

*Kateryna Demchuk**
*Oksana Krayevska***

The Transformation of Polish-Ukrainian Relations in the Context of Migration Policy Implementation

Abstract

In 2022, Russia's war against Ukraine shook the world and kickstarted an active humanitarian operation to save war-affected Ukrainians. All the neighbouring countries of Ukraine were forced to react actively. However, the subsequent refugee crisis affected Poland the most. Currently, Poland is playing the most important role among the countries receiving war refugees from Ukraine, which raises obvious questions about future developments and possible future challenges in relations between Ukraine and Poland and, above all, migration policy itself.

The objective of this paper is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Poland's policy in the field of accepting refugees and to examine the relevant legislation and procedures related to Ukrainian refugees, thereby shedding light on the assistance and support mechanisms put in place by the Polish authorities. Furthermore, this study seeks to draw insightful conclusions regarding the impact of Ukrainian refugees on Poland's economic and social spheres, in addition to exploring the refugees' integration into various aspects of daily life.

A critical aspect of this research involves a comparative analysis to ascertain whether Poland's policy towards Ukrainian refugees has undergone any significant changes since the beginning of the full-scale invasion on February 24th, 2022. This timeline provides a crucial backdrop for understanding how evolving geopolitical dynamics may have influenced Poland's approach.

* **Kateryna Demchuk** – Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, e-mail: Kateryna.Demchuk.MVKM@lnu.edu.ua, ORCID ID: 0009-0000-5134-0150.

** **Oksana Krayevska** – Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, e-mail: oksana.krayevska@lnu.edu.ua, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6997-3490.

This research employs a multidisciplinary approach, utilising a combination of data collection, policy analysis, and an extensive review of relevant literature to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex issue at hand.

Keywords: Migration, Migration Policy, War Refugees, Russia, Temporary Protection, Poland, Ukraine

Introduction

The migration of Ukrainian labour to Poland has always been a significant phenomenon. Usually, this type of migration occurs in waves, having been influenced by various factors and circumstances. Since the end of the 20th century, several waves have been distinguished and are detailed as follows.

The first wave began in the 1990s in an already independent Ukraine. By December 1994, about 600,000 Ukrainians had moved to Poland. This wave of migration was characterised by Ukrainians looking for employment and economic opportunities in Poland and seeking escape from the economic challenges and uncertainties that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Many of them found work in various sectors of the Polish economy, such as agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, and often took on less desirable jobs that local workforces were less willing to do, which led to the perception of Ukrainians being essential contributors to Poland's labour market.

The second wave began after Poland's accession to the EU, this event opening new opportunities for Ukrainians on the Polish labour market. Poland's EU membership facilitated legal pathways for Ukrainians to work and reside in Poland, contributing to the country's labour force and helping address labour shortages in certain sectors. This second wave of Ukrainian migration to Poland was a response to the opportunities presented by Poland's EU integration and further deepened economic and social ties between the two states.

The third wave gained momentum in 2008, at the height of the global financial crisis. Thousands of Ukrainians crossed the border to neighbouring Poland in search of a more stable economy. The Polish economy remained comparatively robust in the face of the global economic challenges of that time, and employment opportunities were available in various Polish sectors, making it an appealing choice for those seeking work and economic security. As a result, thousands of Ukrainians made the journey to Poland during that period.

The fourth wave was preceded by the beginning of hostilities in the east of Ukraine. Because of that, many people went to the neighbouring country to the west in search of shelter and employment. This particular wave of migration had a distinctly humanitarian dimension, as many individuals and families fled the battlefield in order to seek safety and stability. Poland, being a neighbouring country with a shared border, became a natural destination for those in search of shelter and opportunities for employment, and the Polish government, along with various humanitarian organisations, extended support to incoming refugees.

The fifth wave is the largest, the reason for which was the military attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine. Millions of people crossed the border with Poland, with some of them moving on to other countries in Europe and America, but a considerable amount did remain in Poland and found employment in order to be able to continue living their lives as usual.

After 2014, Poland became the most popular destination among Ukrainian workers. The significant increase in the number of migrants from Ukraine was due not only to economic reasons, but also to the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine which had an impact on the geography of migration flows, their gender composition, etc. Incidentally, Poland has always attracted Ukrainians because of its territorial proximity, minor language barrier, and higher salaries. At the same time, Poland was experiencing a shortage of workers amid successful economic development and record low unemployment (Yeleyko, Krayevska, 2020).

The events of recent years are a clear precursor as regards the increase in the flow of migrants. It is also worth noting that wages in Poland are significantly higher than in Ukraine. The flow of Ukrainian labour migrants has had a positive impact on the Polish economy. Once again, and at the same time, Poland is still experiencing a shortage of workers against a background of economic development. This aspect of the relationship between Poland and Ukraine is very important, as migrant workers have a positive impact on both the Ukrainian and Polish economies. Relations between these countries undoubtedly have a long albeit ambiguous history, and when Ukraine needed a helping hand, Poland did not hesitate to extend it.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation which has caused massive casualties, utterly destroyed cities, in addition to stoking fear and confusion about what will happen next, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes, their relatives, and their entire pasts. They did not go to the West in search of a better life, they went to save their own lives, and those millions

have already crossed the borders into neighbouring states. According to official data of The UN Refugee Agency, more than twenty three million Ukrainians have crossed the Ukrainian border since February 24th, 2022, with Poland becoming the main aid hub for Ukrainians and crossing point to the EU. Six million refugees have passed through the territory of Poland, and more than 950,000 have applied for asylum. In total, those who arrived in Poland after February 24th make up 2.5% of the total population of Poland.

Table 1. Countries Featured in the Refugee Response Plan

Country	Date	Refugees from Ukraine Recorded in Country	Refugees from Ukraine Who Applied for Asylum, TP or Similar National Protection Schemes	Border Crossings from Ukraine Since 24 th February 2022	Border Crossings to Ukraine Since 24 th February 2022
Poland	17.08.23	968.390	1.639.725	14.361.820	12.004.055
Czechia	27.08.23	364.885	551.690	Not applicable	Not applicable
Bulgaria	15.08.23	86.490	166.755	Not applicable	Not applicable
Romania	27.08.23	92.420	141.670	3.282.280	2.699.580
Slovakia	27.08.23	107.415	124.925	1.676.750	1.499.350
Lithuania	21.08.23	43.015	79.905	Not applicable	Not applicable
Estonia	20.08.23	50.555	50.555	Not applicable	Not applicable
Latvia	15.08.23	32.470	49.965	Not applicable	Not applicable
Hungary	29.08.23	52.285	37.565	3.387.325	Data not available
Republic of Moldova	20.08.23	117.160	3.195	905.050	582.900

Source: UNHCR, 2023a.

In January 2022, a trial analysis by digital marketing agency Selectivv was conducted, according to which 1.5 million Ukrainian citizens over the age of 15 resided in Poland. This data was compared to the estimates of the Central Statistical Office based on various registers, which show that at the end of February 2020 there were 1.4 million Ukrainians in Poland.

Given that the number of the Ukrainians temporarily staying in Poland is not recorded in any registry, it was only possible to confirm the reliability of the Selectivv analysis by comparing the data with the Central Statistical Office (Selectivv, 2023).

Aid to Ukrainian Refugees

Since the first day of the conventional war, nine refugee reception points have been operational on the border with Poland, namely in the cities of Dorogusk, Dolgobychiv, Zosyn, and Grebenne in the Lublin Region and near Korchów, Medyka, Budomierz, and Krościenko in Subcarpathia, as well as at the railway station in Przemyśl. They served as first aid points where, *inter alia*, information, food, medical assistance could be obtained. After that, the refugees could go to places of stay in Poland, determined independently or by voivode (Polskie Radio, 2022).

In the second half of April 2023, information appeared on the government website of the Republic of Poland that, on April 12th, the Seimas voted to amend the Special Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens, a law which affects those who emigrated to Poland as a result of the war. After the publication of the new provisions of Art. 2, sections 1 and 2 of the Law on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country, the period of stay for citizens of Ukraine (and individual members of their families) who are considered legal was extended until March 4th, 2024. This date coincides with the end of the extended period during which European Union Member States provide temporary protection to citizens of Ukraine. In some cases, it is until August 31st, 2024 or September 30th, 2024.

In its original form, the act was adopted on March 12th, 2022 and regulated the situation of refugees in Poland since the beginning of the war, including the legality of their stay, the right to education and work, and access to medical care. Previously, the Special Law made changes that regulated, for example, the conditions of doing business in Poland. The innovations, which were introduced in January 2023, related to the general conditions of stay for Ukrainian refugees in Poland and the establishment of new obligations for forced migrants (Act of March 12th, 2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country). The approved document also provides for the allocation of 2 billion PLN (17 billion UAH) from the Aid Fund in 2023 for education for Ukrainians in Poland (art. 12 of the Act of April 14th, 2023).

Ukrainians in Poland who have been granted asylum or temporary protection have the same rights as Polish citizens (except for the right to vote and to be elected). They are also obliged to comply with all laws and procedures that must be followed by Polish communities (UNHCR, 2022a). In order to make it easier for Ukrainians to adapt to Polish society and to gain access to social benefits, medical services, the education system, and even to start their own business, the Polish authorities granted Ukrainians the right to obtain an identification number for national selection (PESEL). With its help, Ukrainians can obtain a Trusted Profile and a so-called “NIP”, or tax identification number (in Polish, *numer identyfikacji podatkowej*). To date, more than 1.5 million (1,507,461) PESEL UKR numbers have been assigned to Ukrainian citizens, of which fewer than a million (997,932) are still active. The largest number of people with active PESEL UKR numbers are in the Mazovia (211,693), Lower Silesia (112,045) and Silesia (98,625) voivodeships (Polish Government, 2022). According to statistics provided by the article *Miejska Gościnność: Wielki Wzrost, Wyzwania i Szanse – Raport o Uchodźcach z Ukrainy w Największych Polskich Miastach* (Wojdat, Cywiński, 2022), 72% of people who received a PESEL are women and only 22% are men, most of whom have reached the age of 60. It can also be concluded from these statistics that 40% are children, and 60% are adults (15+) (Wojdat, Cywiński, 2022, p. 49).

As Marcin Woidat, director of the UMP Analysis and Research Centre noted, due to the influx of refugees from Ukraine, the population of Poland exceeded 40 million people for the first time in history. The demographic structure of the Ukrainian community in Poland has also changed significantly. Until February 24th, 2022 a significant part of Poland’s demographic consisted of young men who had come to Poland to earn money, then, with the beginning of the conventional war, many of them decided to return to Ukraine to fight, with women with children being the first to come to Poland as a consequence of the war (Wojdat, Cywiński, 2022, p. 15). Citizens of Ukraine can use Diia.pl as a digital identity document after obtaining a PESEL number and activating a Trusted Profile. In order to regulate the movement of Ukrainian citizens within the Schengen area and their crossing of the EU borders, on July 12th, 2022, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration of Poland informed the European Commission that the Diia.pl temporary residence permit can serve as confirmation of the legality of a stay in Poland (Polish Government). In January 2023, Poland updated the rules for re-crossing the border for Ukrainian refugees, and in connection with this, it will be mandatory to present diia.pl at the border, in order not to lose one’s UKR status (Embassy of Ukraine in Poland, 2022). It is noted that in

order to preserve their status, a Ukrainian refugee has the right to leave Poland for a period of no more than 30 days. However, this status can be restored on the condition that the departure for a period of more than 30 days was made to the territory of the Schengen zone or that the reason for returning from Ukraine is justified – active hostilities at a place of residence, for example.

To every Ukrainian refugee, including children, who arrived in Poland after February 24th, 2022, the Polish government undertook to pay 300 PLN in an effort to help. In addition to basic financial assistance, one parent has been able to, and can still (at the time of writing) receive assistance for raising a child in the amount of PLN 12,000 (for 12 or 24 months). Every Ukrainian who was forced to migrate from their homeland to Poland has the right to receive free assistance from the Justice Fund (The Act on Assistance for Ukrainian Citizens, 2023). Ukrainians who arrived in Poland after February 24th, 2022 can also count on several types of financial assistance, such as: financial assistance in the form of the Family 500+ program – it can be received by citizens of Ukraine or spouses from Ukraine who have at least one child under the age of 18; material assistance courtesy of the “Large Family Card” in the form of financial aid to support large families; cash assistance from the “400 Plus” program to pay for children’s stays in kindergarten; the Family Capital Program – this assistance is also intended for young children aged 1 to 3 years; and UNHCR’s financial assistance for persons in need of special protection and persons in a poor economic situation (Visit Ukraine, 2023b). Medical assistance is provided to refugees who crossed the border on or after February 24th, 2022, in connection with the war in Ukraine. Such persons must have a certificate with a stamp from the Border Service of Poland. Among other things, refugees can receive reimbursement for the cost of purchasing medicines, and children who have come to Poland have the opportunity to receive preventive vaccination, which is provided as part of the vaccination calendar (Polish Government, 2022c).

A study by the National Bank states that for 560,000 registered Ukrainian children, Poland provides 2.2 billion euros for education, as well as 1.5 billion euros for medical care. After receiving a personal PESEL code, a citizen of Ukraine with refugee status will be able to manage an internet-based patient account, a so-called “IKP” (in Polish, Internetowe Konto Pacjenta). Access to this application from the Ministry of Health is via the site pactin.gov.pl, and the platform allows a person to remotely receive electronic prescriptions for medications, referrals to doctors, test results for COVID-19, as well as obtain information regarding vaccinations and sick leave.

Residences of Ukrainian Refugees

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, modular houses for Ukrainian refugees began to be built in different regions of Poland, with Podlaskie Voivodeship, together with the "Podziel się Pokojem" foundation, building 50 mobile homes for Ukrainians. In these modular houses, 250 people found temporary residence. 19 modular apartments also appeared in the Lesser Poland Voivodeship. The city of Ruda Śląska (in the Silesian Voivodeship) received 1 million euros in European Union funds for the conversion of municipal premises into housing for Ukrainian refugees. With these funds, the city authorities plan to fit out 28 social apartments. For this, 26 residential premises, which are currently in a state of near-disrepair, will be overhauled, and another 3 non-residential premises will be rebuilt into 2 apartments (wspolczesna.pl, 2023).

Starting from June 2022, reception points for Ukrainian refugees began to be closed in Poland. The reason for this decision was the fact that more and more Ukrainian refugees are returning to their homeland. Subcarpathian Voivode Michal Melnichuk confirmed that it is unprofitable to keep so many points on standby, mainly for economic reasons. Currently, the reception and medical points remain in Przemyśl at the railway station, as this is a strategic reception point for citizens of Ukraine. However, the Polish authorities claim that, if necessary, the closed reception points for refugees will reopen and resume their work (Polskie Radio, 2022).

Since the first days of the full-scale invasion, the PTAK Humanitarian Centre for Refugees, located near Warsaw in the city of Nadazyn, has been in operation. Since February 24th, several hundred thousand Ukrainians have passed through this centre. Although the centre is designed for the simultaneous stay of 20 thousand people (its area covers 150,000 m²), only between 4,000–5,000 people stay there at the most at any given moment, since Ukrainians do not stay in the Humanitarian Centre for more than 3–5 days. There is also a bus station on the territory of PTAK, from which Ukrainians could travel to other cities in Poland and Europe for free.

In September 2023, the largest centre for refugees from Ukraine, the so-named PTAK Expo, was closed due to the fact that new people were no longer arriving there. Until recently, only about 300 people had lived in the hub, so it made no sense to keep it open, according to officials. Hundreds of people were forced to seek new shelter (as stated in a telephone statement from Dagmara Zalewska, the press secretary of the Mazovian Voivodeship, on September 4th, 2023).

As reported by the mayor's office, there are currently seven centres operating in Warsaw, in which 1,031 refugees from Ukraine are staying, including 375 children (Gazeta Wyborcza, 2023). In accordance with the amendments to the Special Law, the conditions for aiding Ukrainians living in residential buildings will change. The amendment provides that citizens of Ukraine who arrived in Poland fleeing the war and settled in mass accommodation centres can stay there for free for 120 days. More precisely, since March 1st, 2023, Ukrainian refugees have been obliged to pay the costs of staying in places of collective accommodation. According to the new changes, citizens of Ukraine who live in such places for more than 120 days will have to pay 50% of their own maintenance costs, but no more than 40 PLN per day, from March 2023. Since May 2023, Ukrainians whose stays exceed 180 days have had to cover 75% of their living costs, but no more than 60 PLN per day. At the same time, the obligation to pay does not apply to people with disabilities, children, pregnant women, people of retirement age, and people who take care of at least three children (Sejm. Nr 3133, 2022). Many Ukrainian forced migrants have reached the end of their assistance period provided by the 40+ funding program, which previously offered free housing to Ukrainians. Consequently, they now face the challenge of not only securing housing, but housing at full market rates - a task made difficult by today's real estate market conditions. To address this situation, Ukrainians can now utilise the non-profit French platform EU4UA, a platform designed to assist Ukrainian refugees in finding accommodation in European countries including Poland. The platform contains information about European families willing to host Ukrainians for free. However, these ads are becoming fewer and fewer in number. To enhance housing prospects and reduce rental costs, the platform has introduced a new feature in the form of the ability to find roommates for shared renting. This roommate search function aims to optimise the apartment-sharing experience by considering factors such as preferred location, rental duration, the gender of potential roommates, the presence of children and pets, budgetary considerations, and more (EU4UA, 2023).

The Influence of Ukrainians on the Polish Economy

According to the international employment company Gremi Personal, 739,000 Ukrainians are currently officially employed in Poland. In 2021, according to the Central Statistics Office of Poland, that number had dropped to 325,000, but, according to the National Bank of Poland, the contribution of Ukrainian migration to Poland's GDP growth in 2014–

2018 was as much as 11%. Of course, after the invasion of 2022, refugees joined the flow of movement to Poland in addition to Ukrainian labour migrants. The study additionally showed that only 4% of adults from Ukraine who have moved to Poland are not of working age. More than half of the Ukrainians who are currently in the country's capital have a higher or unfinished higher education, and one in three has a professional and technical education (32%). In addition, slightly more than a third know the Polish language at a good or very good level.

The results of a study conducted by the gaming platform EWL, the EWL Foundation, and the Centre for Eastern Europe of the University of Warsaw showed that 78% of Ukrainian citizens living in Poland are officially employed. Among people who lived in Poland before the full-scale invasion, this figure is 12% higher – 83% against 71% among people who came to Poland after February 24th, 2022. According to the study, only 35% of Ukrainians who work in Poland do jobs appropriate to their qualifications; 43% of those people are people who have been living in Poland since before the full-scale invasion, and 23% of the 35% are people who were forced to move to Poland after the full-scale invasion in order to find refuge there (Platform Migracyjna EWL, Studium Europy Wschodniej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2023). This is due to the fact that Ukrainians face various barriers when looking for work, such as a lack of knowledge of the local language, a lack of connections, childcare responsibilities, and/or a lack of understanding of how the labour market works in Poland. Refugees who do find employment most often perform relatively low-paid work, very often on a part-time basis. The most common answer to the question about their net income was that they earn between 2,000 to 3,000 PLN per month. In turn, the most common answer to this question among former migrants is 3000–4000 PLN net. Pre-war migrants received relatively higher wages for their work, and were most likely to work in industry, while female refugee workers are more likely to function in sectors such as hospitality and catering. Also, labour migrants who worked in the Polish market even before the war worked much more per week than the average working citizen of Poland.

The increase in the share of women with children among Ukrainians in Poland has become a challenge for the local labour market, and this is due to the fact that employers have been forced to adapt workplaces to such child-based requirements if possible by introducing, for example, more flexible schedules, providing assistance in placing children in educational institutions, and even speeding up automation processes. It is undoubtedly in the interests of the Polish economy to help Ukrainians find work related to their qualifications (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2023).

Ukrainians working in Poland improves the dynamics of production, and also stimulates competition in the local labour market. Thanks to the contribution and efforts of Ukrainian migrants, the output of goods and services in Estonia, Poland, and Czechia in 2026 will be 2.2–2.3% higher than in the base scenario without migration (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023). Even despite the increase in the flow of Ukrainians who were forced to flee the war, Polish companies still lack workers and are actively looking for them and opening new markets. Even in the industrial sector, in logistics, and areas that do not require much work experience or skills, there are still many unfilled job vacancies (EWL, 2023).

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Ukrainians have paid 2.14 billion euros in taxes to Poland, while spending 750 million euros on financial aid (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023).

Experts of the Deloitte consulting company have prepared a report on the integration potential of refugees from Ukraine. From this we can conclude that if Poland develops a strategy for the integration of refugees, then the country will get an increase in GDP and employers will also get access to skilled, professional workers. In the long term, the plan for the integration of refugees from Ukraine can help increase Poland's GDP from 0.2% to 3.5% (Monitor Deloitte, 2022). Making the flow of information more efficient, combating misinformation, facilitating the entry of refugees into the Polish labour market and activation of refugees through public policies appear to be crucial both for the integration of refugees from Ukraine into the Polish economy and for their successful integration into Polish society.

Research by the National Bank shows us that Ukrainians actively stimulate consumer demand in Poland. The volume of spending by Ukrainians abroad has increased several times compared to spending in the pre-war period. According to the National Bank of Ukraine, in 2022, the spending of currency via Ukrainian bank cards in the travel category was significantly higher than in 2021 (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023).

The economy of Poland is really gaining momentum, and Ukrainian refugees have made a certain contribution to this. The Telegraph newspaper emphasises that the GDP per capita at purchasing power parity in Poland has already reached \$35,600.

Intentions of Refugees

In June 2022, the UN Refugee Agency conducted a survey among Ukrainians to find out their intentions for the future (UNHCR 2022b). Most refugees want to return to Ukraine as soon as it is safe to do so,

and for the short and medium term they plan to stay in Poland. 63% of refugees intend to stay in Poland only temporarily, and, in most cases, that particular decision was made for security reasons. Those who plan to return (22%) are most often convinced that the situation in Ukraine has improved. 17% of respondents who plan to return only want to embark upon a temporary trip to visit family.

The percentage of people who plan to stay in Poland is higher among refugees travelling with persons who need additional care (70% with children or infants, 71% with elderly people, and 73% with people with special needs). A tenth of respondents plan to move to another country, the most frequently mentioned destinations being Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands (UNHCR, 2022b).

In February 2023, the UN Refugee Agency conducted a survey among Ukrainians to find out how their intentions for the future have changed. The majority of the survey's respondents continue to express a desire to return to Ukraine one day (65%), with a large part being still undecided about their return in the medium or long term (18%), and only a small minority reported an unwillingness to return (5%).

Table 2. Intentions of Ukrainian Refugees in February 2023

Want to Return	Haven't Decided Yet	Do not Want to Return
65%	18%	5%

Source: UNHCR, 2023a.

Among the people who plan to return in the near future: elderly people, people from the West of Ukraine, people whose husbands/wives or children are still in Ukraine. Among the people who do not plan to return: men or youths, people with no spouses or children in Ukraine, and people from the North of Ukraine (UNHCR, 2023b).

The migration platform EWL and the Centre for Eastern European Studies of the University of Warsaw published the report entitled "*Z Polski do Niemiec. Nowe trendy ukraińskiej migracji uchodźczej*" (EWL, 2023) which demonstrates the trend of Ukrainian refugees moving from Poland to Germany. This report summarises the results of a survey (of 400 refugees) conducted in August 2023. Several factors influence their desire to move from Poland; social reasons are at the top of the list (as indicated by 43% of the respondents) i.e., refugees being encouraged to move by friends and acquaintances who already live in Germany. Economic issues were also very important, among which, first of all, are more attractive social benefits for refugees from Ukraine in Germany (42%).

Table 3. Factors Influencing Decisions to Return to Ukraine

The final end of the war	51.2%
An absence of hostilities and airstrikes	34.1%
Adequately paid work in Ukraine	28.3%
A higher standard of living in Ukraine	20.7%
The cessation of hostilities in my region	19.1%
The restoration of infrastructure in my region	17.7%
The expiry of temporary protection	17.4%
A lack of affordable housing abroad	11%
The de-occupation of my settlement	10.7%
Financial assistance from Ukraine	9.4%
The cancellation of social payments abroad	8.8%
Restoring my home	7.0%
A prohibition to work remotely	1.1%
None of the above	6.8%
Other	1.9%

Source: Centre for Economic Strategy, 2023.

It is material issues that force Ukrainians to move. In Germany, after living expenses have been covered, Ukrainian refugees have an average of almost 500 Euros, which is four times more than the 826 PLN they have left over after covering the same expenses in Poland. Mikhalina Selevych, Director of International Development at EWL, predicts that Germany will remain a very important migration destination for Ukrainians. The directive, introduced last summer, not only provided them with free access to education, medical, and social services in EU countries, but also allowed them to work there legally. 35% of refugees from Ukraine who left Poland for Germany want to stay there, with only 13% considering a return. As Michal Wierzchowski, Director of EWL in Poland, noted, the introduction of universal Polish language courses for refugees, as well as the facilitation of the nostrification of diplomas would help specialists, in particular, doctors, who are in short supply in Poland, enter the labour market.

According to Eurostat data, by the end of June 2023, 1.1 million Ukrainian citizens were registered in Germany, while 975,000 were registered in Poland. This means that since August 2022, the number of registered refugees in Poland has decreased by more than 350,000 people, whereas in Germany, the number has increased by more than 410,000 people.

Poles' Support of Ukrainian Refugees

The longer the war lasts, the more Polish support weakens. In the first days of the war, the citizens of Poland rushed to help the refugees with all their might, donating money and various things, and accepting them into their homes. Now, however, this enthusiasm has waned. The research group Openfield conducted a survey in which it can be seen that the percentage of people who agree to accept immigrants is only decreasing. According to a poll by the Manulo Research Panel conducted on Tuesday February 14th, 2023 among 1,677 respondents, 67% of people agree to accept forced migrants. In previous editions, Poles' support was higher; 72 percent in the first release of the study on February 24th, 2022, 88% in the second release of the study on March 4th, 2022, 79% in a study on May 24th, 2022 and 71 percent in a survey conducted on October 24th, 2022 (Manulo Research Panel, 2023).

Table 4. Changes in Poles' Attitudes in Support of Forced Migrants

24.02.2022	04.03.2022	24.05.2022	24.10.2022	14.02.2023
72%	88%	79%	71%	67%

Source: Manulo Research Panel, 2023.

Increasingly more Poles think that help from the state, in the form of benefits, is better for refugees than for Poles themselves. This opinion, according to Zespół Badawczy Openfield from February 2023, is held by 60.4%. Respondents of the October 2023 issue of the study also shared this opinion, i.e., 55.7% of Poles. The number of respondents who want refugees from Ukraine to be able to stay in Poland permanently after the end of the war has decreased to 40.5 percent from 41.7%. Among the reasons for concern related to the influx of refugees, the most commonly alluded to were communal services and institutions (as indicated by 56% of the respondents), increases in apartment rental prices (49.3%), and the reduction in the number of job offers (47.6%) (Openfield, 2023). According to a recent survey by CBOS, which was conducted in August 2023, 69% of its respondents in Poland support the acceptance of refugees from Ukraine, while 25% were of the opposite opinion. Also, 70% of respondents believed that the war in Ukraine threatens the security of Poland whereas 25% believed otherwise. The survey shows that 70% of respondents believe that the war in Ukraine threatens Poland's security, which is two percentage points higher than in the July survey (Polskie Radio, 2023).

Tomasz Grzyb, Ph.D. from SWPS University, who studies human behaviour in crisis situations, claims that the so-called "burnout in

helping people” would more appropriately be called a quite natural weariness and acclimatization, as these terms more closely reflect what people are dealing with in such a situation. This is a very valid observation, since “burnout” is often the result of inability to live in constant stress and tension, rather than a lack of desire to help (Instytut Praw Migrantów, 2023).

Conclusions

Russia’s attack on Ukraine on the 24th of February, 2022 created a humanitarian crisis that forced numerous countries, but Poland particularly, to deal with the problems associated with accommodating the outflow of Ukrainian refugees. Poland’s legal response to the Russian war against Ukraine demonstrated that Poland is committed to international humanitarian principles. It quickly adapted its legislation to the needs of Ukrainian refugees. The Polish government has demonstrated flexibility in granting humanitarian visas, temporary protection statuses, and by expediting asylum applications. All these actions are consistent with international law and the Refugee Convention of 1951, which Poland ratified. Poland not only provides asylum to Ukrainian refugees, it approaches this issue comprehensively; Poland’s approach also includes social services, employment opportunities, and free housing. Additionally, in order to meet the urgent needs of Ukrainian refugees, Poland has opened reception centres to which refugees must apply after arriving in the country. This strategy demonstrates Poland’s desire to do everything in its power to facilitate the process of adaptation of Ukrainian refugees so that they can more easily integrate into society. Poland’s efforts to create language courses and help with cultural integration is another important aspect to note, as it greatly aids the transition of Ukrainian refugees into Polish society. Poland has also adapted the education system to the needs of Ukrainian children. All this testifies to the inclusive nature of Poland’s policy towards refugees.

It is also important to note the influence of Ukrainian refugees on the economic sphere of Poland. Ukrainians have become a valuable resource on the Polish labour market; their presence has contributed to economic growth and prosperity, which is very important for the development of Poland. On the basis of a report prepared by the Deloitte consulting company concerning the integration potential of refugees from Ukraine, we can conclude that if Poland develops a strategy for the integration of refugees, then the country will get an increase in GDP and employers will also get access to skilled professionals. In the long term, the plan for the

integration of refugees from Ukraine could help increase Poland's GDP from 0.2% to 3.5% (Monitor Deloitte, 2022).

Poland's response to the war against Ukraine testifies to the steadfastness of the Polish people who have demonstrated resilience and adaptability in the most difficult times for their neighbours. Poland continues to show its solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and is doing everything possible to support Ukrainians who have fled from war and who are searching for security and protection. Poland is also trying to analyse this situation and find proper answers to any questions that arise in order to help Ukrainians and avoid any violations of rights and/or opportunities for Poles in their native state. Therefore, many challenges still should be discussed and eventually overcome and effective policy should be developed and implemented.

As evidenced in this article, there have already been some changes in the intentions of Ukrainians as regards their stay in Poland as well as the desire of Poles to help Ukrainians. The majority of Ukrainians want to return to Ukraine after the end of war. The list of people who plan to return in the near future include elderly people, people from the West of Ukraine, and people whose husbands/wives and/or children are still in Ukraine. Among the people who do not plan to return are men or youths, those who have no spouses or children in Ukraine, and people from the North of Ukraine. Therefore, such a situation will influence the development of Polish policy toward refugees. This all highlights the importance of adaptability in the face of challenges and can serve as an example for others to follow as the world continues to face the consequences of various conflicts.

References

- BBC (2023) *How and why Ukraine and Poland fell out*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/c9ejzgkydm9o> (Access 3.10.2023).
- Bloomberg (2023) *Poland Signals It Will Stop Aid for Ukrainian Refugees Next Year*. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-19/poland-signals-it-will-stop-aid-for-ukrainian-refugees-next-year> (Access 3.10.2023).
- Chruślińska, I. (2023) *Sploty – o Ukraińcach z Polski. Rozmowy z Piotrem Tymą*. Gdańsk: Fundacja Terytoria Książki.
- Council of the European Union (2023) *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/eu-solidarity-ukraine/> (Access 9.09.2023).
- Council of the European Union (2023) *Ukrainian Refugees: EU Member States Agree to Extend Temporary Protection*. Available at: <https://www.>

- consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/09/28/ukrainian-refugees-eu-member-states-agree-to-extend-temporary-protection/ (Access 02.10.2023).
- Center for Economic Strategy (2023) *Factors influencing the decision to return to Ukraine*. Available at: <https://ces.org.ua/en/refugees-from-ukraine-final-report/> (Access: 16.10.2023).
- Duszczuk, M. and Kaczmarczyk, P. (2022) "The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges", *Intereconomics*. Vol. 57(3). Available at: <https://www.intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2022/number/3/article/the-war-in-ukraine-and-migration-to-poland-outlook-and-challenges.html> (Access 16.10.2023).
- Embassy of Ukraine in Poland (2023) *PESEL UKR*. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/AmbasadaUkrainywPolsce/posts/50389185523405> (Access 12.09.2023).
- EU4UA (2023) Available at: <https://www.eu4ua.org/uk/login?tab=signup> (Access 31.10.2023).
- European Parliament Research Service (2023) *Ukrainian Grain Import Bans Explained*. Available at: <https://epthinktank.eu/2023/04/19/ukrainian-grain-import-bans-explained/> (Access 3.10.2023).
- European Commission (2022) *Ukraine refugees: Operational guidelines to support Member States in applying the Temporary Protection Directive*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1727 (Access 3.10.2023).
- EWL (2023) *Z Polski do Niemiec. Nowe trendy ukraińskiej migracji uchodźczej*. Platforma Migracyjna EWL, Studium Europy Wschodniej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Available at: https://ewl.com.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Raport_Z-Polski-do-Niemiec_Nowe-trendy-ukraińskiej-migracji-uchodźczej.pdf (Access 16.10.2023).
- Gazeta Wyborcza (2023) *Wojewoda Mazowiecki Zamknął Największy Ośrodek dla Uchodźców z Ukrainy*. Available at: <https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,54420,30143047,wojewoda-mazowiecki-zamknal-najwiekszy-osrodek-dla-uchodzcow.html> (Access 12.09.2023).
- Górny, A. et al. (2019) "New dimensions in immigration from Ukraine to Poland", *Center of Migration Research Newsletter*. Vol. 9(15), December. Available at: <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Spotlight-December-2019-1.pdf> (Access 11.09.2023).
- Instytut Praw Migrantów (2023) *Czy Polacy wciąż chcą pomagać Ukrainie? O znieczulicy, wsparciu i powrocie do normalności*. Available at: https://www.instytutpm.eu/czy-polacy-wciaz-chca-pomagac-ukrainie-o-znieczulicy-wsparciu-i-powrocie-do-normalnosci/#_ftn1 (Access 8.10.2023).

- Monitor Deloitte (2022) *Refugees from Ukraine in Poland: Challenges and Potential for Integration*. Available at: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/pl/Documents/Reports/pl_ENG_Report_Refugees_from_Ukraine_in_Poland.pdf (Access 12.10.2023).
- Narodowy Bank Polski (2023) *Sytuacja życiowa i ekonomiczna migrantów z Ukrainy w Polsce – wpływ pandemii i wojny na charakter migracji w Polsce*. Available at: <https://nbp.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Sytuacja-zyciowa-i-ekonomiczna-migrantow-z-Ukrainy-w-Polsce-raport-z-badania-2022.pdf> (Access 11.10.2023).
- National Bank of Ukraine (2022) *Impact of Ukrainian migrants on the economies of recipient countries*. Available at: https://bank.gov.ua/admin_uploads/article/Migration_impact_2022-12-15.pdf?v=4 (Access 2.10.2023).
- Polish Government (2022a) *Dokument DIIA.pl*. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/uw-lodzki/dokument-diiapl> (Access 13.10.2023).
- Polish Government (2022b) *Uzyskaj numer PESEL oraz profil zaufany – usługa dla obywateli Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa*. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/gov/uzyskaj-numer-pesel-oraz-profil-zaufany--usluga-dla-obywateli-ukrainy> (Access 12.10.2023).
- Polish Government (2022c) *Yak mozhna skorystatysia z derzhavnoi medychnoi dopomohy u Polshchi*. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ua/Yak-mozhna-skorystatysya-derzhavnoyi-medytynoyu-v-Polshchi> (Access 12.10.2023).
- Polish Government (2023a) *Nowelizacja ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa*, 28.01.2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/novelizacja-ustawy-o-pomocy-obywatelom-ukrainy-w-zwiazku-z-konfliktem-zbrojnym-na-terytorium-tego-panstwa> (Access 12.10.2023).
- Polish Government (2023b) *Obywatele Ukrainy w Polsce – aktualne dane migracyjne*. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/obywatele-ukrainy-w-polsce--aktualne-dane-migracyjne> (Access 5.10.2023).
- Politico (2022) *Polish Cities Feel the Strain of Helping Ukrainian Refugees*. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-cities-strain-help-ukraine-refugees/> (Access 12.10.2023).
- Polskie Radio (2023) *Some Reception Points for Refugees from Ukraine Are Being Closed in Podkarpacie*. Available at: <https://www.polskieradio.pl/398/7856/artykul/2970613> (Access 3.10.2023).
- Rzeczpospolita (2023) *Ukraińscy uchodźcy mają dopłacać do pobytu*. Available at: <https://www.rp.pl/cudzoziemcy/art38041091-ukrainscy-uchodzcy-maja-doplacac-do-pobytu> (Access 13.10.2023).

- Rzeczpospolita (2023) *Badanie: zmienia się nastawienie Polaków do uchodźców z Ukrainy*. Available at: <https://www.rp.pl/spoleczenstwo/art37927281-badanie-zmienia-sie-nastawienie-polakow-do-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy?> (Access 12.10.2023).
- Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (2022) *Ustawa z 12.03.2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa*. Available at: https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/proc9.nsf/ustawy/2069_u.htm (Access 9.10.2023).
- Selectivv (2023) *Ukraińcy w Polsce – dynamika populacji w latach 2022–2023*. Available at: <https://selectivv.com/ukraincy-w-polsce-dynamika-populacji/> (Access 9.10.2023).
- Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (2023) *Ustawa o Pomocy Obywatelom Ukrainy*. Available at: <https://ukraina.interwencjaprawna.pl/ustawa-o-pomocy-obywatelom-ukrainy/> (Access 8.10.2023).
- UNHCR (2022a) *The UN Refugee Agency “Rights of Recognized Refugees in Poland”*. Available at: <https://help.unhcr.org/poland/access-to-services-for-recognized-refugees/rights-of-recognized-refugees-in-poland/> (Access 13.10.2023).
- UNHCR (2022b) *The UN Refugee Agency “Uchodźcy z Ukrainy w Polsce: Profilowanie – czerwiec 2022”*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/96508> (Access 10.10.2023).
- UNHCR (2023a) *Operational Data Portal Ukrainian Refugee Situation*. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> (Access 10.10.2023).
- UNHCR (2023b) *Regional Bureau for Europe “Lives on Hold: Intentions and Perspectives of Refugees from Ukraine. Regional Intentions Report #3, February 2023”*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99072> (Access 11.10.2023).
- Visit Ukraine (2023) *Housing for Ukrainian Refugees in Poland: Another City to Provide Shelter*. Available at: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/1537/housing-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-poland-another-city-to-provide-shelter> (Access 3.10.2023).
- Visit Ukraine (2023b) *Cash assistance in Poland 2023: available programs for Ukrainians and how to get funds*. Available at: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/1370/cash-assistance-in-poland-2023-available-programs-for-ukrainians-and-how-to-get-funds> (Access 3.10.2023).
- Wojdat, M. and Cywiński, P. (2022) *Miejska Gościnność: Wielki Wzrost, Wyzwania i Szanse – Raport o Uchodźcach z Ukrainy w Największych Polskich Miastach*. Available at: https://metropolie.pl/fileadmin/news/2022/10/UMP_raport_Ukraina_20220429_final.pdf (Access 13.10.2023).

wspolczesna.pl (2023) *Rada powiatu monieckiego podjęła decyzję o współpracy z Fundacją „Podziel się Pokojem”. Dzięki temu powstanie 50 domów dla uchodźców*. Available at: <https://wspolczesna.pl/rada-powiatu-monieckiego-podjela-decyzje-o-wspolpracy-z-fundacja-podziel-sie-pokojem-dzieki-temu-powstanie-50-domow-dla/ar/c9-17365983> (Access 13.10.2023).

Yeleyko, I. and Krayevska, O. (2020) “Labour Migration from Ukraine to Poland: Current State and Further Perspectives”, *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*. Vol. 24(3), pp. 126–143. DOI: 10.33067/SE.3.2020.7.