

GOŚCINNA POLSKA 2022+

Jak mądrze wesprzeć
Polskę i Polaków w pomocy
osobom uciekającym
przed wojną w Ukrainie?

HOSPITABLE POLAND 2022+

How to wisely support
Poland and Poles in helping
people fleeing the war
in Ukraine?

ГОСТИННА ПОЛЬЩА 2022+

Як мудро підтримати
Польщу у прагненні
допомогти особам,
що тікають від війни
в Україні?

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1. POLAND AS AN IMMIGRATION COUNTRY

Specific nature of immigration to Poland and future scenarios

The outbreak of war in Ukraine has set in motion the migration potential of a scale that has not been observed since the Second World War. The magnitude of the influx of people fleeing the war in Ukraine is enormous – especially in the case of Poland and other countries in the region, which until recently could hardly be described as destinations for immigrants.

According to the Polish Border Guard, from 24 February to mid-May 2022, as many as 3.5 million border crossings to Poland and 1.5 million to Ukraine were registered, while at the end of April 2022, the number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine („war refugees”¹) in Poland can be estimated at 1.40-1.55 million people.

At present, it is very difficult to predict the future of war refugees from Ukraine in Poland (and other EU countries). The number of war refugees – just like the number of returnees to Ukraine – depends mainly on the events of the war and the future reconstruction of the country. However, it should be assumed that in any scenario we will see more migrants from Ukraine than before the war. It can already be concluded that Poland has turned into an immigration country with a high share of non-native Poles. In other words, regardless of the outcome of the war and its consequences for the economic development of Ukraine, Poland will become a bi-national country, with an obvious predominance of the Polish nation, but with an increasing share of the Ukrainian one. Poland will also be inhabited by citizens of many other countries. Data on residence permits show that the most immigrants, apart from Ukraine, come from Belarus, Germany, and Moldova. However, the share of Ukrainian nationals is, in the population of foreigners residing in Poland, more than 85%.

It is very difficult to predict developments in Ukraine in the coming weeks or months. However, it is necessary to outline the potential scenarios that appear to be the most probable, and which relate to the migration situation resulting directly from Russia's aggression in April 2022. We have prepared three scenarios for the development of the situation, assuming that at the time of drafting, there were approximately 2.9 million Ukrainian citizens in Poland, both those who arrived before the outbreak of war and those fleeing the war in Ukraine. The first scenario assumes a long, gruelling war; the second one – a quick lasting peace, and the third one – a devastating war with the prospect of peace in the second half of 2023.

1 Here, we use the following two terms interchangeably as this is methodologically and legally grounded: „persons fleeing the war in Ukraine” and „war refugees”. This approach will allow us to refer precisely to which category of persons we are referring to in the text.

Table 1. War refugees and Ukrainian immigrants in Poland: development scenarios

	Starting point (April 2022)		Scenario I		Scenario II		Scenario III	
	Estimated numbers	%	Estimated numbers	%	Estimated numbers	%	Estimated numbers	%
Males (18-65)	950,000	33%	1,150,000	37%	850,000	49%	850,000	25%
Females (18-65)	1,150,000	40%	1,150,000	37%	650,000	37%	1,350,000	40%
Age: below 18	750,000	26%	750,000	24%	200,000	11%	1,100,000	32%
Age: 18-65	2,100,000	72%	2,300,000	74%	1,500,000	86%	2,200,000	65%
Age: 65+	50,000	2%	70,000	2%	50,000	3%	100,000	3%
Total	2,900,000	-	3,120,000	-	1,750,000	-	3,400,000	-

Source: own study (Duszczyk, Kaczmarczyk)

These three scenarios, and in particular the first one (which is the most likely) formed the basis for the analyses that were included in the report – and this text is the abridged version of the report.

Recommendation

In the case of the analysis of immigration to Poland, a key recommendation for the Polish government and local authorities is that they should take into account the fact that Poland is becoming a multinational country with a large proportion of Ukrainian citizens who will live in Poland for a long time – or perhaps all their life.

2. LABOUR MARKET AND ECONOMY

Preventing work below competence

For several years now, the Polish labour market has started to experience labour shortage problems as a result of both demographic changes and the economic boom. More than a decade ago, the number of economically productive individuals began to decline, while the rapidly growing economy created many new jobs, enabling unemployment among persons aged 20-64 to fall from 9.5% in 2010 to 3.4% in 2021.

The force of demographic change is so strong that the working-age population is projected to shrink by 1.2 million by 2030 and by up to 5.5 million by 2050 – unless these deficits are filled by immigrants.

According to the Social Insurance Institution's (ZUS) statistics, in December 2021 insured foreigners accounted for about 5.4% of the total insured in Poland, which translated into almost 900,000 employed persons, including almost 630,000 Ukrainian citizens. Together with those working in the shadow economy, the number of foreigners working in Poland (not only Ukrainians) at the beginning of 2022 can be estimated at 1.5 million people (or 8.5% of the total).

The rapid influx of war refugees following the outbreak of war in February 2022 began to have a rapid impact on the Polish labour market. Thanks to the registration in the PESEL (national identification number) database and special legal provisions, some 160,000 Ukrainian citizens, i.e. about 29% of the total refugee population of working age, had found work by the end of May 2022.

The vast majority of them were women, with a slightly lower percentage of them in employment (75%) than in the entire adult refugee population (90%). As many as a half of them found employment in simple jobs. Thousands were employed as office workers, specialists, technicians and other middle-level staff, although these figures may be underestimated due to the source of the data (Ministry of Family and Social Policy based on reports from jobcentres).

Given that half of the adult refugees have a university education, their current employment structure reflects their qualifications to a limited extent. The problem is the language barrier and the lack of decision to possibly settle in Poland. This should change as the length of stay increases. It is difficult at the moment to determine the maximum at which the capacity for „simple” absorption of migrants from Ukraine will be exhausted, but it can be assumed that the key test will come in autumn with the end of the summer season and a possible deterioration of the general economic situation.

Recommendations

Adequate utilisation of the potential of migrants (including those fleeing the war in Ukraine) in the labour market requires the reduction of barriers, especially linguistic, informational (scattered information about available vacancies), related to care responsibilities (most migrants are mothers with children), demand-side (job offers fail to match refugees' qualifications) or formal (recognition of diplomas). In the longer term, it will be crucial for the material situation of refugees to increase their chances of working in jobs that are compatible with their competences and that provide adequate access to social security and protection in line with common standards.

Taking into account the barriers mentioned above, we recommend to:

- **implement an information system with details on the demand for skills** with a particular focus on offers for Ukrainians and on the supply of skills of refugee jobseekers using information collected from local jobcentres;
- **implement solutions to support labour market integration**, including language training and acquisition of marketable competences by public and non-public employment services (financed by the Labour Fund as well as by EU funds);
- **launch and develop instruments to financially support the training** for employed war refugees, targeting their employers;
- **provide access to childcare for children up to the age of 3, support for nursery school enrolment, support for the creation of care placements with Ukrainian home carers;**
- **implement training programmes in companies on working in multicultural teams** that support diversity management;
- **promote legal employment and monitoring the risk of „junk” work** by comparing remuneration of Polish and foreign workers;
- **prevent pathologies related to the exploitation of the more difficult situation of immigrants, including those fleeing the war in Ukraine, on the labour market** than nationals by strengthening the State Labour Inspectorate, including its competences. Depending on the scenario of further development of the conflict, the number of persons of working age who will be active on the Polish labour market will reach 325,000-935,000; in the medium term, this should meet adequate demand on the part of businesses seeking foreign workers to fill the growing demographic gap. Consequently, it is important to shape the labour market policy in such a way that it supports both the quantitative and also the qualitative aspect of employment of migrants from Ukraine, including the best possible use of their competences.

3. HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

Visitors – but not tenants?

The influx of people fleeing the war in Ukraine has highlighted the problem of access to housing in Poland. The housing resources, compared to Western Europe, are still small, even though the construction rate is among the fastest in the OECD countries. In 2020 and 2021, 221,000 and 235,000 units will be built in Poland, respectively (i.e. approximately 1.5% of the existing resources). This is more than the OECD (1.1%) and the EU (0.8%) averages, and almost as much as in Japan known for its liberal urban planning rules.

Poland, similarly to other post-socialist countries, is characterised by a shallow housing rental market. Buying or changing housing involves significant transaction costs that can restrict labour mobility or delay young people from moving out of the family home. Standard tenancy agreements do not provide landlords with the certainty of being able to evict a non-paying or troublesome tenant, and tenants cannot be sure of their stability and absence of any hidden costs. The scope of legal restrictions on eviction based on circumstances remains exceptionally wide in Poland compared to other OECD countries. The high fragmentation of the private rental market and **under development** of institutional tenancy also contribute to the low quality and availability of tenancy. A limitation is the lack of a law on funds investing in rental housing, which would allow, through the stock market, to invest even small amounts of money in rental, mobilising additional capital into this market.

According to data from the PESEL register, the largest number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine (20%) reside in the large metropolitan areas of Warsaw, Wrocław, Poznań, Kraków and the Tri-City. Together with the neighbouring counties, this figure rises to 30%. Therefore, it is the urban areas that will face the greatest housing challenges. At the same time, these are also the locations with the highest concentrated stock of housing within city boundaries in the country – 16%, and 24% in agglomerations. **The high concentration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine in the largest agglomerations may have advantages in the long term.** Research indicates that the region where refugees initially arrive is important for their possible integration. Some Western European countries have (or used to have in the past) some policies to disperse refugees on the basis of non-labour market criteria in order to more evenly distribute the housing burden, avoid ethnic enclaves, or reduce the burden of locally funded benefits. However much these types of policies may reduce short-term costs, they generate long-term harm for those who end up in weaker labour markets (Komada, Łaszek, & Trzeciakowski, 2022).

From the point of view of the real estate market, it is particularly important that the large number of Ukrainians working in Poland before the Russian invasion significantly alleviates the pressure on the housing stock from refugees. According to a survey of applicants for PESEL numbers in the first week of registration, as many as 45% of refugees stay in the flats or houses of their families or friends. According to the report, the number of Ukrainians estimated on the basis of mobile numbers (daily population aged 15 and over) in the 12 Polish metropolises increased from 937,000 on 01 February 2022 to 1,726,000 on 01 April 2022 – in other words, it almost doubled. At the same time, however, very many people fleeing the war in Ukraine are hosted by Polish families. Refugees are renting flats on their own – so far, relatively few flats, despite the fact that there are 1.2 million units for rent in Poland. The increase in rental prices in March compared to February was smaller in the larger, more liquid markets. In Warsaw, it amounted to several per cent, but in Łódź – up to 40%.

Recommendations

The recommendations can be divided into those that will bring effects quickly, and systemic changes that will improve the availability of housing in the long term by creating conditions for the accommodation of more immigrants in the perspective of several years.

Among the **short-term** measures, the situation can be improved by:

- refurbishing empty uninhabited flats funded by the Surcharge Fund; preliminary results from the 2021 census revealed that there are 1,856,000 such properties;
- liberalising tenancy law to reduce the protection against eviction of refugees;
- investing in temporary modular townships, supported by a public purpose investment formula and covered by infrastructure funding mechanisms under the Surcharge Fund. This solution may be controversial, but with the possible threat of homelessness in the autumn/winter, it may be indispensable. It is cheap and quick to implement; it guarantees privacy, it does not provoke envy, and it gives refugees an incentive to look for better solutions on the market themselves.

In the **long term**, measures such as legal action and assistance from the European Commission will be helpful:

- EU funding for the construction of modular, full-fledged prefabricated housing for war refugees. The European Commission would coordinate a public-private partnership procurement programme for these buildings, which would be built and inhabited in Poland, and then relocated to Ukraine after the end of the war. Housing units built with such technology are erected 20-50% faster and 20% cheaper than traditional buildings;
- passing a law on funds that invest in rental property, which would mobilise more capital for residential investment and offset the trend of fragmentation of the rental market;
- comprehensive liberalisation of the rental market providing security and stability for landlords and tenants alike;
- giving Social Tenancy Agencies (Spoleczna Agencja Najmu) a more active role in the creation and management of the municipal housing stock as a municipal own task, by launching a fund to support the operational activities of Social Tenancy Agencies and to act as a guarantor in the event of solvency problems for residents;
- replacing taxation of rental income with higher taxation of land.

In the long term, an additional 400,000-600,000 housing units will be needed for people who will have fled the war in Ukraine and will become long-term immigrants. To this end, it will be necessary to ensure that the construction of new housing is accelerated by:

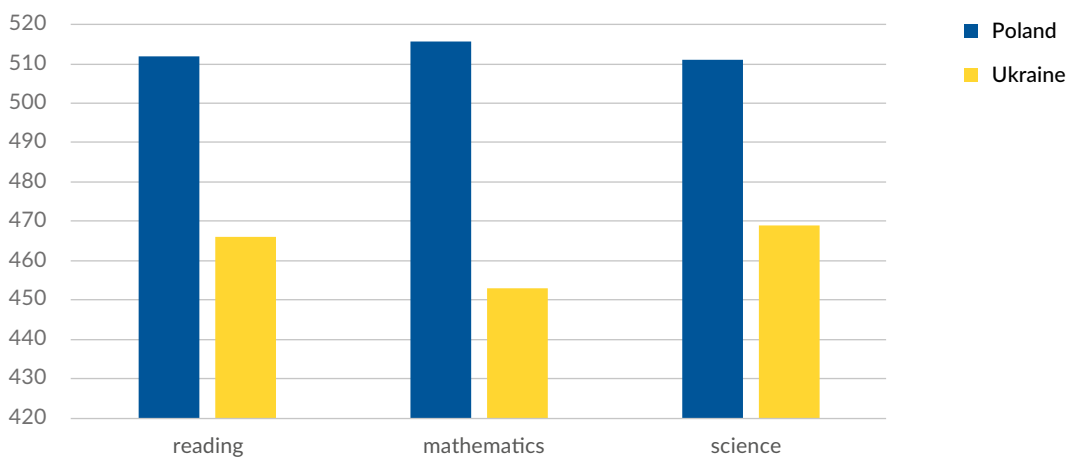
- comprehensive review and deregulation of building laws and zoning regulations that would allow more housing to be built at a lower cost;
- streamlining of decision-making procedures for housing developments including the possibility of electronic submission of building permit applications;
- making the land blocked for the 'Mieszkanie Plus' programme (Housing Plus) available to private investors or handing it over to municipalities, and the active involvement of municipalities in the creation of a land resource that could be financed from the Surcharge Fund.

4. EDUCATION

Not only knowledge, but also psychological well-being

In many cases Polish schools have previous experience in accepting pupils from Ukraine. However, practice often falls short of the ideals envisaged by the legislation. The challenge is the scale of the current influx of new schoolchildren and the differences in their actual levels of knowledge and skills. Analysis of the PISA 2018 data for Ukrainian students and their comparison with Polish students shows significant differences in achievement levels.

Figure 3: Comparison of average scores of 15-year-olds from Poland and Ukraine (PISA 2018)



Source: study by Hippe, Jakubowski, Gajderowicz, 2022 on the basis of the PISA 2018 data

Access to quality education, concern for students' psychological well-being, additional language support and reducing segregation are the most important measures to foster equal educational opportunities for immigrant schoolchildren.

This requires increased resources and adequate training for teachers on how to understand at least the basic values and customs of different cultures. Adequate support requires coordination at national, local government and school levels, but also flexibility of solutions.

In the current crisis, it is not possible to guarantee education for all Ukrainian schoolchildren in the same form, nor is it reasonable. On the contrary – we should consider several complementary formulas. All forms of guaranteeing education should provide:

- the realisation of unique emotional and social needs;
- the opportunity to maintain national identity;
- the ability to learn Polish to the extent that immigrants can integrate into Polish society (including entry into the Polish education system – if they choose to do so);
- mastering the content of the Polish or Ukrainian core curriculum;
- mutual recognition of the education gained, and establishing relationships with Polish peers.

In particular, all proposed solutions should involve encouraging Ukrainian schoolchildren (and their parents) to learn Polish as a foreign language. However, this must not be confused with an attempt to Polishise refugees – this is just a tool to ensure that they can function effectively in the host society. The school must not become an instrument of assimilation.

Recommendations

Given the situation in which 800,000 children fled the war in Ukraine, and 500,000 of them are outside the Polish education system, the following action points are recommended:

- transitional admission of all forms of learning, including remote learning in the Ukrainian system, but with the aim of arriving at a system where all students attend stationary classes;
- preparatory departments with intensive learning of Polish as a foreign language and the possibility of bridging curriculum gaps should be established for interested students; ultimately, this pathway aims to integrate Ukrainian schoolchildren into the Polish system;
- maintaining the possibility of learning at Ukrainian schools, but gradually reducing remote learning in favour of residential schools working in the Ukrainian system in cooperation with Polish schools to ensure the integration of students and learning the Polish language;
- in the longer term, education for interested students should be organised along the lines of the arrangements available to Polish citizens who are members of ethnic minorities.

5. HEALTH CARE AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

Not only patients, but also valuable human resources

The health care system in Poland has been criticised for many years. It is widely perceived to be underfunded, and the problem of staff shortages and organisational dysfunctions have also been recognised for many years. The level of unmet health needs was already high before 2020, and has continued and worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the outbreak of war, Ukrainian war refugees gained the right to receive national health care services, and many health-related professionals, including doctors and nurses fleeing the war in Ukraine, gained simplified access to the Polish labour market in their medical professions.

The biggest challenges of the current situation arise from the increased demand for health services in a health system that has limited human, financial and organisational capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic has left a so-called 'health debt' which means a specific pool of services that needs to be made up for the Polish population in the coming months. This is compounded by the demand for services from approximately 1.5 million war refugees from Ukraine, among whom there are seniors (approx. 6%), children and young teenagers (45%), and women (47%) – all of them with needs that are specific to each population group.

The overarching goals of the health system in relation to this group should be:

- ensuring access to health care and meeting the needs of Ukrainian patients, particularly in primary health care and mental health;
- professional engagement of war refugees from Ukraine in the health services and care delivery system.

TEN KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE “HOSPITABLE POLAND 2022+” REPORT

Poland has faced the challenge of supporting and potentially integrating Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland before 24 February 2022 as economic migrants and those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Citizens of more than 100 countries of the world who have settled in Poland should not be forgotten, either. The following recommendations mainly concern the support and possible integration of Ukrainian citizens, more than 2.8 million of whom reside in Poland, but with a slight adjustment they can form the basis for Polish immigration and integration policy for foreigners. The implementation of the following recommendations will determine whether immigration to Poland will be a success, a missed opportunity, or a fiasco.

1. The Polish government and local authorities should take into account the fact that Poland is becoming an immigrant and multinational country with a large share of Ukrainian citizens in its society.
2. Poland needs the presence of foreigners in the labour market in order to maintain the competitive character of its economy. Adequate utilisation of the potential of immigrants (including war refugees) in the labour market will require the reduction of a number of obstacles, including in particular language barriers, information barriers, as well as barriers related to caring responsibilities, demand-driven qualifications and smooth recognition of qualifications.
3. The increased presence of immigrants, including those fleeing the war in Ukraine, creates additional pressure on the housing market. Appropriate response to the challenge in the short term (–identification and settlement of uninhabited properties, liberalisation of rental law and construction of modular housing estates), will lay the groundwork for improving the housing situation in Poland in the longer term (tidying up and scaling up the rental market, comprehensive review and deregulation of construction law and spatial regulations, making land blocked for the ‘Mieszkanie Plus’ programme available to private investors or transferring it to municipalities, improving the functioning of the Surcharge Fund) and preparing for potentially better coping with the effects of natural disasters.
4. In the current crisis, it is not possible to guarantee education for all Ukrainian schoolchildren in the same form, nor is it reasonable. On the contrary – one should consider several complementary formulas. The key is to temporarily allow all forms of learning: in Polish schools, in preparatory classes, but also as remote learning in the Ukrainian system, but with the assumption of reaching a system where all schoolchildren attend stationary classes.
5. The biggest challenges in health care stem from the increased demand for health care services from the system that has limited human, financial and organisational capacity and is very weakened after the COVID-19 pandemic. It is crucial to ensure access to health care and meet the needs of Ukrainian patients, particularly in primary health care and mental health, and to employ Ukrainian war refugees in the health and care delivery system. In the short term, it is necessary to launch a system of information in Ukrainian for Ukrainian patients about health and care services as well as to provide free remote interpretation services of the conversation between a doctor (or another health care professional) and a patient whose command of Polish is not sufficient, and to support the placement of Ukrainian persons in the health and social care sector, including the recognition of their qualifications.

6. Polish legislation should be reviewed for provisions that potentially discriminate against foreigners residing in Poland. In addition, it is necessary to de-bureaucratise work and residence legalisation procedures – both for persons fleeing the war in Ukraine and for other migrants, and to ensure protection and support for individuals with special needs or at risk of exploitation – especially in the area of employment, as well as to adapt, in various ways, offices at different levels to serve migrants in a manner that responds to their needs, (including employment of specialists with experience in dealing with migration at public administration).
7. Transformation of Poland into an immigration country creates a completely new perspective for the functioning of Poland. At the basis of this outlook there is a strong role played by relations between the government, local self-government and social organisations. This will not be achieved without the adoption of transparent principles of full financing and refinancing of the tasks commissioned by the government administration, of all expenses related to the accommodation and integration of immigrants, including war refugees, for local governments and social organisations. It will also be very important to closely link the institutions of local self-government with those of civil society in terms of the transparent distribution of funds and the management of aid activities (national, EU and international) for the benefit of immigrants, including war refugees, as well as support for the immigrants' countries of origin – currently, this being primarily Ukraine.
8. Ukraine and Poland are countries with a very low cultural distance, which is a great advantage in the current situation. However, the low cultural distance is not equivalent to the absence of differences. It has become urgent to prepare a coherent strategy for the possible integration of immigrants, including war refugees from Ukraine in Poland. A government programme of multicultural management is necessary for the implementation of integration policy, without which all efforts for possible integration will be fragmented and much less effective. Along the lines of the integration idea, the policy should be developed in consultation with representatives of minorities so that it takes into account both Polish needs and also the needs of these groups. A clear and coherent programme would make it possible to prevent possible crises in the future.
9. Russia uses various disinformation techniques to undermine the internal cohesion of the states they consider to be hostile and strain their alliances. The refugee crisis has made the harmful mechanisms, processes and policies present before the war even more threatening to the social cohesion and security of all groups living in Poland. Consequently, it is necessary to prevent and counter-narrate attempts to fuel conflicts and divisions between the different nationalities living in Poland (currently this is primarily between Poles and Ukrainians).
10. It is becoming urgent to develop a nationwide strategy for migration policy that takes into account the experience of European Union membership, the two migration crises we have faced in recent months, and projections for the future. Given the importance of migration both politically, socially and economically, this strategy should override the actions taken in many public policies. Hence, it must be developed on the basis of expert knowledge and in an atmosphere that is free of any ideological influence.

Recommendations

- Launch of an information system for Ukrainian patients (in the Ukrainian language version) about medical and care services;
- Launch of health care centres with Ukrainian-speaking personnel;
- Launch of remote psychological counselling in Ukrainian;
- Launch of mental health centres in Ukrainian that are located close to larger concentrations of war refugees from Ukraine;
- Launch of care centres for dependants arriving from Ukraine;
- Provide free remote interpretation services for conversations between a doctor (or another health care professional) and a war refugee patient with an insufficient command of Polish;
- Launch of a data collection function on the health status and medical history of people fleeing the war in Ukraine;
- Introduction of multilingual electronic medical records;
- Vaccination of children and adults against specific infectious diseases;
- Check-ups for children to reconstruct basic medical information about the child and their development;
- Employment of Ukrainian-speaking medical staff;
- Supporting the employment of specialists from Ukraine in the health and social care sector².

These activities should be assigned to specific implementers, local or non-governmental institutions, as well as state institutions (such as the National Health Fund). These activities can be launched individually and independently of each other. At the national level, it would make sense to launch coordination of these and other health care activities for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. This is advisable due to the multiplicity of initiatives and activities and, at the same time their fragmented nature.

6. ADMINISTRATION AND LAW

The right to have rights that are available for all

Before 24 February 2022, Polish local administration offices could be divided into two main groups. The first one, representing the vast majority of the Polish administration, was the one that did not recognise at all the existence of a separate group, with different needs, which was the migrant men and women residing in Poland. Not only were the Polish civil servants not prepared to work with people from other countries, but they also had no desire whatsoever to understand these conditions. The second group of offices were those specialised in working with migrants. These institutions, where petitioners were mainly individuals without Polish citizenship, had been criticised for years for not being adequately prepared to serve this group of people, including, above all, the lack of adequate intercultural sensitivity and foreign language skills among their staff.

Following the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Polish authorities moved rather quickly to build a new legal system for those fleeing the country. Although the speculation passed on

2 In the health care section of the report, the authors attempted to estimate the costs of implementing the measures identified.

12 March 2022 introduced a number of solutions to facilitate the arrival and stay in Poland for those fleeing the war in Ukraine, many issues in the area of law and administration still need to be amended.

Recommendations

EU level

- Introduce greater oversight and additional mechanisms to increase the security of spontaneous relocations of people fleeing the war in Ukraine across the EU and collect data on these migrations;
- Plan and implement an additional, complementary mechanism for the planned relocation of people fleeing the war in Ukraine in different member states;
- Implement a mechanism to prevent the risk of falling into undocumented residence and extreme poverty for those fleeing the war in Ukraine and not covered by the Temporary Protection Directive.

National level

- Expansion of the catalogue of persons covered by the special law (although not to its full extent) to other groups of individuals who have fled or cannot return to Ukraine, as well as extending some of the support measures to other groups of migrants, such as Belarusians and other refugees;
- De-bureaucratisation of work and residence legalisation procedures – both for people fleeing the war in Ukraine as well as for other categories of migrants;
- Ensure protection and support for people with special needs or at risk of exploitation – especially in terms of employment;
- Adapting the administration offices at different levels to serve migrants in a way that is responsive to their needs (including employment of specialists with experience in dealing with migration in public administration);
- Preparing and enacting local integration policies at the local level, providing a framework for building cohesive communities and involving various public and non-public institutions in the process (more on this in the integration section).

Changing the way in which the activities of community organisations are funded – in addition to subsidising individual, commissioned activities and projects, funding the general functioning of the organisation so that it can achieve the objectives for which it was set up (more on this in the integration section).

Introduce cross-sectoral dialogue and cooperation at every level of government, taking into account organisations of war refugees from Ukraine.

7. GOVERNMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FACE OF THE CRISIS

Central government, local government and community organisations as one entity

In the first weeks after the outbreak of war, the function of caring for those fleeing the war in Ukraine was taken up by citizens, organisations, and local authorities. They took upon themselves the main burden of assistance, providing very important short-term support (material, social and psychological) to the refugees.

In the long term, however, this predominantly voluntary aid effort will have to be replaced by a systemic approach supported legally, organisationally and financially by governmental and European institutions. Moreover, in practice, however, it will be carried out by local government, using the already revealed organisational and human resources potential of NGOs and local community initiatives.

Poland's cooperation with other member states of the European Union and its bodies such as the European Commission and Frontex will be very important. The issue of bearing the costs of the assistance provided is very significant – however, it is just one aspect of this cooperation. It is also crucial to organise the relocation of war refugees between EU member states and to create the legal basis for their social, educational, professional and housing integration.

It is possible to think about the local government as a victim of the war, burdened with providing care for those fleeing the war in Ukraine, and as an organiser of this care. Moreover, the refugee crisis will last much longer than the war in Ukraine and will take on different shapes and scenarios. This diversity should be truly supported by local government structures with financial security and the assurance of autonomy of decision-making and a clearly defined permanent set of essential services.

Recommendations

The current situation is creating a completely new perspective for the functioning of Poland, at the basis of which relations between the central government, local government and social organisations will play a strong role. These relations in recent times have not always been appropriate. Therefore, it is important to sanction the principles of action in the areas of relations and activities:

- establish a strategy for the voluntary deployment (relocation) of war refugees under governmental coordination (województwie – governors of voivodships), continuously agreed and updated with the level of local authorities (powiats and gminas) and NGOs;
- develop a secure process for a relocation plan for people fleeing the war to other countries – cooperation at the EU level (European Commission, Frontex);
- intensifying cross-border cooperation between local authorities and decision-makers; the refugee crisis is an opportunity to build new formats of cross-border cooperation and launch new initiatives under the auspices of the European Union;
- rapid empowerment of people from Ukraine to obtain opportunities for permanent residence, work (inclusion of local jobcentres), education, personal development and activity in Poland (more on this in the rest of the study);
- financing and refinancing (in full) of tasks delegated by the government administration and all refugee-related expenses for local authorities and social organisations (more on this in the integration section);

- **establish close links between local self-government institutions and civil society institutions, in terms of transparent distribution of aid funds and organisation of aid activities for Ukraine;**
- organise systemic assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine – thus far, this assistance has been bottom-up, and it came from local governments or citizens;
- systematic management of aid funds;
- facilitate the access of Polish NGOs involved in assisting war refugees to aid and other resources from the state level and external resources (EU and US funds);
- the changes that are now taking place are an opportunity for the further development of Poland as an open country of strong self-government. Polish hospitality builds and strengthens international/neighbourly relations. The people who have recently come from Ukraine and will go back there will be supporters of Poland. Poland and Polish society will benefit not only in terms of image, but also economically. This is an incredible opportunity to create and live a new history for both nations.

8. INTEGRATION POLICY

Diversity as a social value

The influx of people fleeing the war in Ukraine means that Poland has begun to become a culturally pluralistic country. As late as the end of 2021, Ukrainians accounted for almost 57% of the total number of foreigners settling in Poland. The biggest threat in the current situation is the uncertainty whether sufficient measures will be taken for their possible integration into Polish society.

Whether and how Poland will pursue a policy of integration towards those fleeing the war in Ukraine is certainly going to have an impact on Polish-Ukrainian relations. For a multicultural orientation to develop, the following preconditions are necessary:

- widely established acceptance of cultural diversity as a social value;
- relatively low levels of prejudice;
- positive reciprocal attitudes between ethno-cultural groups;
- sense of attachment to and/or identification with the larger society of individuals and groups.

Thanks to the low cultural distance between Poland and Ukraine, some of these conditions have been met. However, the situation may be changing, not only as a result of the government's real aid measures (or lack thereof) but also of the narrative of politicians and the media.

Ukraine and Poland are countries with a very low cultural distance. This is a huge advantage of the current situation. However, this low cultural distance does not mean the absence of differences.

Integration activities should focus on language learning. Language is a tool for refugees to gain independence and empowerment. It enables integration and maintaining one's own identity.

It is also important not to lose sight of the Poles who need help most when providing assistance to those fleeing the war in Ukraine. If there is no systemic assistance and relief for Poles currently assisting war refugees, it is very possible that hostility towards those fleeing the war in Ukraine will follow.

A government programme of multicultural management is necessary to implement the integration policy. All efforts towards possible integration will be fragmented and much less effective without it. In line with the idea

of integration, the policy should be developed in consultation with representatives of minorities so that it takes into account not only Polish needs but also the needs of these groups. A clear and coherent programme would make it possible to prevent possible crises in the future.

Recommendations

- Intensive Polish language courses are needed for Ukrainian war refugees;
- Creating conditions for Ukrainian mothers to combine work with access to good and quality out-of-home care for their children;
- Systemic measures to facilitate access to the labour market, educational institutions and health care;
- Provision of formal and legal security in the form of a package of information on the rights and facts related to residence in Poland;
- Education and training that would sensitise both sides to possible areas of cultural differences;
- Legislation, anti-discrimination policies, as well as close monitoring of the situation and prevention of hate speech;
- Access to rapid and free psychological assistance in Ukrainian, and therefore to psychologists who speak the language;
- Enable Ukrainians to form and function in mutual support groups – at a minimum, by providing space for this (e.g. in schools);
- Implement and train social workers to support war veterans;
- Employment of Ukrainian-speaking staff in the local authorities;
- Employment of so-called intercultural assistants in schools and kindergartens attended by Ukrainian children;
- Introduce multiculturalism into the curriculum.

9. DISINFORMATION AND CYBERSECURITY

Polarisation and xenophobia are the targets of information warfare

Russia uses various disinformation techniques to undermine the internal cohesion of the states they consider to be hostile and strain their alliances. Using disinformation, Russia attempts to reinforce existing social and political divisions and to exploit the need to make sense of reality in uncertain times. These actions are reinforcing the general decline in the Western societies' trust in the media.

Even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there was a significant amount of anti-Ukrainian content in social media. Arguably, some of this content was inspired by Russia, while some was created by Polish nationalist circles and ordinary citizens. In a 2019 report prepared by the Union of Ukrainians in Poland it was found that 41% of social media statements in Poland about people from Ukraine were negative in nature. The shared history is what divides the countries most.

The refugee crisis has meant that the harmful mechanisms, processes and policies present before the war pose an even greater threat to the social cohesion and security of all groups living and residing in Poland. Disinformation campaigns that aim to undermine efforts to integrate Poles and Ukrainians, at this special historical moment, are only just being initiated.

One of the goals of Russian disinformation in such a situation will undoubtedly be to fuel conflicts and divisions between the different nations living in Poland. Looking back from the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the first hours of the great refugee wave of Ukrainians to Poland, the following phenomena and dominant themes can be observed in the disinformation space:

- stirring up resentment against people from Ukraine on a social and economic level in order to fuel a feeling of unfair and inferior treatment of Poles;
- inciting resentment towards people from Ukraine in the perspective of having to defend Polish identity.

Recommendations

Recommendations for actions and practical political solutions aimed at creating short-term as well as long-term conditions for implementing the goals of "Hospitable Poland" require a kind of implementation test. With the changing scenarios of the influx of war refugees from Ukraine (both in terms of size, structure and length of stay in Poland), the following conditions will be important:

- the potential for opportunities (as well as the risks) of cooperation between governmental, self-governmental and civic institutions;
- the nature of legal and financial rules and their dependence on national and European regulations, including the possibility of financing (from various sources – not only public but also private) of all projects and programmes supporting Ukrainians in Poland and building Polish-Ukrainian relations;
- the social climate, i.e. factors supporting the persistence of an aura of openness and solidarity in a large part of society (temporary and directional improvement of social capital), and factors that may ignite conflicts and social tensions around the stay of Ukrainians in Poland, which may be fostered by the high susceptibility of a part of society to disinformation, hate speech, and polarisation.

Recommendations for specific actions can be divided into two categories:

Measures to limit the scale and scope of disinformation

- monitoring;
- better moderation of content;
- stronger legal responses.

Measures to limit the achievement of disinformation objectives:

- media education for individuals from Poland and Ukraine;
- undertaking strategic communication by government administration about war refugees from Ukraine;
- nuancing the image of war refugees and consolidation of good associations;
- education and multicultural activities;
- sustaining the spirit of solidarity;
- placement of Ukrainians in local communities;
- limiting the fields of conflict.

Whether people fleeing the war in Ukraine stay in Poland for a longer period of time or return to Ukraine after a few months, their stay in Poland will be accompanied by tensions. The aim of our recommendations is not to counteract the actual challenges and problems that may arise, but to present measures that could lead to a situation where the response to the challenges matches their scale..

The entire report is available for download at www.wise-europa.eu

ГОСТИННА ПОЛЬЩА 2022+

Як мудро підтримати Польщу у прагненні допомогти особам, що тікають від війни в Україні?

Наплив до Польщі мільйонів українців, які тікають від російської агресії, викликав безпрецедентне бажання польського суспільства допомогти постраждалим від війни. Це дало можливість комфортного та безпечного перебування в Польщі передусім жінок із дітьми, що одночасно дає тим, хто бореться за звільнення України, почуття того, що їх рідні у безпеці. До допомоги залучені передусім чотири зацікавлені сторони, які формують мережу підтримки особам, що тікають від війни в Україні.. До них належать неурядові організації, низові ініціативи громадянського суспільства, органи місцевого самоврядування та державні установи. Дві перші взяли на себе основний тягар допомоги, особливо на початку, надаючи особам, що тікають від війни, дуже важливу короткострокову матеріальну, соціальну та психологічну підтримку. Однак у довгостроковій перспективі цю, переважно добровільну, допомогу доведеться змінити на більш системний підхід, який підтримають державні установи – у юридичному, організаційному та фінансовому аспектах. Але на практиці цей підхід буде реалізовувати місцева влада, використовуючи вже виявлений організаційний та людський потенціал неурядових організацій та низових соціальних ініціатив. Водночас слід відзначити, що українська сторона високо цінує ту надзвичайно важливу технічну й гуманітарну допомогу, яку надав польський уряд, аби належним чином підтримати боротьбу українських військ.

Міграційна криза, з якою зараз стикається Польща, є найбільшим викликом останніх кількох десятиліть після політичної та економічної трансформації на зламі 1980-х і 1990-х років. Це вимагає від уряду, органів місцевого самоврядування, неурядових організацій та низових ініціатив громадянського суспільства розробки комплексного та узгодженого плану управління окремими державними політиками. Лише такий підхід дозволить нам протистояти викликам і скористатися можливостями, які стоять перед Україною та Польщею. Метою рапорту WiseEuropa є зібрати в одному місці необхідні дії та застосувати їх у часі та просторі. Таким чином, він має бути ключовим голосом у дискусії щодо моделі та принципів реагування держави на цю безпрецедентну ситуацію.

Дізнатися про проект більше: www.wise-europa.eu.

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