SEE THE CRISIS CHANGE THE OUTCOME

REGIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION OVERVIEW

POLAND PROTECTION WG; 22 FEBRUARY 2024

ABOUT ACAPS

WHO WE ARE

ACAPS Ukraine Analysis Hub provides independent analysis on the humanitarian impacts of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine across the country and the region

WHAT WE DO

Our products include datasets, thematic reports, analytical support, and capacity building to responders

HOW WE COLLABORATE

We engage and establish collaborations with like-minded organisations, through scenario-building workshops, joint analysis, and training sessions.

THE REPORT

The ACAPS overview of social protection for refugees from Ukraine (21 November 2023) looks at:

- The assistance is available *from the host states* to refugees from Ukraine who have temporary Protection (TP) in: Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia;
- The extent to which this assistance is accessible;
- The extent to which this assistance may help refugees meet their needs.

Methodology:

- Secondary data review and the ACAPS regional dataset
- 9 key informant interviews with responders.

This presentation is based on:

- This report, and additional sources
- Findings are from across the 6 countries and may not come from Poland unless specifically stated.
- If findings are from Poland, it is specified.

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE COVERAGE OF THIS REPORT

What this report covers:

What social protection is:

Social protection is a set of **national** policies and programmes to protect people from, and aid people in poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion.

1. Social assistance and social care:
benefits, subsidies, counselling etc.
+ special measures for refugees from Ukraine.

2. Labour market (employment) policies:
- support with job searching, training, etc.,
- recognition of qualifications / diplomas.

- early childhood education and care

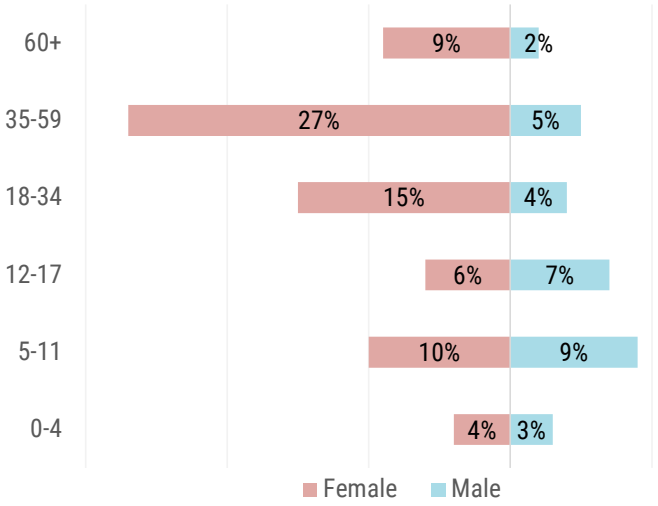
3. Social security covers risks and needs related to - health (access to public healthcare), old age and disability (pensions), unemployment (benefits) and more. It is usually **insurance based**.

*This report does **not** cover the aid from the international humanitarian sector*

REFUGEE PROFILES – AGE AND GENDER

CZE, SVK, POL, ROU, MDA

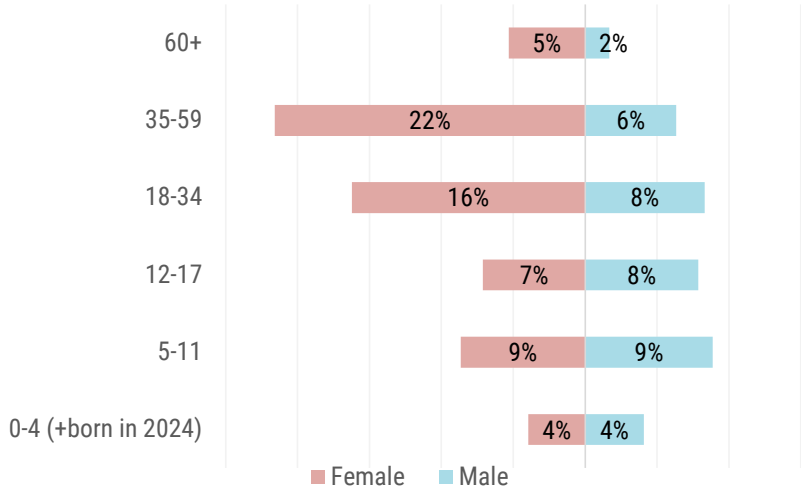
Intentions 4th Round May 2023



Poland

TP beneficiaries - Gov't Poland 13/02/2024

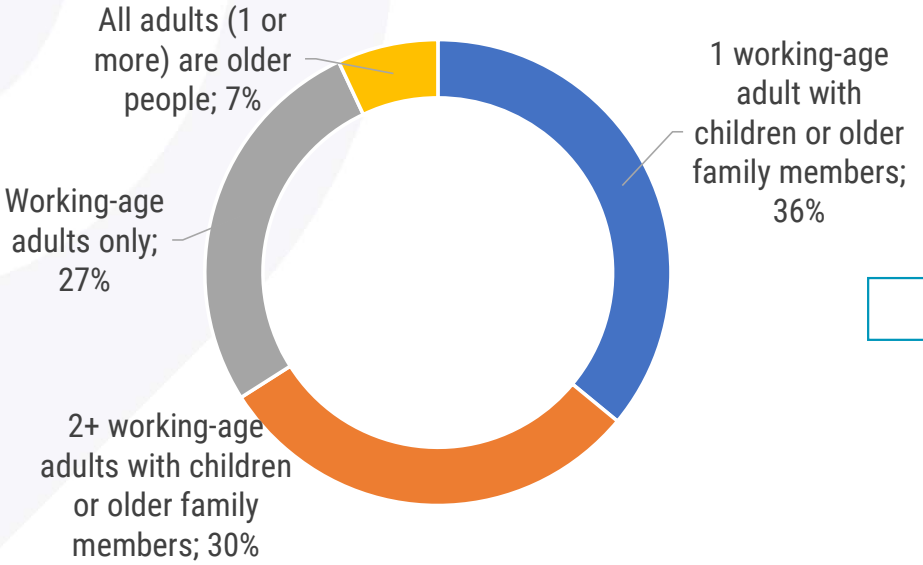
Age groups as of 2023 (!)



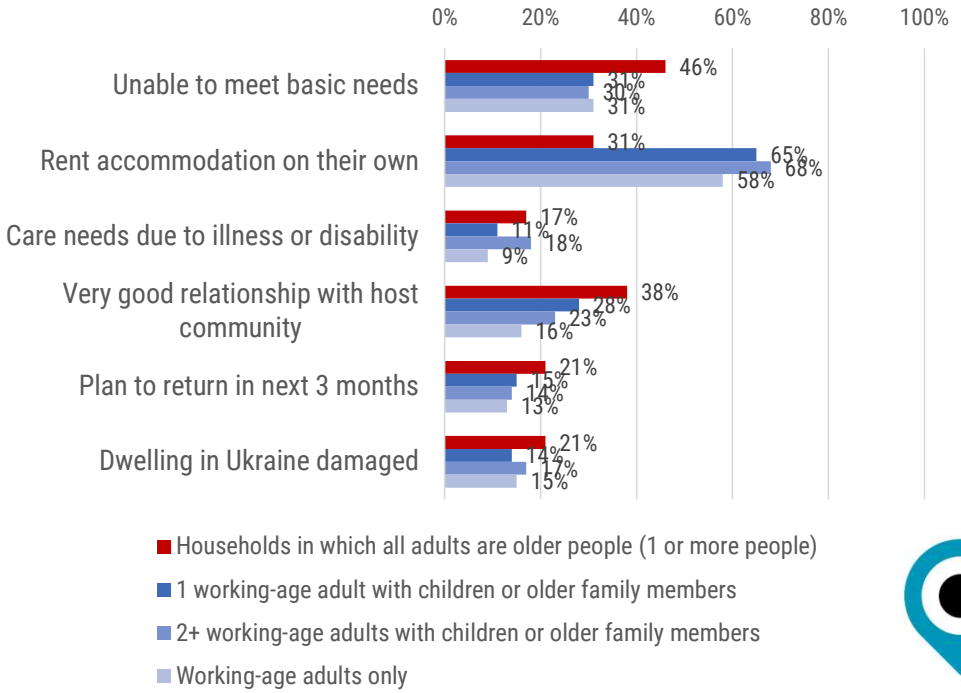
- Profiles likely similar to other Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries,
- Fewer women aged 35+ (and a decrease by 1.1% since Sept 2023)

HOUSEHOLD PROFILES

- Discrepant data on household profiles.
- Approx. 1/3 HHs are made up of a single caregiver + children or older people, …
- … and in 7% HHs all adults are older people (CZE, SVK, POL, ROU, MDA Intentions 4th Round May 2023)
- HHs with children in Poland: 63% in the 5 countries; 54% in Poland (Intentions 4th Round May 2023); 52% in Poland (MSNA 2023). Likely over 54%, because of a higher share of women aged up to 34 in Poland (→ gov. data).



CZE, SVK, POL, ROU, MDA Intentions 4th Round May 2023



INADEQUACIES IN MEETING NEEDS

Income sources available to TP holders compared to the cost of living per country, calculated for a family of three (1 adult and 2 children)

% of cost of living covered by…	Czechia	Hungary	Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia
Special benefits for refugees from Ukraine	17%	6%	0%	0%	24%	0%
Child benefits not dependent on income	0%	2%	0%	500+ 10%	10%	5%
One salary at minimum wage (net)	30%	25%	10%	28%	22%	29%
One salary at minimum wage (net) and available benefits not dependent on income	47%	31%	10%	38%	45%	35%
Max. amount under basic income-dependent benefits	16%	3%	12%	20%	7%	19%
Median or mean household income	No data	No data	No data	No data	26%	27%

Yellow indicates current ineligibility for refugees from Ukraine.
Green indicates conditional eligibility.

Income sources available to TP holders compared to the cost of living per country, calculated for a single person of retirement age

% of cost of living covered by…	Czechia	Hungary	Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia
Special benefits for refugees from Ukraine	10%	6%	0%	0%	19%	0%
Average Ukrainian pension	10%	13%	17%	11%	16%	12%
Sum of average Ukr. pension and available benefits not dependent on income	20%	19%	17%	11%	35%	12%
Max. amount under basic income-dependent benefits	15%	11%	9%	15%	4%	20%

Yellow indicates current ineligibility for refugees from Ukraine

The cost of living is higher for refugees than for locals

- No own house
- Weaker social networks

Rent constitutes between 64% (Slovakia) and **83% (Poland)** of the net minimum salary.

National social protection in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is insufficient to make a living:

1 salary at a minimum wage + universal benefits cover only 1/3 – 1/2 cost of living in the 5 EU countries and 10% in MDA.

Income-dependent benefits:

- Income thresholds at a very low level– only the poorest of the poorest qualify;
- Where refugees are eligible, humanitarian aid is considered income, limiting their eligibility;
- Very low values.

BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Eligibility to temporary protection

- Third country nationals are not eligible in Poland (with exceptions);
- Stateless people not eligible in Poland.

Administrative barriers

- Loss of TP and related social protection for some refugees from Ukraine in Poland (ACAPS 14/11/2023)

Insufficient information

- Across the region, lack of information is a challenge for refugees to apply for assistance. Especially lacking is the information about regular national social aid (where refugees are eligible to it).

Lacking translation and interpretation

- Lack of interpretation services limits access to TP registration and to benefits.
- Some of the social protection institutions' websites lack information in Ukrainian or it is incomplete.
- Even lower availability of information in, and interpretation from/to: Russian, Romani and Ukrainian sign language.

GROUPS MOST VULNERABLE TO POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION [1]

Older people

- Nearly half of their HHs struggle to meet basic needs.
- An average Ukrainian pension + benefits in Poland cover only 11% of the cost of living (incl. rent) of a single older person;
- More likely to live in collective accommodation or be hosted;
- More likely to express the intention to return to Ukraine within 3 months.

People with disabilities

- Accesibility issues (facilities, transport, information);
- More likely to live in collective centres and hotels (where adaptations and accessibility are lacking);
- UKR disability certificates do not give eligibility to the benefits and services available for Poles (exception: PFRON cash aid for the purchase of assistive devices).

GROUPS MOST VULNERABLE TO POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION [2]

Roma people

- Discrimination, including from the staff of public institutions…
- Which limits their access to protection, social protection, accommodation and more,
- Lacking interpretation from/to Romani.

Women

- Face barriers to employment, if aged 50+, or have children and no childcare.

Refugee children and youth

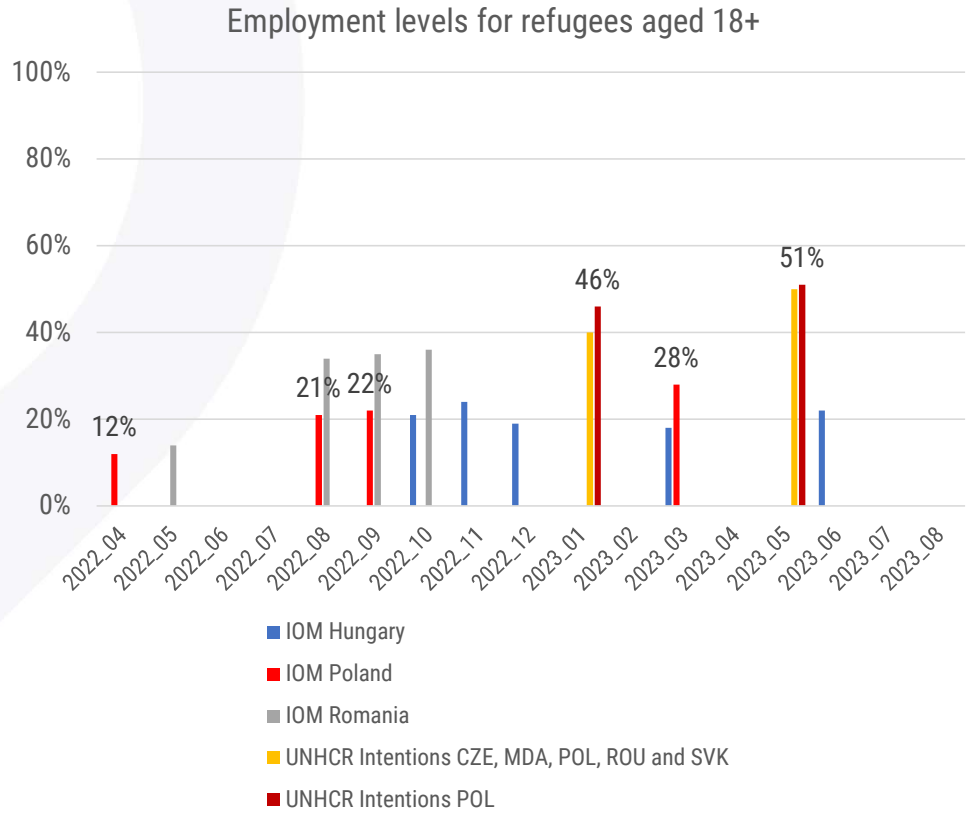
- Children are often at a higher risk of economic vulnerability than adults.
- Youth encounter challenges to find employment.

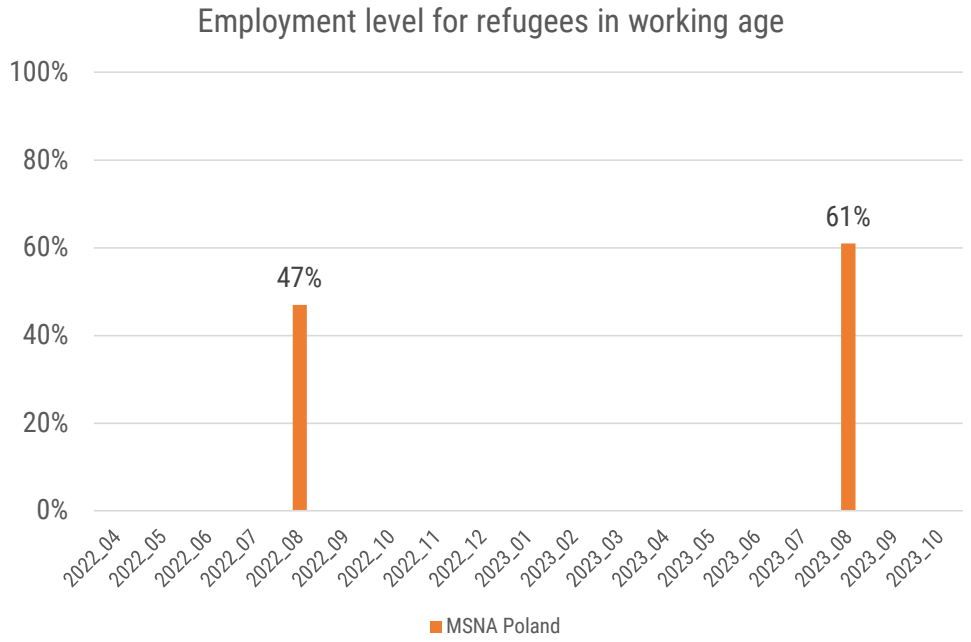
Certain men with mental health conditions

- abuse alcohol, perpetrate intimate partner violence or resort to other problematic behaviours.
- This led some of them to lose collective accommodation and put them at the risk of homelessness.

EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

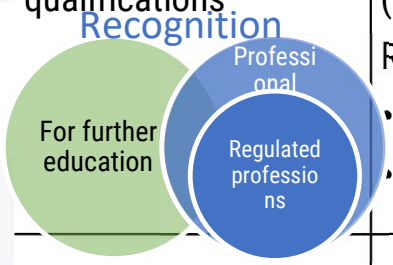
- Discrepancies in employment statistics;
- Employment levels slowly increasing or stagnating (depending on country) in 2023.





2022: age 18-59
2023: M. age 15-64; F. age 15-59

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

	Cross-country	Poland specifics
Language	The higher the language skills, the more are employed. Lack of language proficiency → employment in low-skilled jobs. Free language courses essentially unavailable, except in CZE.	Even in the countries with the highest linguistic proximity to Ukrainian (CZE, POL and SVK), only one-third of refugees who arrived between Feb-Apr 2022 said that they spoke the language in May 2023 (Intentions 4th Round)
Childcare	Of those not employed, ¼ - ½ were not looking for work because of caregiving or a lack of childcare. Childcare facilities' capacity: • no infrastructure or staff to accommodate more children, • close earlier than many jobs.	
Recognition of qualifications 	Regulated professions = a licence or certificate is required (e.g. electrician, teacher, nurse). Recognition for the practice of regulated professions in CEE: • At university level: available but slow and costly; • At vocational qualifications level: almost unavailable.	Simplified or waived requirements for healthcare professionals, teachers, miners, and employees of the public administration. Incompatibilities were identified when some vocational qualifications were compared between Ukraine and Poland, revealing challenges to potential recognition.
Other		Refugee employment is disproportionately more precarious than for the host community: • 70% of refugees from Ukraine work under precarious contracts compared to about 20–30% of Poles • Large proportion of daily wage workers; • Exploitation, discrimination, ill-treatment.

MORE ABOUT ACAPS ANALYSIS

More ACAPS reports on humanitarian situation:

- For refugees from Ukraine in Central and Eastern Europe;
- In Ukraine

Be the first to know all about our products and events
Follow us on social media @ACAPSproject

Ukraine analysis hub Newsletter

Contact us: ukraine.hub@acaps.org

Social protection report: malgorzata.zub@acaps.org

acaps
Avenue de France 23
5th Floor
CH -1202 Geneva
OFFICE + 41 22 338 15 90

acaps
www.acaps.org