367 per month per an adult. The size of the child allowance depends on age (under 6 years – € 249, from 6 to 17 – € 326, adults under 25 living with parents – € 294) (Deutsche Welle, 2022a). Free German courses are organized for Ukrainians. Pupils and students have a chance to continue their studies in Germany. The main problems here are the deficit of accommodation, especially in large cities, and far too high rent. Obviously, temporary stay facilities (e.g., school gyms) do not have needed conveniences. Therefore, the Wunderflats platform offering free accommodation or discounts for Ukrainians was created. Moreover, there is an opportunity to get social housing compensated by the state.

EU provides financial and logistical assistance to Poland and Romania, which host the largest number of Ukrainians, same as to Moldova. Several EU countries and Norway previously offered to welcome 14,500 Ukrainian refugees from Moldova. Other countries will prepare additional sites they can move to (Deutsche Welle, 2022b).

A particular burden parameter formed based on the data on displaced persons from Ukraine, the total number of refugees, and the ratio of these parameters to the population is planned for introduction (Natsionalnyi Instytut stratehichnykh doslidzhen, 2022). Meanwhile, Poland and Germany call for a more distinct solidarity scheme, in particular for allocation of a fixed amount of funds from the EU to the hosting country for each accommodated refugee.

The system of quotas for the redistribution of refugees between the EU countries will not work since Ukrainians have the right to stay 90 days in the EU under a visa-free regime, and they can choose any country they want to stay in. Experts' calculations confirmed by the data of mobile operators allow arguing that the third part of Ukrainians having crossed the Polish border do not stay in the country but head to other states (Mind, op.cit.). To facilitate their movement, a decision was made to reinforce the coordination of transport connections and cooperation with Great Britain, the USA, and Canada.

Moreover, European Union has already launched the solidarity platform where each country provides information on how many refugees from Ukraine it can take. Namely, the information includes accommodation for a longer stay of Ukrainians in the EU. EU home affairs ministers agreed to create an index that would help unload the countries hosting most people. The index should contain the following data: how many displaced from Ukraine are in each EU country, how many refugees are in total from all over the world, and how these figures correlate with the population there. The information on the state of affairs should be updated regularly (Deutsche Welle, 2022b).

European Union is also developing an action plan to prevent the exploitation of Ukrainian refugees by criminal groups. It is of utmost importance since most of them are women and children. Moreover, the ministers agreed to attract Europol and activate the European Interdisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). In such a way, the EU is trying to prevent criminals or people from terrorism databases from entering its territory.

According to Deutsche Welle, EU bodies can potentially use € 17 billion from the pandemic recovery fund and unused funds from the previous seven-year budget period (2014–2020). However, Ylva Johansson, the Commissioner for Home Affairs, doesn't confirm this figure, just mentioning that European Commission is looking for funding opportunities (Deutsche Welle, 2022b).

Conclusions

The research shows that most Ukrainians that have left their Motherland due to war have family members that remain in Ukraine (Mind, op.cit.). On the one hand, it can be an essential incentive for return. Therefore, according to the optimistic scenario, a significant part of people who have left abroad will return to Ukraine after the war ends.

On the other hand, the longer the war continues the more people will leave. Moreover, for many Ukrainian refugees, this time can be enough to arrange their lives abroad. After the martial law is terminated, their husbands that have no right to leave Ukraine currently can join them. Therefore, according to the pessimistic scenario, the end of war can lead to a new powerful wave of international migration generated by the relatives of those who left abroad during the war and those urged by the fear of poverty (which often is the consequence of the after-war economic crisis).

The realization of the optimistic scenario depends on the efficiency and complex nature of measures taken by state and local authorities. Since

220,000 Ukrainians lost their homes due to Russian hostilities, in addition to their gradual restoration, it is necessary to expand the range of housing for temporary residence. Despite the fact that Verhovna Rada of Ukraine has registered the bill on reimbursement of destroyed and damaged housing, its implementation will take time. It is worth noting that the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi has announced before that the World Bank will allocate \$ 4.8 billion to rebuild Ukraine (Bovsunovska, 2022). Meanwhile, social infrastructure needs recovery and modernization as soon as possible (roads, schools, kindergartens, etc.). The mechanisms of returning citizens to Ukraine can be efficient only after these urgent problems are solved. The development of such mechanisms must be based on the results of the sociological monitoring of relevant problems, needs, and intentions of people forced to leave their country. The monitoring also has to determine the relevance and opportunities to develop a circular migration model. Meanwhile, there is a need for an active awareness-raising campaign to form the citizens' understanding and recognition of their importance and the significance of their contribution to the processes of the country's recovery.

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