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Mechanisms for the Protection of Ukrainian Refugees in the EU Member States

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Abstract

The article considers the issue of the migration crisis of Ukrainian refugees to EU member states caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. An elucidation was made as to the quantity of Ukrainian refugees taken in by European states since the Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine commenced. An analysis of forms of protection for individuals in the European Union is conducted, including refugee status and temporary protection. The legislation of refugee status in the EU is represented through the prism of the analysis of the Council Directive 2001/55/EC on temporary protection. The key difference between temporary protection and refugee status is defined.

The key problems faced by European countries are highlighted; concurrently, the obstacles experienced by Ukrainian refugees are presented, namely, obtaining housing and employment. Special attention was paid to the issue of “fatigue” and exhaustion of social systems and ordinary citizens in EU countries. The authors present the results of the study on the mechanisms of providing protection and asylum to Ukrainian refugees in the EU. Furthermore, the 10-point strategy suggested by the European Commission to the European Council and the Justice and Home Affairs Council in order to support EU countries in their endeavor of admitting Ukrainian refugees has been duly given attention. The core research objectives revolve around the effectiveness of protection mechanisms for Ukrainian refugees in the EU, and any consequences said system may bring about for both the EU and Ukraine.

Keywords: refugees, European Union, Ukraine, war, temporary protection mechanism, Russian Federation

Механизмы защиты украинских беженцев в странах ЕС

Аннотация

В статье рассмотрен вопрос миграционного кризиса украинских беженцев в страны-члены ЕС, вызванного полномасштабным вторжением России в Украину 24 февраля 2022 года. Выяснено количество украинских беженцев, принятых европейскими государствами с момента вступления России в силу. началось полномасштабное военное вторжение в Украину. Проводится анализ форм защиты физических лиц в Европейском Союзе, включая статус беженца и временную защиту. Законодательство о статусе беженца в ЕС представлено через призму анализа Директивы Совета 2001/55/ЕС о временной защите. Определено ключевое различие между временной защитой и статусом беженца.

Выделены ключевые проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются европейские страны; Одновременно представлены препятствия, с которыми сталкиваются украинские беженцы, а именно: получение жилья и трудоустройства. Особое внимание было уделено проблеме «усталости» и истощения социальных систем и простых граждан в странах ЕС. Авторы представляют результаты исследования механизмов предоставления защиты и убежища украинским беженцам в ЕС. Кроме того, должное внимание было уделено стратегии из 10 пунктов, предложенной Европейской комиссией Европейскому совету и Совету юстиции и внутренних дел с целью поддержки стран ЕС в их стремлении принять украинских беженцев. Основные цели исследования вращаются вокруг эффективности механизмов защиты украинских беженцев в ЕС, а также любых последствий, которые эта система может вызвать как для ЕС, так и для Украины.

Ключевые слова: беженцы, Евросоюз, Украина, война, механизм временной защиты, Российская Федерация

Introduction

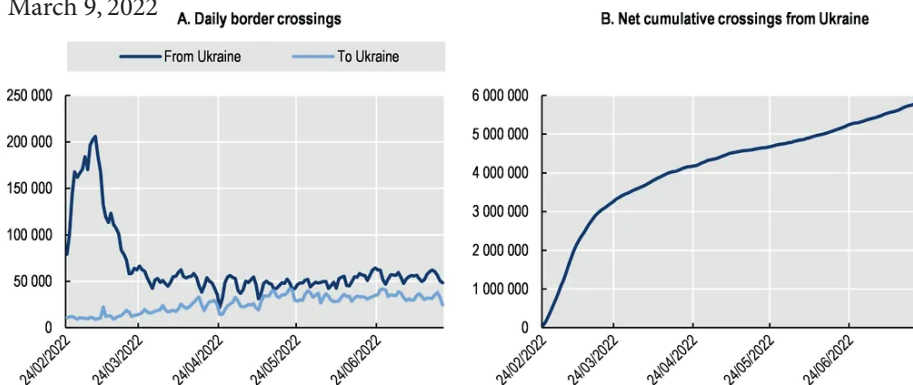
On February 24, 2022, Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine initiated a range of social and economic transformations, impacting not just Ukraine but other countries, particularly in Europe. At the onset of the Ukrainian conflict, the first significant difficulty faced by EU countries was a large influx of Ukrainian refugees, which has remained but at a lesser intensity even to this day. As scientists rightly point out, even by the first decades of the 21st century, the migration (refugee) crisis had become particularly noticeable in the EU countries, having reached its peak (Hołub, 2022, p. 33). In addition, the issue of migration today is a complex problem that needs to be solved (Hołub, 2022, p. 45). The Russian-Ukrainian war particularly intensified the migration crisis on the territory of the EU. It should be noted that a "refugee" is a person who, due to fear for his or her safety, is looking for a place where they hope to find better conditions for the residence. Ukrainian refugees are considered to be all people who were forced to leave Ukraine and go to other countries due to the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, regardless of whether they received official asylum or applied for it.

Ukrainian refugees on the territory of EU countries

By May 2, 2022, more than 11 million people in total were recorded to have left their homes, and that makes a quarter of the population of Ukraine. According to the data from the UN Agency dealing with refugee issues – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 8 million of them, mostly women and children, left Ukraine and became refugees in other countries, including the EU. Just to compare, over 13 million people became refugees during 10 years of war in Syria. In general, after the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, as of March 28, 2023, more than 19.74 million border crossings from Ukraine to other countries were recorded. The majority of Ukrainian refugees were registered in Poland (*Number of border crossings...*, 2023).

The largest number of Ukrainian refugees to EU countries was observed in the period from February 27 to March 9. During this period, 1,649,088 people left Ukraine, with an average of 150,000 people per day; the largest exodus happened on March 6, 2022 with 210,526 people. From March 17, 2022, the number of people leaving has gradually decreased. It is noteworthy that Ukrainian males between the ages of 18 and 60 are subject to call-up to the armed forces and cannot emigrate to other countries (UNHCR..., 2022). More details about the number of Ukrainians who crossed the border are shown in fig. 1 (UNHCR, 2022).

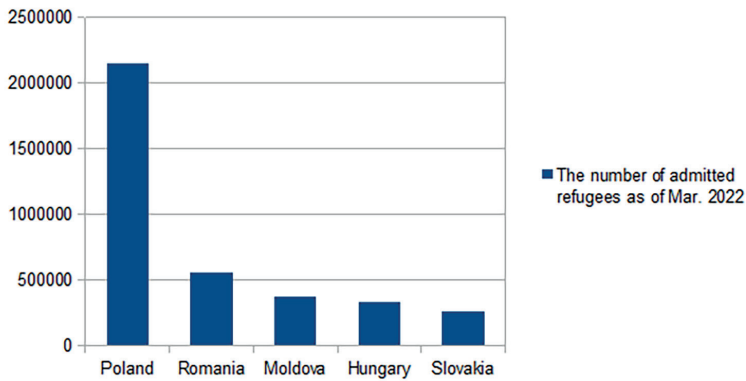
Figure 1. Number of Ukrainians who crossed the border from February 27 to March 9, 2022



Source: UNHCR, 2022.

Without doubt, the influx of a substantial number of Ukrainian refugees largely impacted the neighbouring European countries to Ukraine. As of March 22nd, 2022, the customs data reveals the following departures from Ukraine: Poland – 2,144,244; Romania – 555,021; Moldova – 371,104; Hungary – 324,397; Slovakia – 256,838. (Fig. 2). Simultaneously, many Ukrainians who had been forced to leave their homeland utilized these countries as a transit hub, aiming to reach other EU countries, particularly Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, the Baltic states and others. A relatively small number of Ukrainians sought protection outside the EU too (Filipchuk et al., 2022).

Figure 2. The number of refugees in Ukraine's neighboring European countries in March 2022



Source: Compiled by the author based on data from Filipchuk et al., (2022).

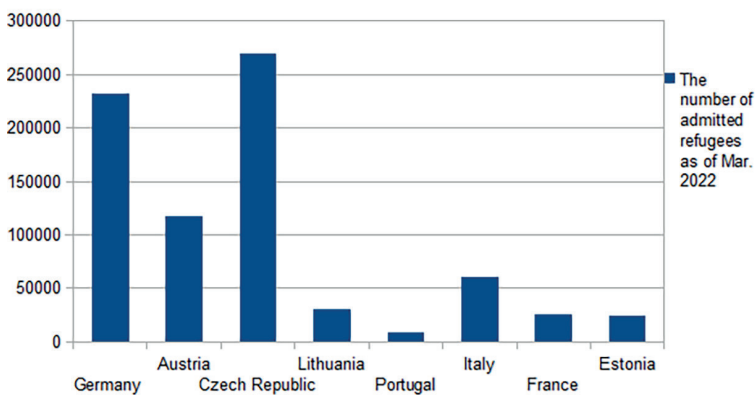
Taking into account that the EU does not impose compulsory checks on its borders with other European countries, the number of forced migrants from Ukraine in the EU states not bordering Ukraine is estimated based on:

- the data of relevant agencies regarding free public transport tickets issued to refugees from Ukraine;
- the number of people who used buses organized by EU countries;
- the data of mobile operators;
- the data on their registration in the state bodies, etc.

Hence, for instance, according to the estimates of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs of Germany, as of March 22, 2022, the country accepted about 232 thousand refugees from Ukraine. As for other countries, in the first weeks of the Russian-Ukrainian war, we observe the following data: The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Austria has estimated the number of Ukrainian refugees to be 117,000; reports of mobile operators indicate that the Czech Republic has welcomed more than 270,000 refugees from Ukraine, the majority of whom have been granted extended visas to reside in the country, and which will eventually be replaced with identity cards recognizing the status of persons with temporary protection; according to the data of the State Statistics Department of Lithuania, more than 30,000 people were registered as refugees; in Portugal, this indicator was 8.5 thousand

people; in accordance with the estimates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Italy, the country accepted more than 61,000 Ukrainian refugees; The Ministry of the Internal Affairs of France estimates the number at 26,000 people with 10,000 of those already having obtained the status of a person under temporary protection; as reported by the border service of Estonia, the country accepted more than 25 thousand Ukrainians (fig. 3) (Filipchuk, Lomonosova, Syrbu, Kabanets, 2022). It is important to bear in mind that the social infrastructure of many cities of European countries, especially Berlin, where the greatest amount of Ukrainian refugees arrived, turned out to be overloaded. Consequently, the most pressing issue was the lack of housing for their resettlement.

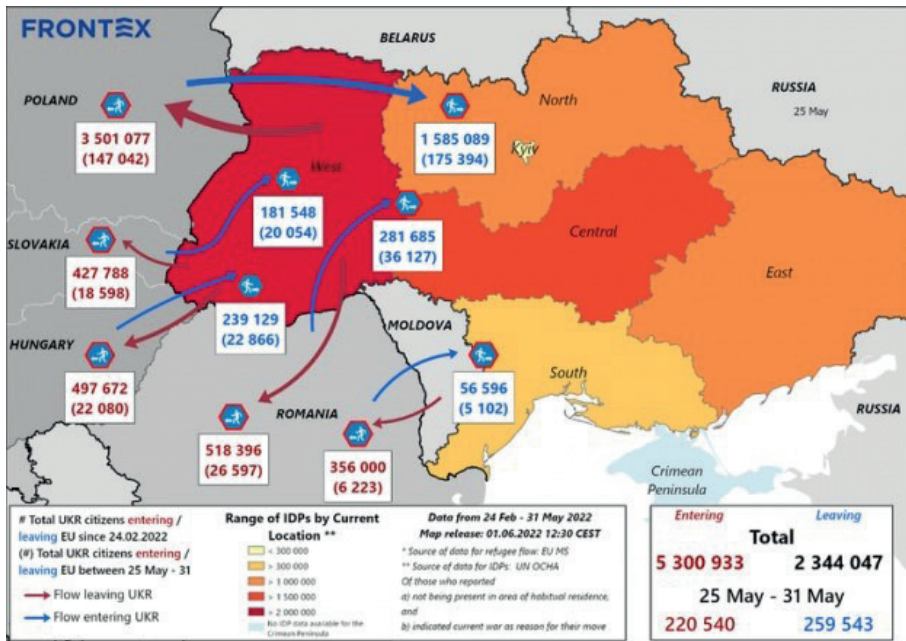
Figure 3. The number of Ukrainian refugees in March 2022 in other European countries



Source: Compiled by the author based on data from Filipchuk et al., 2022.

As of May 2022, part of the Ukrainian refugees began to return to Ukraine. According to the data from the EU border agency Frontex, almost 260,000 Ukrainians left the EU from May 25 to May 31, 2022. In total, 2.3 million Ukrainians returned to their homeland since the beginning of the war (fig. 4) (*EU countries adopt...*, 2022).

Figure 4. The total number of Ukrainian refugees from the beginning of the war to May 2022 in the EU countries



Source: *EU countries accepted...*, 2022.

It is noteworthy that according to the 2022 Gallup World Poll, another 4 million Ukrainians would prefer to leave the country if they had the opportunity. In addition, the survey indicates that a large number of those who have left would like to stay in their foreign host country permanently. Over the same period, the amount of individuals moving across the Ukrainian border has been even more pronounced: 18 million out of Ukraine and 10 million into Ukraine. At the same time, the number of Ukrainian refugees in Russia is estimated at almost 3 million people. However, this number covers both voluntary migration and forced deportation (Elinder, Erixson, Hammar, 2023).

The solidarity mechanism, the EU civil protection mechanism and the EU temporary protection mechanism as the main regulators of the migration crisis

Such a large number of Ukrainian refugees has become a real challenge for the EU. It should be noted that, in general, at the EU level, refugee issues are regulated within the framework of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) – a framework of agreed rules that establish general procedures for international protection and the acquisition of refugee status or temporary protection and which are based on the principles of the Geneva Convention and the Refugee Protocol. According to Art. 78 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, CEAS includes the following: a single asylum status for the citizens of third countries, valid throughout the EU; a single status of additional protection for the citizens of third countries who, having not received European asylum, need international protection; general system of temporary protection for displaced persons in case of mass influx; general procedures for granting and revoking the single status of asylum or subsidiary protection (*Common European Asylum System*). For better management of migration based on the named system, the European Commission is forming more specific mechanisms. For example, back in 2015, the European Commission presented the so-called mechanism of crisis displacement in accordance with the Dublin system.

In terms of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the EU at the legislative level had to regulate its migration policy in a short period of time and to direct and adapt it to meet the needs of a large number of Ukrainian refugees. An important step on this path was the introduction and application of appropriate mechanisms, with special emphasis on *solidarity mechanism*, which was introduced to tackle the problems related to migration within the EU countries or the so-called EU Solidarity Platform, which provides constant coordination of actions at the EU level and is the prerequisite for its effectiveness. The EU Solidarity Platform will facilitate the coordination of activities on the ground, in cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and relevant entities (*Solidarność UE z Ukrainą...*, 2022). The platform became a forum for representatives of the EU countries to discuss the mutual assistance in welcoming Ukrainian refugees in general, as well as the needs of

especially vulnerable Ukrainians and the difficulties in relocating temporary protection rights from one member state to another. The solidarity mechanism also means that asylum seekers will be allocated to EU countries once they have been registered in the country of first entry. The countries that do not adopt the mechanism will contribute either financially or by providing border management personnel (*EU countries adopt...*, 2022).

In particular, as part of the Solidarity Platform at the request of the European Council and the Council of Justice and Home Affairs, in March 2022, the European Commission presented a 10-point plan to support member states in intensifying their efforts to receive refugees from Ukraine, namely:

- 1) The creation of the EU platform for registration is due to the need to exchange information between EU countries regarding Ukrainian refugees who maintain temporary protection and its effective application in general.
- 2) Formation of a coordinated approach at the EU level regarding transport connections of the relevant European agencies in meeting the needs of refugees.
- 3) Allocation of possibilities for taking and accommodating of refugees in accordance with the offers of member states that can provide them with this assistance, as well as the aid in organizing their relocation from those countries that are already overloaded, in particular with the support of the Safe Homes Commission initiative.
- 4) Formation of a common European emergency plan and response, as well as the common EU index to be used by EU member states, European agencies and international organizations.
- 5) Development of standard operating procedures and uniform instructions for receiving and accompanying children with special needs, as well as the procedures for transferring unaccompanied minors.
- 6) Creating a joint plan to prevent human trafficking and support potential victims, as well as providing information to refugees by creating special helplines, training, etc.
- 7) Ensuring coordination of EU member states' solidarity efforts, assessing new needs and suggested solutions, especially for Moldova, which has experienced migration overload, through increased transfers and rapid deployment of Frontex teams.

- 8) Strengthening international cooperation in determining safe destinations through cooperation with relevant agencies and partner countries (i.e. Canada, USA, Great Britain, etc.).
- 9) Facilitating enforcement of EU sanctions against Russians and Belarusians and exchange of relevant security information. In this regard, the Commission created a working group “Freeze and Seize” to ensure coordination of efforts at the EU level regarding the implementation and enforcement of sanctions.
- 10) Strengthening cooperation with EUAA, EUROPOL and Frontex agencies to increase relevant resources, funding and capacity building (*The 10-Point Plan...*, 2022).

It is also worth mentioning the *EU civil protection mechanism*, which was created by the European Commission back in 2001. This mechanism is aimed at: 1) strengthening cooperation between the EU countries and 9 participating countries (e.g. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine) regarding civil protection in case of disasters; 2) unification of international efforts on civil protection for the purpose of implementation of joint solutions and exchange of experience.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, all 27 EU countries, as well as 5 participating countries (e.g. Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey) have offered Ukraine assistance through the EU civil protection mechanism (in particular, it included first-aid kits, equipment for refugee shelters, fire-fighting equipment, electricity generators, fuel, etc.). This mechanism has also been applied for:

- assistance to both internally displaced persons and those who have migrated to nearby countries, such as Poland, Slovakia and Moldova;
- coordination of the medical evacuation of Ukrainian patients in need of emergency care to hospitals throughout Europe (including through the medical evacuation center established in Poland in 2022);
- creation of logistics centers (i.e. hubs), with Poland becoming one of the largest. These hubs collect aid offered by EU countries and send it to Ukraine. In response to the war in Ukraine, the EU is conducting the largest emergency operation since the creation of the mechanism

- and sending millions of emergency goods to Ukraine and the region (*EU Civil Protection Mechanism*);
- sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine with the help of 29 countries – 27 EU member states, as well as Norway and Turkey. The commission also coordinates civil protection assistance for Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to help Ukrainian refugees (*The European response...*, 2022).

However, the most effective in solving the problem of Ukrainian refugees turned out to be the application of the *EU temporary protection mechanism*. To this end, on March 4, 2022, the EU first applied the Temporary Protection Directive of 2001 (Council Directive 2001/55/EC on Temporary Protection). This Directive's primary purpose is to reduce pressure on the national systems of those states providing asylum and temporary protection to refugees from Ukraine, and to ensure the same rights for them across all EU member states. First of all, this applies to such rights as the right to residence, access to the labor market and housing, medical and social services and access to education.

According to this Directive, Ukrainian refugees have the opportunity to stay, work and send their children to school without the usual bureaucratic asylum procedure in EU countries. Denmark was the only one to not comply with the specified EU Directive for Ukrainian refugees to live in EU countries, due to the peculiarities of its membership in the EU. However, on March 17, a special law was implemented in Denmark, which provisions are in line with the EU Directive (*Denmark passes special law...*, 2022). This law has enabled the implementation of a simplified process for obtaining temporary protection for Ukrainian refugees, with the intention of securing their right to work, study and receive social aid. It is noteworthy that the EU Directive was a precedent for its migration policy, where in the past, concerning refugees from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, the EU was more focused on limiting their movements and did not provide them with protection, instead taking steps to protect its outer borders, including using military forces.

It is worth noting that “temporary protection” is a mechanism implemented by the EU for situations of mass migration. Its main feature is the

provision of immediate collective protection to those who need it and cannot return to their country of origin. The UN UNHCR views temporary protection as “a flexible and practical tool for providing international protection to those in need in situations of large-scale influx [...], facilitating possible safe return as the most desirable and feasible solution” (*UNHCR Observations on the Commission’s...*, 1997). Article 2 of the EU Directive defines that “temporary protection” means a procedure of an exceptional nature to provide immediate and temporary protection to individuals. Moreover, the document outlines the concept of “displaced persons”, which includes third-country nationals or stateless persons who have been forced to leave their country or region of origin, or have been evacuated due to requests by international organizations, and cannot return to their country because of the situation there. In particular, the Directive states that temporary protection applies to persons who:

- fled from the areas of armed conflict;
- are at serious risk or have been victims of systematic or general violations of their human rights;
- come from a specific country or geographical area, regardless of whether their arrival in the Community was spontaneous or, for example, through an evacuation program (“mass influx”);
- are the “refugees” – citizens of third countries or stateless persons within the meaning of Article 1 A of the Geneva Convention;
- are “unaccompanied minors”;
- have a “residence permit” issued by the authorities of an EU member state, which allows a citizen of a third country or a stateless person to live on its territory.

In addition, Article 3 specifies that temporary protection does not prevent recognition of refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention (*Council Directive...*, 2001). One should emphasize that the main difference between refugees who maintain temporary protection and those who try to acquire refugee status: firstly, temporary protection is short-term, whereas refugee status grants a person the right to legal residence in another state until they can achieve citizenship; secondly, the process of obtaining temporary protection is immediate, while gaining a refugee status is of long-term. It is important to note that the acquisition of the refugee status is individual in

nature, so the EU Directive does not provide a procedure for mass acceptance of refugees. The granting of refugee status is possible only on the basis of an individual application. However, as is stated by Esin Kucuk, there are no terms in the international legislature that would prevent the recognition of the refugee status for a group of persons, these obstacles are of a purely political nature (Kucuk, 2023).

Regarding Ukrainian refugees, the temporary protection mechanism was primarily initiated for only one year, though it was later extended until March 4, 2024. Concurrently, according to the EU political leadership, in the event of an even greater escalation of the military situation in Ukraine and depending on its development in general, it may be extended for one more year, until March 2025. As of March 2023, 4 million Ukrainians use the EU's temporary protection mechanism (*Infographic...*, 2022).

Actually, on the example of helping Ukrainian refugees, the EU confirmed its support for Ukraine on a practical level. The most significant measures of support for Ukrainian refugees by EU countries include:

- 1) approval in April 2022 of the right to exchange Ukrainian hryvnia banknotes for EU currencies at the NBU exchange rate;
- 2) signing of a voluntary agreement between the mobile operators of the EU and Ukraine, which allows Ukrainian refugees to make free or financially affordable calls to Ukraine, meantime the European Commission is working on a long-term agreement on the inclusion of Ukraine in the EU roaming zone;
- 3) provision of EU financial assistance to member states that take refugees from Ukraine and which is aimed at providing sufficient financial resources to meet the basic needs of Ukrainians in accommodation, education, health care, etc.;
- 4) providing the EU with flexibility in the use of its cohesion funds, which in particular provides for the possibility of transferring funds between programs and receiving funding from the EU in general.

It should be emphasized that the financial allowances for providing the basic needs of Ukrainian refugees differ significantly in the EU countries. First of all, they depend on the number of family members, its type, etc. For example, in June 2022, the financial support of one Ukrainian refugee per month amounted to €449 in Germany, €323 in Finland, €280 in Belgium,

€220 in Spain, €207 in Sweden, €150 in Italy and Estonia, €109 in Latvia, €61 in Hungary, €40 in Austria, and €15 in Poland. Besides, the provision of rights regarding access to education and language courses is also different. In comparison to children in the majority of European countries, whose right to education is more or less equal (such as abolishment of tuition fees for students of Ukrainian universities and the initiation of support programs for students), the access to education for adults differs markedly. Most EU countries mainly offer support to Ukrainians in finding a job, in particular through the state employment service (e.g. Denmark, France) or by suspending qualification requirements, speeding up the assessment of their qualifications (e.g. Lithuania, Poland, Spain, France). Only some European countries have given Ukrainians access to language courses (e.g. Germany, Latvia, the Czech Republic, France). On the other hand, there is no access to state funding of language courses in Cyprus, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Malta, Poland and Sweden (Parusel, Varfolomieieva, 2022, p. 6).

It is also worth pointing out that after the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the EU allocated about €17 billion of cohesion and recovery funds in the aftermath of pandemic, which can be employed by member states to support Ukrainian refugees. This sum includes around €7 billion of unspent cohesion funds for 2014–2020 and around €10 billion of funds reserved for post-pandemic recovery under REACT-EU, the recovery support instrument for European cohesion and territories (*Solidarność UE z Ukrainą...*, 2022). In this aspect, it is also important that in April 2022 the EU decided:

- 1) to provide its member countries with up to €420 mln of unspent funds in the field of internal affairs for 2014–2020 to help Ukrainian refugees;
- 2) to allow EU member states and other public or private donors to make additional contributions to the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the period of 2021–2027.

One should also pay attention to the set of problems related to the implementation of the EU Directive. First of all, it is about the fact that:

- 1) in many European countries, the procedure for registering the right to temporary protection is different. The registration process (i.e. from application to receiving temporary protection) can take quite a long time, since the relevant authorities do not have sufficient resources to receive and process

a large number of applications. To a large extent, this is influenced by the previous experience of each country in receiving refugees, the availability of appropriate infrastructure and employees and the established mechanisms for the interaction of state structures;

2) not all Ukrainian refugees registered and used the right of temporary protection. The owners of biometric passports can freely stay in the EU for up to 90 days as travelers without any need for registration. Those who have maintained a remote job and/or have enough savings to support themselves for several months may not deem registering for this status a critical demand;

3) some countries have allowed access to temporary housing without registering the right of temporary protection. A significant number of refugees also find shelter with their acquaintances or relatives who have agreed to take them;

4) the experience of being in another country and interacting with local bureaucratic institutions is in itself new for many people fleeing war. A number of Ukrainian refugees did not register with official organizations either due to lack of comprehension of the process or apprehension concerning the ramifications of the protection, such as the concern that they would not be able to return home when hostilities cease (Filipchuk, Lomonosova, Syrbu, Kabanets, 2022);

5) Ukrainian refugees faced the problem of employment in the countries of their temporary protection. According to surveys conducted by the UN UNHCR, 27% of respondents were employed in host countries, while 8% stated they worked remotely and 1% listed themselves as self-employed. At the same time, many of them work part-time, perform low-paid work that also does not correspond to their qualifications. Of those who do work in host countries, 82% reported that they needed financial assistance (47%), food (27%) and even employment (30%). The lack of opportunities for decent work is another important factor contributing to the unemployment of refugees in host countries (*Displacement patterns, protection risks...*, 2023).

However, despite the difficulties, according to the survey of Ukrainian refugees conducted by the UN UNHCR, amongst Ukrainians on their evaluation of the conditions of temporary protection in European countries,

a notable 96 % of respondents had a positive view of the safety provided. This shows the effectiveness of registration systems in general, and also the measures taken by states to speed up the process, including the digitization of the registration procedure. It is also important that 24% of Ukrainians temporarily returned to Ukraine, primarily to visit relatives who remained in Ukraine, to obtain documents, etc. According to the decision of the European Commission, “short visits to Ukraine do not lead to the loss of temporary protection and the European Commission calls on states to refrain from taking measures that would deter people from their temporary return”. There can be no doubt that the European Union has unmistakably demonstrated its commitment to providing assistance and protection to those who were forced to depart Ukraine as a result of the war (*UNHCR...*, 2022).

Negative consequences of applying the mechanism of temporary protection of Ukrainian refugees for EU countries and Ukraine

Despite the positive and fairly decisive steps taken by the EU regarding the needs of Ukrainian refugees, it is still worth paying attention to the spectrum of negative consequences of the mechanism of temporary protection of Ukrainian refugees for EU countries and Ukraine.

Firstly, according to Alice Hickson, the crisis of Ukrainian refugees threatens the physical, psychological and material well-being of all displaced persons (Hickson, 2022). Despite the fact that Ukrainians have enormous support from the EU countries due to their condemnation of the Russia's invasion of Ukraine in general, economic instability, security problems and internal political tensions are particularly felt by them, which can also change the behavior of individual EU countries and their national interests. In this context, one cannot ignore the fact that in recent years the EU has suffered significantly from migration flows from other countries, in particular from Afghanistan and Syria, and to some extent it was unprepared for such a large wave of the Ukrainian refugees. In addition, the EU de facto lacks effective reforms regarding the management of the migration process as such. This should also include the growth of xenophobia and the formation of identity policies in many EU member states.

Secondly, the EU needs to form an effective long-term plan for the resettlement of Ukrainians due to the humanitarian crisis which may continue in the future. It is possible that in order to overcome the crisis of Ukrainian refugees and to coordinate their efforts, the EU will be forced to involve its international partners. This complication is also reinforced by the fact that Ukrainian refugees in some places are considered more worthy than other refugees, or that they have priority over the others. In the scientific literature, such parity was called “selective benevolence” and “special situation”, which eliminates the common denominator regarding the need to protect people in international crises in general. To a certain extent, it is also about the fact that for the EU one military conflict has an advantage over others due to Ukraine’s geographical proximity to the EU. However, both international refugee and European laws, do not fix geographical priorities in the least (Parusel, Varfolomieieva, 2022, p. 10–13).

Thirdly, Ukrainian refugees mostly moved to neighboring countries in the west, such as Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Moldova, which are partly quite vulnerable to Russian provocations and unable to cope with refugee flows of this scale due to economic problems and the lack of legal mechanisms and social services. Eastern Europe serves as a gateway to Europe for migrants from Asia and elsewhere, so many of their facilities are already overwhelmed with asylum applications.

Fourth, given that the number of Ukrainians seeking long-term asylum in the EU is growing and potentially straining resources, these countries may take a more anti-migrant stance. As the refugee crises reinforce each other, their impact on anti-migrant far-right forces in the EU and the response of countries such as Denmark and Hungary, which have previously taken a hostile immigration stance, will have long-term consequences for the integration of refugees in Europe (Hickson, 2022). The flow of refugees from Ukraine may lead to increased disillusionment in the EU, in particular due to the economic burden, rising inflation, prices for gas, fuel and other related goods, which has also partly occurred due to the Russian invasion. In the long term, the EU will also have to decide the issue of the further effect of the temporary protection status of Ukrainians.

Fifth, regarding the temporary protection of Ukrainian refugees, the EU applied the model of the so-called “free choice” or the absence of clear criteria

for their distribution in the EU countries. In fact, this led to their uneven distribution in the EU and caused violation of the financial solidarity of its member states, since the countries that accepted more Ukrainians needed more financial resources from the EU (Parusel, Varfolomieieva, 2022, p. 13).

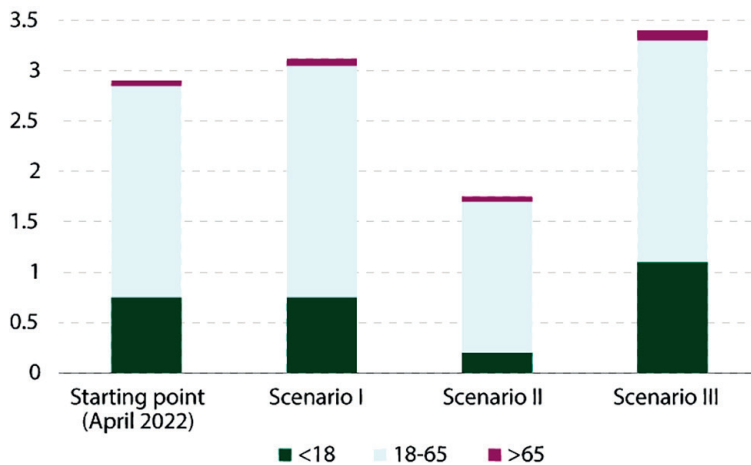
Sixth, taking into account the fact that the EU countries faced the most of the flow of the Ukrainian refugees, some scientists focus on strengthening the US aid to the EU. Although the US has provided \$1 billion in financial assistance to EU countries in their response to the migration crisis, but it may still be able to support the EU member states in resolving the Ukrainian refugee problem by means of diplomatic efforts, monetary collaboration, and humanitarian aid, etc. In addition, the US can use its position with partners in international security cooperation fora to encourage the sustained, collective delivery of secure passage for vulnerable displaced persons to regions not controlled by Russia (Hickson, 2022).

For Ukraine, the problem of external population migration, which is the largest in its history, contributes to the intensification of the demographic and economic crisis (primarily due to the outflow of the workforce), the scale of which is currently difficult to assess. According to the results of a sociological study of the Ukrainian Center for Economic Strategy on the analysis of migration and its consequences during the war, conducted on February 22, 2023 among Ukrainian refugees, the return of Ukrainians was projected according to the following scenarios – optimistic, average and pessimistic. Thus, the optimistic scenario presupposes that 2.93 million people will return to Ukraine, whereas the pessimistic one predicts 2.25 million; correlating with these projections, 860 thousand and 2.67 million people respectively will remain abroad. That is, after the war, 46–76 % of the people who left Ukraine will return. The Center's findings showed that the demographic with the highest rate of returning is seniors, while those aged thirty-five to forty-nine are the least likely to return. Meanwhile, it is worth understanding that the security factor is the main one for Ukrainian refugees in the matter of returning to their homeland, followed by economic factors – decent wages and a higher standard of living (*To What Extent the Demographic...*, 2023).

For instance, using the example of Poland, scientists Maciej Duszczyk and Paweł Kaczmarczyk single out three hypothetical scenarios of the migration crisis by the end of 2023:

- 1) the ongoing regional war that will lead to even greater flow of Ukrainian refugees, including economic migrants. In consonance with this scenario, the demographic structure can be reduced to the following indicators: 24% of children, 72% of women and men of working age;
- 2) a quick and lasting peace, which will partially lead to the outflow of Ukrainian refugees, those who remain will be mostly Ukrainians from the East of Ukraine, where there is the greatest destruction of infrastructure. The demographic structure is outlined in the following framework: 11% of children, 86% of workforce people;
- 3) peace agreement after even more large-scale destruction, so one should expect an even greater influx of refugees from Ukraine. The demographic structure here is assumed as follows: 32% of children and 65% of workforce persons (Fig. 5) (Duszczyk, Kaczmarczyk, 2022).

Figure 5. Demographic structure of Ukrainian refugees



Source: Duszczyk, Kaczmarczyk, 2022.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is noteworthy that the EU has implemented such measures as solidarity mechanism, civil protection mechanism and temporary protection mechanism to tackle the issue of Ukrainian refugees. The latter, in our opinion, proved to be the most appropriate and effective. Furthermore, the EU's application of the 2001 Temporary Protection Directive to Ukrainian refugees is an exceptional protection measure intended to induce a combined endeavor by EU member states to the massive influx of displaced persons while affirming immediate access to basic rights without requiring an individual assessment of refugee status. The implementation of temporary protection has significantly reinforced the distinction of responsibilities between EU member nations, augmenting interstate unity, confirming adherence to basic human rights for Ukrainian refugees on the EU level, granting them access to housing and social security, etc. The Ukrainian refugee situation has highlighted the proficiency of a quick response in the occurrence of a mass influx of refugees. Bearing this in mind, it is justifiable to give a favorable assessment of the EU's progression regarding the formation of its migration policy in the present geopolitical conditions. In opposition, a complex of unfavorable consequences, predominantly social and economic, are being experienced by the EU and Ukraine, the range of which is determined by the longevity of the war in Ukraine and the exacerbation of the military scenario in its entirety. First of all, these are the provision of housing, work and education, the challenges in the field of providing social and medical services, the outflow of labor force and the demographic problem for Ukraine. De facto, as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European international system for the protection of the rights of refugees faced the phenomenon of forced mass migration, which currently has no clear signs of ending.

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