

— SPECIAL SECTION TWO —

# Editorial Introduction: Migration Dynamics, Trajectories and Policies in the Context of Russian Full-Scale Aggression against Ukraine

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*This short introduction presents the context and background information to the CEEMR special section analysing the migration dynamics, trajectories, everyday reality and policies in the context of Russian full-scale aggression against Ukraine. The special section contains the first group of articles dealing with the unprecedented migration consequences of military aggression against Ukraine, including air strikes on many Ukrainian cities, the use of indiscriminate weapons, killing and deportations as well as the economic consequences of protracted armed conflict. The intensity of the migration movement should also be explained by the quick opening by neighbouring countries of their borders to the incoming refugees. The exceptionality of the situation and high uncertainty about further developments led us to conclude that this special section should not follow any prior conceptual background but should be open to different perspectives and approaches in studying migration from/in/to Ukraine.*

*Keywords: Ukraine, Russian aggression, forced migration, migration policies*

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## Setting the scene

This short introduction presents the context and background information to the CEEMR special section analysing the migration dynamics, trajectories, everyday reality and policies in the context of Russian full-scale aggression against Ukraine. The special section contains the first group of articles dealing with the unprecedented migration consequences of military aggression against Ukraine, including air strikes on many Ukrainian cities, the use of indiscriminate weapons, killing and deportations as well as the economic consequences of protracted armed conflict. The intensity of the migration movement should also be explained by the quick opening by neighbouring countries of their borders to the incoming refugees. The exceptionality of the situation and high uncertainty about further developments led us to conclude that this special section should not follow any prior conceptual background but should be open to different perspectives and approaches in studying migration from/in/to Ukraine.

It should be emphasised that Russian military intervention had already started back in 2014; although it did not cover the whole territory of Ukraine, it had a predominant influence on the migration patterns of Ukrainians. The beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014 had a series of direct and indirect consequences that affected the migration intentions of the population. In most cases, Ukrainian citizens who migrated to EU countries from the temporarily occupied territories between 2014 and 2021 did not receive refugee status, as most of the territory of Ukraine remained under the control of the Ukrainian government. As a result, the majority of those who left the occupied territories at that time chose mixed migration strategies, including legal and illegal employment, marriage and educational migration.

Russian aggression in this period also affected labour migration from Ukraine in general, in particular with regard to its distribution among destination countries. Between 2014 and 2016, Ukrainians started travelling for a variety of reasons to the West more often. For example, according to the data from a representative survey conducted in Poland among Ukrainian labour migrants who left between 1991 and 2019, 77.3 per cent of the participants said that they first went to work in Poland in 2015 and later (Mikheieva and Susak 2019: 10). From 1991 to 2011, quite low rates of migration from Ukraine to Poland were recorded (a total of 10.5 per cent of respondents indicated that they had left in that period). Between 2012 and 2014, a revival of migration flows was noticeable (with 12.2 per cent of respondents leaving at that time). At the same time, there was also a change in the direction of the migration flows. From 2014, there was a decrease in the flow of labour migrants to Russia and an increase in the flow to EU member states and, above all, to Poland (Malynovska 2020). The internal geography of labour migration from Ukraine has also started to change. While, before 2014, the main contributors of labour migrants to Europe were the western regions of Ukraine, after that date almost all regions of the country gradually started to be included in the 'western' vector of labour migration. In 2021, 1.57 million Ukrainian citizens received permits to stay in the EU, making them the third largest group of citizens representing non-EU countries (Eurostat 2022).

The onset of full-scale aggression created a radically new situation. In February 2022, Europe received the largest number of refugees since the Second World War. As a result of the war in Ukraine, the number of all refugees living in the EU increased by 20 per cent (European Commission 2023). Millions of Ukrainians crossed the country's state border in the early days of the war in search of aid and asylum. In response to the scale and intensity of the refugee crisis and for the first time in its history, the European Union activated the Temporary Protection Directive ((TPD), which created a framework for managing massive refugee flows. TPD was adopted in 2001 as a lesson learnt from the Balkan wars, yet was not activated until the Russian full-scale invasion (European Commission 2022).

According to UNHCR (2023) data, as of 1 July 2023, some 6,302,600 refugees from Ukraine were recorded globally (the figure recorded in Europe was 5,949,500 while, beyond Europe, it was 353,100). The main

countries hosting the largest number of refugees from Ukraine as of 31 May 2023 were Germany (1,111,590 or 28 per cent of the total), Poland (991,375; 25 per cent) and the Czech Republic (340,090; 8 per cent) (Eurostat 2023a).

### **Ukrainian forced migration in conditions of war: problems and challenges of research**

The beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022 led to an intensification of research on the forced migration of Ukrainians – both academic and practical – which focused on rapid implementation and practical response. The intensification of research interest in the number of texts related to the study of war-affected societies is important. However, at this stage of studying the Ukrainian situation, we see the prevalence of empirical over theoretical research and the conceptualisation of problems, which generally creates an oversaturation of details and facts with an insufficient level of understanding and assessment of what is happening.

The situation when assessing the scale of forced migration of Ukrainians due to the war is complicated by the fact that many statistics on both the population of Ukraine and the number of migrants are approximate, incomplete and estimated. This applies to both statistical estimates of the population as a whole and of internal and external migration. The last census in Ukraine was conducted in 2001. Accordingly, data on the number of people in the country are approximate, vary due to the use of different methodologies and refer to different geographical areas (e.g. related to the inclusion or exclusion from counts and estimates of the territories occupied in 2014).

Similar problems arise when calculating the number of labour migrants due to the existence of different models of labour migration (permanent, return, border, circular, etc.), to the partial preservation of its irregular nature and to different methods of calculation. As a result, there is a significant discrepancy between the data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the National Bank of Ukraine and the International Monetary Fund on the number of labour migrants (Sushko, Kulczycka and Minicz 2019: 5). The same applies to internal forced migration after the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014.

Refugee and internal migration statistics are also processual in nature. The war continues while its duration, the scale of its consequences and the outcome remain in question. All this forms a situation with a high level of uncertainty. As a result, most of the surveys among Ukrainian forced migrants conducted in Europe today do not answer the question about the future of this migration, the prospects of people's return or their integration into the local communities of the European host countries. The granting of protection in the EU is temporary and there are no clear guidelines for future decisions in this regard. On the other hand, the situation in Ukraine remains problematic. Ukrainian forced migrants associate their return to the country primarily with the end of the war. However, immediately after their security-related needs, they voice expectations related to the economy – adequate salaries and higher standards of living in Ukraine. An important factor is also the restoration and availability of an infrastructure necessary for life (Vyshlinsky, Mykhailyshyna, Samoiliuk and Tomilina 2023). This configuration of expectations, in the context of an ongoing full-scale war, either questions the reality of return or postpones the decision indefinitely.

Extremely problematic and important for an in-depth understanding of the situation with forced migration is the issue of the migration of Ukrainians to the Russian Federation after the beginning of the full-scale invasion. The forced passportisation of residents of the occupied territories and forced migrants from Ukraine, filtration practices, the restriction of the right to movement for people living in the territories occupied after 2022 and the forced displacement (deportations) to the territory of the Russian Federation of vulnerable categories of the population – primarily older people and children – all raise questions about the assessment of the scale of forced migration from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. How can we divide those Ukrainian

citizens who voluntarily chose this migration and those who became victims of the aggressor's actions and ended up in Russian captivity, in filtration camps or deported? A separate research issue may be the legal status of forced migrants from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. Who are they from the point of view of international law? Which state is responsible for them? Can the aggressor state be responsible for the citizens of the state that was attacked?

Another important issue is the policies of different European host countries concerning Ukrainian refugees. Despite the existence of a common European space and common directives regulating the status of Ukrainian migrants in Europe, the situation in each individual country has its own specifics. For example, we can see this difference of approach in the top three countries – Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic – in terms of the number of Ukrainian refugees accepted. The German government is committed to providing temporary refugee-seekers with a social package, including financial help for housing, health insurance, language courses and monthly payments; this generally creates conditions for the gradual soft integration of Ukrainian refugees into both local communities and the labour market. Poland and the Czech Republic do not have the same social packages for refugees as Germany but the migration from Ukraine in the context of a full-scale war relies heavily on the experience of previous migration, extensive local government and civil society support, the Ukrainian community in Poland and the cultural and linguistic proximity of the population of the two countries, which provides Ukrainians with faster integration and entry into the labour market. Also, as a recent Centre of Migration Research of University of Warsaw (CMR UW) survey demonstrated, the vicinity of the Ukrainian territory and extensive migration networks make it easier for the refugees to combine life in Poland with distance work and other transnational activities (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2023). The difference in contexts at the level of individual European countries and their administrative parts makes the nuanced processes related to the everyday life of forced migrants an important research issue.

The peculiarity of post-2022 external forced migration from Ukraine is its high intensity and simultaneity. According to UNHCR data, from 24 February 2022 to 9 May 2023, some 21,496,802 people crossed the border out of Ukraine and 12,724,350 people crossed the border in the opposite direction. These statistics show the increased mobility of the Ukrainian population due to full-scale Russian invasion but do not show the real scale of forced external migration, as they contain information, among other things, on the movement of the same people to and from Ukraine. However, the dynamics of these crossings show that the largest outflow of people from Ukraine occurred in the first few months of the war. Thereafter, the intensity of border crossings remained more or less constant, comparable to the pre-war level (CReAM 2023). The same dynamics is confirmed by the figures for Germany, where 68 per cent of Ukrainian immigrants arrived in the first three months after the beginning of the full-scale aggression by the Russian Federation (Federal Statistical Office of Germany 2023). Overall, about 18 per cent of the Ukrainian population moved to Europe during the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Another important feature of Ukrainian forced external migration is its socio-demographic parameters. In contrast to other waves of refugees, Ukrainian migration consists primarily of women and children. The education factor also plays an important role. The majority of Ukrainians forced to migrate to the EU (66 per cent) have higher education. This significantly exceeds the overall figures for Ukraine (29 per cent) and the EU (33 per cent) (Federal Statistical Office of Germany 2023). The mass transition, as a result of forced migration, to low-skilled jobs with a general lowering of the usual standards of living has already created and will continue to create additional tensions in the host communities. Another important problem in the future will be the issue of the mental health of forced migrants. The trauma of war, forced displacement, difficult migration experiences and constant exposure to information flows of the ongoing war are factors that significantly affect the moral and psychological state of forced migrants. Mental reaction to trauma often has a delayed character and, accordingly, is one of the problems facing the future of both Ukraine and the EU.

Understanding these complexities in the study of Ukrainian forced migrations in war conditions is important both for researchers seeking to make a deep and multidimensional assessment of what is happening and for making informed political and managerial decisions.

### **The migration and mobility of Ukrainians: short state-of-the-art**

One can distinguish several main topics related to migration from/in Ukraine in the existing studies. This short review should not, however, be treated as fully fledged state-of-the-art but, rather, as a contextual background to the presentation of the articles in this special section.

A strand of literature that looks at the process of transforming Ukraine into a net immigration country, together with the forms, trajectories and narratives about labour migration, can be distinguished. Temporary labour migration (Pirozhkov, Malynovska and Homra 2003) – which converted from ‘local mobility’ – or different forms of transborder activities, including petty trade, began to be researched in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. As such, the Ukrainian case was not an exception from other post-communist Eastern and Central European countries (Vakhitova and Fihel 2020). One aspect of the relevant literature was dealing with the qualitative assessment of the phenomenon, taking into consideration the scarcity of statistical data (Prokhorov, Yablonsky, Piontikivska, Ruda and Hamaniuk 2018). Other researchers were looking at the policies, migration networks, migrant anchoring and legal and other conditions in the receiving countries and, finally, the settlement practices of Ukrainian migrants (*inter alia*, Fedyuk and Kindler 2016; Fonseca, Pereira and Esteves 2014; Górny, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Kępińska, Fihel and Piekut 2007; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020). In particular, literature focusing on Ukrainian migrants in the EU depending on their legal status and contesting the simple contradiction between legal and irregular migration, access to healthcare, education and social security in the context of the EU laws and policy practices, can shed some light on current discussions of the legal status of Ukrainians in the EU (see the article by Łysienia in this section).

The second strand of literature is the studies on the Ukrainian diaspora and transnationalism. However, traditionally perceived as looking at the forms of cultivation of national language and culture, diaspora studies have situated research on Ukrainian migration in the realm of politics as well as civic and political activity (Dunin-Wąsowicz and Fomina 2019; Lapshyna 2019; Solari 2018).

Last, but not least, an important strand of literature written after 2014 looks at the mobility consequences of the Russian occupation of Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine, studying both the security and the political context of external migration as well as a certain ‘invisibility’ of forced displacement (Drbohlav and Jaroszewicz 2016; Sasse 2020). Finally, there are many extensive in-depth studies looking at internal displacement through the prism of social cohesion, national identity, geopolitical struggles, civil society activism or individual adaptation strategies (Bulakh 2020; Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020; Rimpiläinen 2020). The article by Steblyna (in this volume) contributes further to this strand of literature.

We can conclude that Ukraine as a country, represented by the existence of large historic diaspora(s), forced displacement and territorial changes after the Second World War, extensive labour immigration and also hosting emigrants, has received significant attention from migration scholars. In its volume and the diversity of its topics, the existing research cannot, however, be compared to those studying classic emigration countries. Another crucial challenge impeding the development of scholarship is the insufficient knowledge of publications in English about research written in other languages, particularly Ukrainian. An important issue that also hampers research is the lack of basic demographic data stemming from the fact that the last national census in Ukraine was conducted only in 2001 (see the second section of the introduction and also the article by Pozniak in this volume). At this stage of the study of Ukrainian forced migration, this set of problems results in the prevalence of qualitative over quantitative research. Also, as underlined by Fedyuk and Kindler (2016),

despite the fact that Ukrainians constitute one of the most numerous immigrant groups in the EU member states, their presence often went unnoticed among other Eastern and Central European migrant communities. Finally – and this also a task that this special section attempts to address – is an insufficient understanding of what the 2014 and 2022 Russian aggression meant for migration dynamics and a tendency to keep studying post-2014 mobility solely through the prism of labour migration.

### **Introducing the papers**

This special section contains the first group of articles submitted in response to the CEEMR call for papers on the consequences, trajectories, policies, discourses on war and displacement, emergency practices and other aspects pertaining to the migration resulting from the Russian illegal aggression against Ukraine. All kinds of migration happening in the aftermath or in the context of the Russian aggression on the Ukrainian territory after 24 February 2022 remain within the scope of the current special section. Both the CEEMR editors and the special-section guest editors purposely did not specify any topics for possible contributions, leaving to the authors the choice of topics, theories and methods. At an epistemological level, however, the special section's purpose was to give voice to Ukrainian and other researchers from – or those studying migration from/to/within – Central and Eastern Europe. The result reflected the perception that, particularly in times of war and conflict, those who personally experience the war and/or forced migration or present a closer perspective on the ongoing atrocities, should be heard first. Secondly, there is ample evidence that scholars from the region are under-represented in social-science research – including migration studies – and thus more rarely participate in knowledge production at both a general level and a regional one (Düvell and Lapshyna 2022; Mälksoo 2022; Vorbrugg and Bluwstein 2022). This argument was not made only to point to the numeric unrepresentativeness of Eastern and Central European scholars but also to emphasise that many topics and perspectives could have gone untouched or unnoticed due to such a narrow generalist, rather than context-sensitive, knowledge production. Possible biases deriving from these knowledge gaps should be taken seriously in current debates about the Russian war against Ukraine (Artiukh 2022; Khromeychuk 2022; Mälksoo 2022), Ukraine's future and the consequences for migration and mobility in Europe.

Despite such a broad range of topics, disciplines (political science, law, sociology, demography) and methods used by the authors of the articles in this special section, several topics appear repeatedly and are touched upon by almost all the authors. These include:

- the different forms of struggle during the process of forced mobility and immobility caused by the armed conflict and related insecurities and emergency governance in times of war (at different levels – pan-national, state, societal and, finally, individual);
- the narratives, discourses and stereotypes that accompany Russian aggression against Ukraine and the related migratory movements;
- the time, temporality and uncertainty in forced migration caused by the military aggression and methods of coping with this uncertainty; and
- rights versus obligations in times of war at different levels – the right to leave the country or to remain there and obligations towards the homeland experienced by migrants.

The first article, by **Nataliia Steblyna**, was written before the full-scale invasion of 24 February 2022 yet it tackles the topic of internal displacement in Ukraine after the Russian illegal occupation of Crimea and the start of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine in Winter/Spring 2014. In 2015, the Ukrainian authorities reported approximately 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) which represented one of the largest displacement crises after the Second World War (UNHCR 2015). The literature pertaining to migration trajectories, the adaptation of IDPs to their new places of residence and the policies adopted towards them is

fairly abundant (Bulakh 2020; Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017; Jaroszewicz and Grzymiski 2023; Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020; Rimpiläinen 2020; Sasse 2020), yet Steblyna's article offers a rarely adopted research perspective that looks at the social and political attitudes towards IDPs via the lens of the local press and local communities. With the application of a rigorous frame analysis of the local content of online media services in Kharkiv and Dnipro in 2015–2018, the author offers a typology of the narratives pertaining to IDPs – created or replicated by the local media – and how they evolved over time. Steblyna differentiates between four main frames: 'generalisation' (speaking of IDPs as an essentialised group, a mass), 'victim', 'help-receiver', and 'threat'. A very valuable contribution by Steblyna is bringing time into her research, showing how less-favourable narratives of IDPs appeared over the years marked with prolonged military activities and related socio-economic consequences. By linking the existing literature on internal displacement in different geographical contexts – where IDPs are often portrayed as helpless victims – with the case of Ukraine experiencing the first phase of the conflict with Russia, the author also voices clear normative postulates calling for greater responsibility by local media in introducing migrants to new communities and fighting against biased narratives.

The second article, by **Oleksii Pozniak**, 'The Situation of Forced Migrants from Ukraine in Europe after Russian Military Aggression and Problems of Migration Policy of Ukraine in New Conditions', was prepared in the first few months after the full-scale Russian aggression. The author, a demographer and researcher at the National Academy of Science of Ukraine, sought any possible data that could help to analyse the migration dynamics resulting from the external aggression but also put the data possessed in the wider context of the different types of migration movement of the inhabitants of Ukraine after 1991. Being mainly a quantitative researcher in a war situation where representative surveys cannot be conducted, Pozniak attempts to base his assessment on different auxiliary sources. These include data on the border crossings obtained from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (where possible compared against the data of the counterpart institutions of the destination countries and international organisations) as well as in-depth expert semi-structured interviews conducted between July and September 2022. In a somewhat rigorous demographic manner, Pozniak looks at the migration transformation which Ukraine is undergoing, both demographic and social, including the dynamics of attitudes of Ukrainian society towards those who have left the country. He studies the ongoing immigration through the prism of temporality but also the rights and obligations as seen within Ukrainian society. He concludes with recommendations for the Ukrainian government by positing that the impact of a full-scale war on the future demographic situation in Ukraine will be reflected primarily in migration losses; he thus calls for an active migration policy that encompass both maintaining relations with Ukrainians abroad and easing immigration for selected categories of foreigners – for instance, foreign students.

The next article, by **Maja Łysienia**, touches upon different aspects pertaining to the policies and 'solidarity' practices of Poland as being the first country of entry for the majority of war refugees and still being one of the leading countries in hosting forced migrants from Ukraine. As such, her article adds to the growing literature studying the narratives and practices that followed activation by the EU of the temporary protection directive. This TPD allowed people fleeing Ukraine to enter, reside and obtain rights in the EU territory without hindrance, while also granting Ukrainian migrants solely with a temporary status and differentiating between Ukraine's citizens and third-country nationals (Carrera and Ineli Ciger 2023; Klaus 2022; Motte-Baumvol, Mont'Alverne and Braga Guimarães 2022). Maja Łysienia studies the compatibility between Polish and EU law, in particular the similarities and differences between the temporary protection directive and the new law that Poland adopted to offer rights to Ukrainian nationals and their family members. The originality of Łysienia's research lies in the detailed legal analysis that assesses possible legal discrepancies across several dimensions, including: eligibility for temporary protection, residence permits, accommodation, family reunification, returns and measures after temporary protection ends and remedies. Her general conclusion is that the Polish law on temporary protection does not fully follow the temporary protection directive and lists

here the cases of non-Ukrainian children and dependent family members of Ukrainian nationals, Ukrainian nationals and their spouses who entered Poland in an irregular manner as persons excluded from the protection offered by the Polish legislation.

### **Conclusions and avenues for further research**

Several quite straightforward and a few less-obvious conclusions that also encourage further exploration are forthcoming from this special section. One conclusion is that the ongoing full-scale Russian aggression puts the lives of millions of Ukrainians at direct risk of falling victim to military hostilities; it also means that they are in constant need of making decisions on their mobility/immobility based on their individual security calculations. Another important feature of the continuing atrocities is the high level of uncertainty as to when and how the war will end and when forced migrants will be able to rejoin their family members from whom they were obliged to separate. In such circumstances, the cognitive and physical barriers to the analytical comprehension of the Ukrainian experience of war and forced emigration are quite straightforward and result in the predominance of empirical exploration over theoretical understanding of the problems. Secondly, the necessity and importance of theoretical generalisations is directly conditioned not only by their heuristic potential but also by their practical value. The conceptual understanding of the problems is very important for an adequate and timely response to the challenges provoked by Russian aggression and full-scale war.

What is clear, however, at both epistemological and empirical-analysis levels, is that Russian aggression against Ukraine shed a light on some severe blindspots in migration and refugee research – resulting, among other things, from the insufficient presence of Eastern and Central European migration researchers in global knowledge production. To cure this problem, more and more-diversified research on Ukrainian migration is needed; however, researchers directly experiencing the war and its consequences should also be given the opportunity to make their voices heard. At the same time, the problem of giving voice raises a number of additional questions. To what extent can people who find themselves in a situation of direct threat to their lives and are forced to deal with issues of daily survival be expected to produce scientific knowledge that meets international standards and deadlines or perform highly intellectual work on a volunteer basis as part of their professional activities in peace time? Is there a real demand for local expertise or are Ukrainian experts perceived primarily as carriers of personal traumatic experiences that they can share with others? Also what is lacking is the research revealing postcolonial legacies in studying Eastern Europe and also examining migration from Ukraine from a long historical perspective, including the context of geopolitical and national identity struggles. The migration of Ukrainians is not only a story of labour migration.

All the articles in this special section clearly demonstrate that forced migration is a research area within which contemporary Ukrainian migration should be conceptualised. Perhaps one of the most striking blind spots was the refusal, perhaps unconscious, by some academics, media and analytical institutions in 2014 to see the beginning of the war in Russia's actions towards Ukraine and in bringing refugee migration from Ukraine. Also, in many cases, we are not dealing with 'pure forms' but with hybrid trajectories of forced migration – when people start their journey with an IDP status, then continue as asylum-seekers before becoming labour migrants. The same hybrid trajectories can be observed now in the context of a full-scale Russian invasion, described, *inter alia*, by Pozniak in this section. Another issue is the trajectories of internal displacement and the policies of both the central government and local communities in adapting newly arriving co-inhabitants. In her contribution, Steblyna proposes a detailed in-depth analysis of biased narratives that may accompany internal displacement. What is still hampered by the absence of data and the inability to gather any on Russia are studies on the deportations and the 'voluntary' migration of Ukrainian citizens to Russia.



Among the more detailed avenues for further research one could raise the issue of the assessment of the scale of forced migration (see Pozniak's article in this section). Today there are many sources of statistical information on the number of people who were forced to flee the war, both inside and outside the country. However, the data from the different sources vary significantly. A number of migrant practices and strategies also remain essentially invisible to statistical records. For example, the statistical recording of IDPs in Ukraine after 2014 is complicated by the fact that some people preferred to avoid registering and obtaining official status due to specific perceptions of IDPs in society, stigmatising practices and restrictions on political rights. Today the situation with IDPs has changed drastically. It has become much easier to obtain status and assistance from the state. However, even in this case, there is the problem of taking into account the scale of internal forced migration, primarily because of its procedural nature – people leave the war zones and return home whenever possible. Accordingly, in this case, the more important parameter for assessing the scale of migration is not the number of people who moved but the duration of their stay away from home. All this raises a number of questions for researchers on how to describe the situation of internal forced migration in statistical parameters. What criteria for assessing the situation are really informative? How can the scale of forced migration be estimated, given the high level of avoidance of official registration or floating data in a context where people's forced mobility is processual in nature?

In assessing the scale and forms of forced migration in the context of a full-scale invasion, there are also many aspects that are important for understanding the situation. At the initial stage, some Ukrainians crossed the EU border on the basis of the visa-free regime, which gives Ukrainians the right to stay in the EU for 90 days in any 180-day period. This allowed some Ukrainian emigrants to stay in the EU legally but without any additional registration. Often people relied on the help of relatives, acquaintances and professional and spontaneous volunteers. Despite the existence of common policies towards Ukrainian forced migrants, the domestic context of each country has its own specificities and shapes the different everyday practices and strategies of migrants from Ukraine. At the policy level, a detailed and in-depth understanding of these experiences acquires particular weight for subsequent management steps to be taken in the context of competition for labour and for finding balanced solutions between the policy of integrating Ukrainian migrants into the labour markets of host countries and Ukraine's desire to bring its citizens back.


Ukrainian migration is a European and, in a sense, an EU phenomenon. Firstly, Ukrainian nationals constitute one of the largest foreign-nationals group in the EU member states. Secondly, since 2017, Ukrainian holders of biometric passports have been exempt from the visa obligation for short-term stay in the Schengen zone. Hence, many Ukrainians had personal experience in crossing the Schengen border which proved crucial when they decided to escape. Thirdly, Ukraine is also a multi-national and quite diverse society and many Ukrainian residents of different citizenships have also left the country as a result of war. In this context, much more research is needed to study the complex and fluctuating responses of the EU member states to forced migration from Ukraine and to de-centre this research by also examining the role of local communities, the Ukrainian diaspora and the civil society. Maja Łysienka's article in this section shows how, in practice, the implementation of the EU temporary protection legislation into the national legislation looks like.

## Note

1. Before the full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian government estimated the Ukrainian population (excluding the occupied territories of the Crimean Peninsula and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts) at 37.3 million people (Ukrainska Pravda 2020). These data were obtained using the following methods: collecting anonymous information from mobile operators about the number of users and their location; collecting data from registers of children (Civil Registry Office) and pensioners

(Pension Fund); and ‘calibrating’ sociological surveys, i.e., clarifying how many sim cards there are on average per Ukrainian in different groups. The data only allowed us to estimate the approximate number of people but are not really a census. According to the State Statistics Service, as of 1 February 2022, the population of the country was 41,167,300 people, excluding the occupied Crimea (Derzhavna Sluzhba Statystyky Ukrainy 2021). The difference in the figures is also due to the fact that the State Statistics Service data include the population in the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk occupied in 2014. According to Eurostat, the population of Ukraine as of 1 January 2022 was 40,997,689 people (Eurostat 2023b). Eurostat’s calculations are based on data on the resident population of a country or, if this information is not available, on data on legal and registered residents. The long-term absence of a population census in Ukraine already makes it difficult to assess the scale of the demographic consequences of the war and forced migration (both internal and external) and is a future-oriented problem.

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