



CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, POLAND, ROMANIA & SLOVAKIA

### **Contents**

Executive summary	3
Introduction	7
Methodology	8
Refugees' profiles	10
Refugees' intentions	15

### Acknowledgements

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We are grateful for the extensive involvement and support of UNHCR's partners, local authorities, civil society, international organizations and donors. Most importantly, UNHCR would like to acknowledge the resilience and strength of refugees from Ukraine, who continue to share with us their challenges, fears and hopes.

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#### COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Poland. Refugees at UNHCR's cash enrolment centre in Krakow Tauron Arena. UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa

# Executive summary

Based on 4,900 interviews with refugees from Ukraine conducted by UNHCR and partners in the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia between mid-May and mid-June 2022, complemented with seven focus group discussions conducted in Poland and

Romania, this regional report presents the main findings relating to refugees' profiles and intentions, aiming to establish a baseline which will be periodically updated to monitor and analyse trends and changes in the situation in a timely manner.

# Key findings

THE MAJORITY OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN, WITH HIGH LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND DIVERSE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AMONG ADULTS

70%

of respondents left Ukraine accompanied by other persons (mainly immediate family), and **90%** of all family members are women and children.

82%

had to separate from at least one or more immediate family members who stayed behind in Ukraine as a result of the international armed conflict and/or their departure. **77**%

of respondents have completed technical, vocational or university studies; most have a professional / occupational background in services-related sectors.

WHILE MOST REFUGEES HOPE TO RETURN TO UKRAINE ONE DAY,
FOR THE TIME BEING, THE MAJORITY PLAN TO STAY IN THEIR CURRENT
HOST COUNTRY



The majority of participants in focus group discussions expressed their **hope** to return to their home communities as soon as possible. They are anxious to reunite with friends and family and worry about those who stayed behind. Most want to wait until hostilities have subsided. **However, respondents highlighted a shared uncertainty about the future which impacted their ability to form secure long-term plans.** 

65%

of respondents reported planning to stay in their current host country and **9**% were planning to move to another host country within the next month. Refugee plans vary significantly according to their region of origin, the time elapsed since displacement and their current host country.



Among refugees who reported plans to remain in their current host country, a higher proportion than average were: (i) individuals travelling with dependents (infants, children and older persons; (ii) those that left the country at the beginning of the military offensive against Ukraine; and (iii) currently staying in hosted or rented accommodation.



Among refugees who were planning to move to another host country, a higher proportion than average were individuals who departed Ukraine more recently as well as those who were staying in collective sites or reception / transit centres.



Safety, family ties and access to employment were the main reasons for deciding to remain in the current host country or move to another host country. Germany was identified as the main intended destination for refugees reporting an intention to move on (33% of respondents), followed by the Czech Republic (7%) and Canada (5%).

# FOR REFUGEES WHO WERE PLANNING TO RETURN TO UKRAINE, IMPORTANT QUESTIONS REMAIN AS TO THE SUSTAINABILITY AND DURABILITY OF THESE MOVEMENTS

16%

of respondents were planning to return to Ukraine, with 15% of them planning to only stay temporarily to visit family, get supplies or help other relatives to evacuate. Moreover, only 40% were planning to return within the next month, while 60% of them were uncertain as to when they will do so. Focus group discussions also highlighted the temporary nature of some returns.



The main reported reason for planning to return to Ukraine was the perception that the situation had improved followed by a desire to go back home and reunite with family members. However, a significant proportion reported concerns about returning, mostly related to fears due to the ongoing international armed conflict, echoing concerns expressed by focus group discussants on uncertainty about the future and the ongoing fluidity of the situation in Ukraine.



For approximately a quarter of refugees who reported an intention to return to Ukraine, their plans were motivated by a need to access basic services and livelihoods. A slightly higher proportion than average among refugees with at least one person with specific needs were planning to return, which could indicate that their return is driven by the need to access specialized services or related to difficulties sustaining themselves in host countries.



The need to learn the local language was often identified as crucial to access the job market and educational opportunities by focus groups participants. Some refugees noted difficulties in finding reliable and up-to-date information on available services and employment opportunities. Participants also highlighted cases of persons who returned to Ukraine because they had run out of savings and were unable to find financial security.

# Key recommendations



Refugees should be enabled to make free and informed decisions on their future. The provision of counselling, targeted support for persons with specific needs, information on access to assistance and services in refugees' areas of origin, advice on the implications of return on individuals' legal refugee status and guidance on how to access services and support in the host country are all necessary to enable well-informed decisionmaking.



Respondents have highlighted access to employment, language courses, childcare, education, housing and other forms of support, as well as information on how to access assistance, as important factors influencing refugees' ability to remain in host countries. Access to adequate assistance and support, with specific attention paid to persons with specific needs, is critical in ensuring the sustainability of refugees' continued stay in host countries and in making informed decisions. Host countries and communities require continued parallel support in this regard.



Important questions remain as to the durability and sustainability of refugee movements from neighbouring countries back to Ukraine at the current time. Consequently, refugees from Ukraine will require continued access to safety and protection, while temporary protection and other legal status which has been granted to them should not be prematurely withdrawn as a result of decisions to return. In the event that temporary protection or other status is withdrawn or ceases as a result of a decision to return, people should be permitted the right to re-enter neighbouring countries and reapply for status should they be required to leave Ukraine on subsequent occasions.

Photo: UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

# Results at a glance

#### **REFUGEES' PROFILE**



99% are Ukrainians



90% of all household members are women and children



23% of households had at least one person with specific needs



77% of respondents have completed technical or university studies



had to separate from at least

one immediate family members



76% have a biometric passport

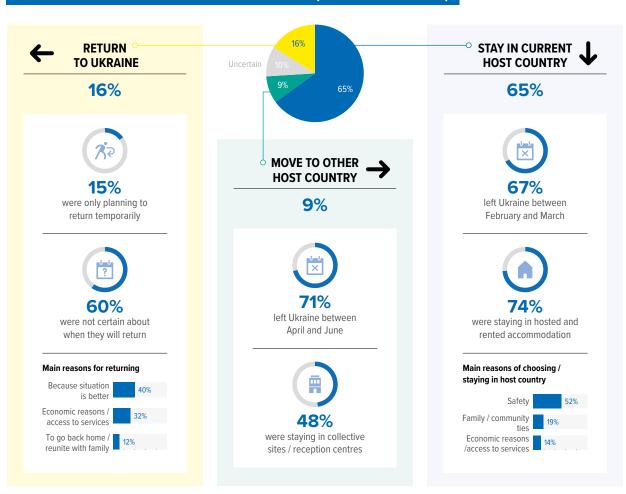


**72%** were staying in hosted and rented accommodation



40%
reported cash, employment
and accommodation as main
urgent needs

#### REFUGEES' PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE (COMING MONTHS)



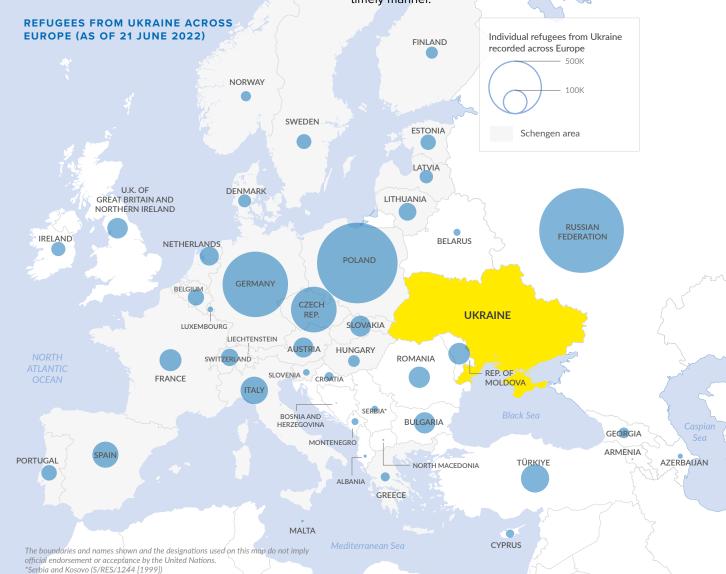
# Introduction

Since the onset of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, one-third of Ukrainians have been forced from their homes. This is the largest human displacement crisis in the world today. Over 7.1 million people remain displaced in Ukraine by the international armed conflict and 15.7 million people are estimated to urgently require humanitarian assistance and protection. As of end-June, UNHCR estimated that there were at least 5.5 million refugees from Ukraine across Europe, and around 3.6 million refugees from Ukraine had registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe. Some 8.4 million border crossings have been recorded out of Ukraine, and authorities have reported more than 3.1 million movements back into the country since 28 February.

ICELAND

Since the beginning of this international armed conflict, UNHCR and its partners in host countries neighbouring Ukraine have been collecting primary data around the profiles, intentions, situation and perspectives of refugees from Ukraine to ensure the centrality of their voices in discussions about their future, as well as to inform evidence-based inter-agency responses in support of host Governments.

This regional report presents the main findings from the most recent round of data collection (mid-May to mid-June 2022) with a focus on data relating to refugees' intentions, aiming to establish a baseline on current profiles and perspectives of the refugees which will be periodically updated to monitor and analyse trends and changes in the situation in a timely manner.

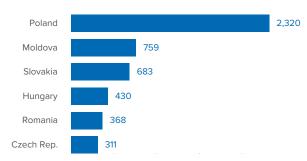


# Methodology

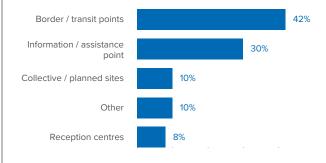
Between 16 May and 15 June 2022, UNHCR and its partners in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia conducted a total of 4,871 protection profiling and monitoring interviews with refugees from Ukraine. Interviews were carried out in multiple locations, including border areas and transit locations, reception centres, collective sites and information and assistance points. Respondents were randomly selected and asked for their consent to participate in structured interviews using a harmonized regional questionnaire. For the purposes of this report, data has been analysed with a focus on understanding refugees' intentions. For the regional analysis, each host country sample has been weighted based on most recent population figures (number of border crossings and refugees recorded).2

Most of the respondents were females, with a third between 18 and 34 years of age, half between 35 and 59 years of age, and the remaining 12 per cent 60 years of age or older.

#### **COMPLETED INTERVIEWS PER COUNTRY**



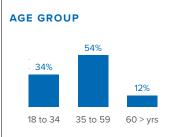
#### PLACES WHERE INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED



#### SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

4,871
interviews between 16-May and 15-June of 2022

90% of respondents were females



Interviews were conducted with adults and in a few cases with children between 14 and 18 years of age with the consent of the guardian. Unaccompanied and separated children, potential victims of trafficking and survivors of torture were excluded from the exercise to prioritize referrals to specialized services.

<sup>2.</sup> Data taken from the Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation as of 21 June 2022: <a href="https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine">https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine</a>

The quantitative data from structured interviews was complemented with information collected through seven **focus group discussions** with refugees from Ukraine in Poland and Romania. Participants were asked about their reasons for leaving Ukraine, their experiences in the host countries and their plans, which helped to bring refugees' voices to the centre and interpret some of the quantitative results.

The results presented in this report must be interpreted according to the limitations of the methodology and given the context of ongoing movements, particularly:

Sampling followed a non-probability approach and cannot necessarily be extrapolated to the population of refugees from Ukraine as a whole. However, respondents were selected randomly, and data collection was carried out in different types of locations, to reduce possible bias and capture different profiles of the populations.

- Most enumerators were Ukrainian and/or Russian speakers, which could have limited interviews with refugees from other nationalities.
- The results reflect refugees' situation and intentions at the time of data collection, which may subsequently change depending on a wide range of factors.

UNHCR plans to present regular analyses of refugees' profiles and intentions through a mixed-methods approach, including: (i) sample-based intention surveys implemented in regular intervals (first round to be rolled-out between July and August, and a second round towards the end of the year) to obtain updated estimates of refugees' plans and their profiles, covering not only neighbouring countries but other countries in Europe where refugees are being hosted; (ii) continuous data collection through protection monitoring to monitor trends and changes in a timely manner; (iii) focus group discussions to collect qualitative information and bring refugees' voices to the centre.

Photo: UNHCR/Dobrin Kashavelov

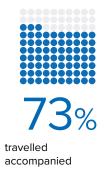
# Refugees' profiles

# Demographic characteristics

The sample is largely composed of women travelling with dependants (infants, children and elderly persons), with a large proportion of them becoming single caregivers as a consequence of family separation forced by the international armed conflict. Women and children represent 90% of all family members, though with a higher proportion of men in Hungary, Moldova and Romania (15 to 18%). Beyond single caregivers, more than one in every five families have at least one person with other specific needs<sup>3</sup>.

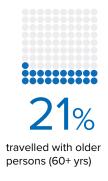
The majority of respondents are highly educated (77% have completed technical, vocational or university studies), pointing to a potential for economic contribution in host countries, though lack of knowledge of local languages and childcare needs can limit opportunities. Education levels for males tend to be lower than for females, associated with their different age profiles (27 per cent of males are 60 or more years of age, compared to 10 per cent for females).

#### **FAMILIES' COMPOSITION**



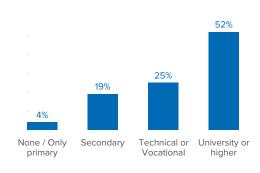




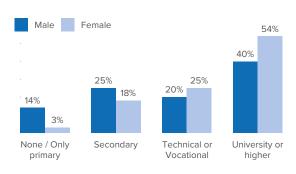




#### RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL



### EDUCATION LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

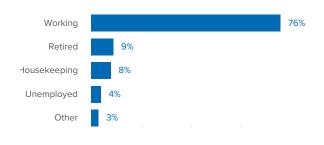


<sup>3.</sup> Includes unaccompanied children (5% of families), separated children (3% of families), persons with serious medical conditions (9% of families), persons living with disabilities (13% of families) and older persons with specific protection risks (11% of families).

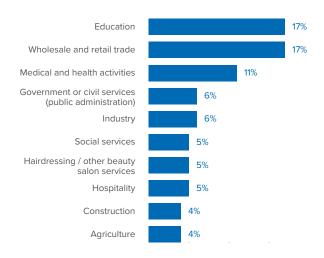
Most of the respondents (76%) were engaged in economic activities before leaving Ukraine, with 8% of persons dedicated to housekeeping (mostly among females) and 9% of persons retired (mostly among males). The occupational background of respondents is concentrated in services-related

sectors, with an equal split (around **40%** each) of experience / skills in essential services (particularly education, medical activities and civil services) as well as in market services (especially wholesale / retail trade).

#### MAIN ACTIVITY BEFORE LEAVING UKRAINE



# OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND (TOP-10 SECTORS)

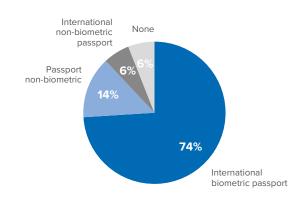


# Displacement profiles and patterns

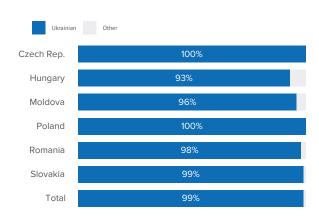
Most refugees interviewed (99%) were Ukrainians, though a higher proportion of third-country nationals was observed among those hosted in

Hungary (7%) and Moldova (4%). The majority carried with them national passports (94%), but only 74% with a biometric one.

#### PASSPORTS CARRIED BY RESPONDENTS

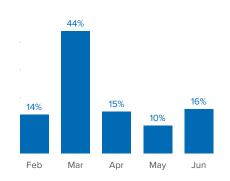


### RESPONDENTS' NATIONALITY, BY HOST COUNTRY

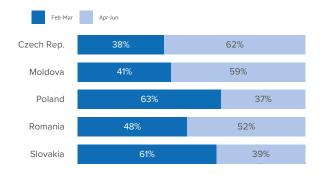


The majority of respondents (58%) were forced to leave their place of origin between end-February and March 2022. It is worth noting that for refugees hosted in the Czech Republic, Moldova and Romania, a higher proportion left their place of origin in the second quarter of the year (particularly those originating from southern and western Oblasts of Ukraine).

MONTH OF DEPARTURE FROM PLACE OF ORIGIN

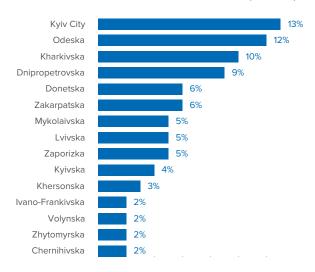


#### MONTH OF DEPARTURE, BY HOST COUNTRY



The top ten Oblasts of origin of respondents account for **75**% of the overall sample, and evidence the wide geographical impact of the international armed conflict. The majority of respondents were residing in the east (**31**%), west (**20**%) and south (**19**%) of the country, as well as in Kyiv city (**13**%).

#### MAIN OBLASTS OF ORIGIN IN UKRAINE (TOP 15)

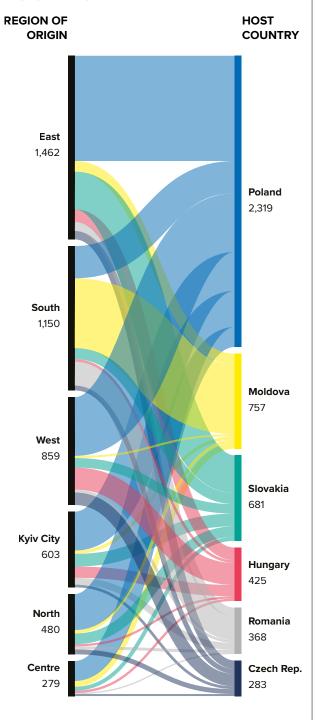




Every time we heard sirens, we were hiding in the bathroom. And day after day, my daughter said, 'Mommy, let's go – I don't want to die'".

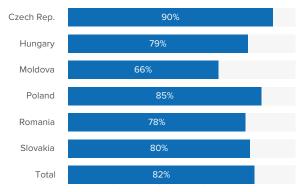
- Adult female, FGD participant, Romania.

# FLOWS BETWEEN REGIONS OF ORIGIN AND HOST COUNTRIES BY NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

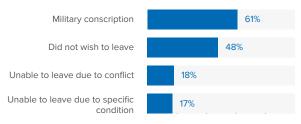


Around 17% of respondents were internally displaced within Ukraine prior to leaving the country to seek international protection, though with a higher proportion for those originating in Kyiv city and Kyivska Oblast (26%) and Oblasts in the East (Luhanska, Donetska and Kharkivska, ranging between 26 and 46%). In addition, for the large majority of respondents (82%), the international armed conflict forced them to separate from family members, mainly due to mandatory military conscription.

# RESPONDENTS' SEPARATED FROM FAMILY MEMBERS, BY HOST COUNTRY



#### **REASONS FOR FAMILY SEPARATION\***



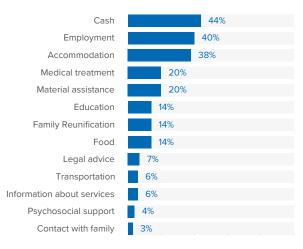
<sup>\*</sup> Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

### Situation in host countries

Overall, a majority of refugees were staying in hosted and rented accommodation (37 and 35%, respectively), while around a quarter were still staying in collective sites, reception or transit centres.<sup>4</sup> Some key differences were observed by host country, noting that refugees in Poland were predominantly staying in hosted or rented accommodation while a higher proportion of those in Moldova and Romania were staying in collective sites or temporarily in reception / transit centres.

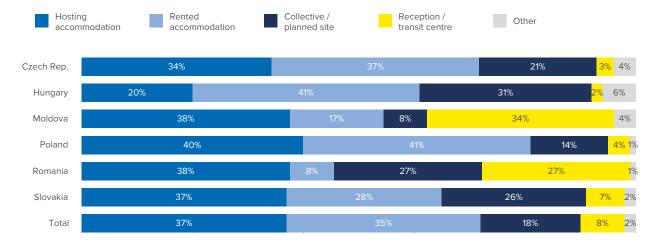
When asked about main urgent needs, the most frequently reported were cash, employment and accommodation (around 40% of respondents for each), followed by medical treatment and material assistance (around 20% for each).

#### MAIN URGENT NEEDS REPORTED BY REFUGEES\*



<sup>\*</sup> Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

#### **CURRENT ACCOMMODATION, BY HOST COUNTRY**



<sup>4.</sup> Collective sites: existing buildings that are used as temporary living accommodations for hosting displaced populations. Reception centres: A facility dedicated to the management of reception arrangements for asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants. Transit centres: used as temporary shelters for new arrivals and to provide short-term temporary accommodation for displaced populations.

# Refugees' intentions

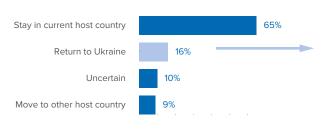
# Plans for the near future

The majority of those who participated in focus group discussions (FGD) expressed their hope to return to their home country. They were anxious to reunite with friends and family and expressed worry about those who stayed behind (particularly male family members of conscription-age). One thing that nearly all participants had in common was a shared uncertainty about the future, which prevented them from making long-term plans. For the time being, most refugees interviewed were planning to stay in their current host countries (65%) and a smaller proportion was planning to move to another host country (9%). Still, around 16% reported that they were planning to return to Ukraine, though 60% of them were not certain about when they will do so, and 15% were planning only to return temporarily to visit family, get supplies or support others to evacuate (15% had already gone back temporarily to Ukraine at least once).5

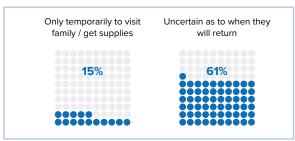
As expected, refugees' plans vary significantly according to their region of origin and time elapsed since their displacement, particularly:

Place of origin: A higher proportion of refugees were planning to return among those originating in Kyiv city (21%), and in Zakarpatska Oblast (30%); in contrast, a lower proportion were planning to return among those originating in Oblasts in the east (between 10 and 12% in Donetska, Luhanska and Zaporizka), the north (between 7 and 9% in Chernihivska, Sumska and Zhytomyrska).

#### REFUGEES' PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE



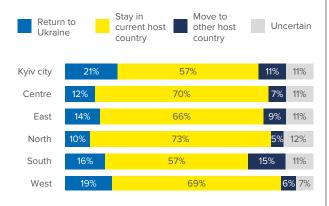
## AMONG THOSE WHO REPORTED PLANS TO RETURN:



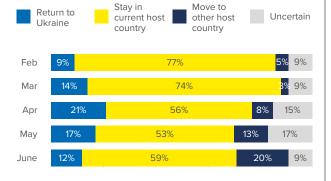
<sup>5.</sup> The analysis in this chapter excludes interviews conducted in border / transit locations with persons about to depart current host countries that same day (16% of the overall sample), to avoid biasing the results regarding refugees' future intentions.

Month of departure: Among those who left Ukraine in February or March, a higher proportion plan to stay in their current host countries (74 to 77%). Conversely, for those who left in April and May, a higher proportion reported plans to return (21 to 17%). Lastly, among those who left in June, a higher proportion reported plans to move to another host country (20%).

#### REFUGEES' PLANS, BY MACRO-REGIONS



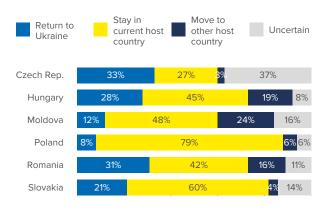
# REFUGEES' PLANS, BY MONTH OF DISPLACEMENT



Some differences are observed when analysing refugees' plans by host country, which can be largely explained by the differences in the profile of refugees in each country (such as in place of origin, time of displacement) and partly by the situation of refugees in the host countries themselves. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania, a higher proportion than average was planning to return

(around 30%). Among those hosted by Poland, a higher proportion than average was planning to stay there for the time being (79%). And among those hosted by Hungary, Moldova and Romania, a higher proportion than average was planning to move to another host country (between 16 and 24%).

### REFUGEES' PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, BY HOST COUNTRY



In addition, data suggests other key differences in refugees' profiles according to plans for the near future (see Annex 1), particularly:

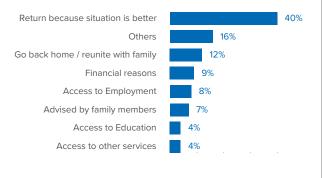
- Among those planning to return, a higher proportion than average were refugees with at least one family member with specific needs;
- Among those planning to stay in the host country, a higher proportion than average were refugees travelling with dependants (infants, children and elderly persons), refugees that left the country at the beginning of the military offensive against Ukraine and refugees staying in rented accommodation in their current host country;
- Among those planning to move to another host country, a higher proportion than average were males, refugees travelling alone, those who were internally displaced before fleeing the country, refugees with relatives outside Ukraine, refugees who left Ukraine more recently and those staying in reception / transit centres in their current host country.

# Perspectives and reasons for those planning to return

As mentioned in the previous section, for an important proportion of refugees who are planning to return to Ukraine, it is not clear whether the plans will materialize (60% were uncertain as to when they will return). Likewise, an important proportion were only planning to return temporarily to visit family or get supplies or to support other relatives to evacuate (15%). Many of the participants in focus group discussions reported knowing someone who had returned to Ukraine after fleeing, with several returning temporarily to check on relatives, businesses and property before returning to the host country.

Excluding those who indicated plans for temporary returns only, the main reason for returning was the feeling that the situation had improved (40%), followed by a desire to go back home and reunite with family members. For around a quarter of respondents the plan to return was driven by economic reasons and need to access basic services. Focus group participants reported knowing persons who returned to Ukraine even though it was not their first choice, having run out of any savings they were able to take with them and unable to find financial security in their host country.

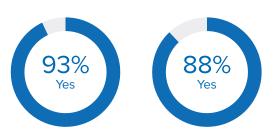
#### MAIN REASONS FOR RETURNING\*



to the same Oblast where they were living before the international armed conflict. A significant proportion (88%) reported concerns about returning, mostly related to fears due to ongoing conflict, which indicates that returns might not materialize or become sustainable if the situation in their home communities deteriorates.

The large majority (93%) expressed plans to return

PLANNING TO RETURN REPORTES CONCERNS TO SAME OBLAST ABOUT RETURNING



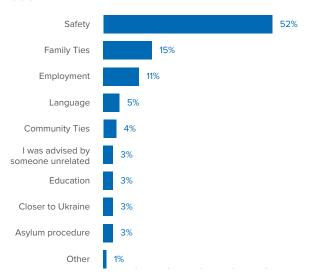
The participants of focus group discussions reported that their family members who stayed in Ukraine were included in their decision-making. They highlighted receiving most of their information about what is happening in Ukraine from friends, neighbours and relatives who stayed behind. They noted the importance of social media and mobile applications for staying in touch with people in Ukraine. However, some have experienced difficulties keeping in contact with those in Ukraine due to disruptions in mobile service and connectivity in areas of active conflict and those with serious infrastructural damage. Some participants relied on media sources to inform their understandings of current events in Ukraine but noted they were aware of reporting biases and misinformation campaigns, therefore most preferred to rely on personal contacts.

\* Excluding reasons related to temporary returns.

# Perspectives and reasons of those planning to stay in host country

Among those that were planning to stay in host countries, the main reason for choosing and staying in those countries was safety, followed by family ties and access to employment. Still, as mentioned in the previous chapter, an important proportion of refugees report an urgent need for cash, employment and accommodation (23% of them were still residing in collective sites or reception / transit centres).

### MAIN REASONS OF CHOSING / STAYING IN HOST COUNTRY



Participants in focus group discussions noted that they had decided to seek refuge in a country near Ukraine so they could be closer to home. While some respondents expressed how welcomed they felt by their host community, others described experiences of prejudice and alienation. Despite mixed views on their quality of life in the host countries, most found that they had been displaced long enough to start considering factors such as finding employment, enrolling children in school and extracurricular activities, and other forms of community engagement.



I had some Polish language classes in the first couple of weeks, however, it was not enough to master the language. We need more classes to learn Polish and be able to study."

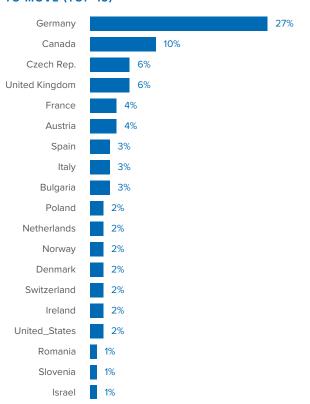
- Child male, FGD participant, Poland.

Refugees reported navigating the daily challenges of establishing themselves in a new country. Some respondents expressed frustration and guilt about having to rely on volunteers for support in the host countries and expressed a wish to be able to take care of themselves. Language barriers were one of the most common issues identified by participants, and the need to learn the local language was often identified as crucial to access the job market and educational opportunities. Some refugees noted difficulties in finding reliable and up-to-date information on available services and employment opportunities.

# Perspectives and reasons for those planning to move

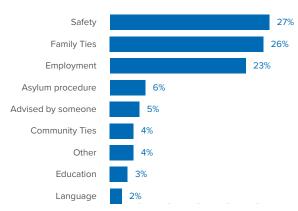
Among those planning to move to another host country, the large majority was planning to do so within the next month, but 17% were still uncertain about when they will do so. A small proportion (6%) was planning to move to other countries neighbouring Ukraine, but the large majority (75%) was planning to move to other non-neighbouring European countries (Germany being the most frequent reported destination). A small proportion reported planning to move to non-European countries (Canada and the United States, among main ones).

COUNTRIES WHERE REFUGEES WERE PLANNING TO MOVE (TOP-15)



The main reasons for moving to another host country were family ties, safety and access to employment.

## MAIN REASONS TO MOVE TO OTHER HOST COUNTRY



Refugees who participated in focus groups discussions reported that they had encountered offers / means for onward transport to other European countries. It was noted that many refugees who wished to move on to other European Union countries had already done so soon after leaving Ukraine. Several cited the lack of employment opportunities and language barriers as a main reason.

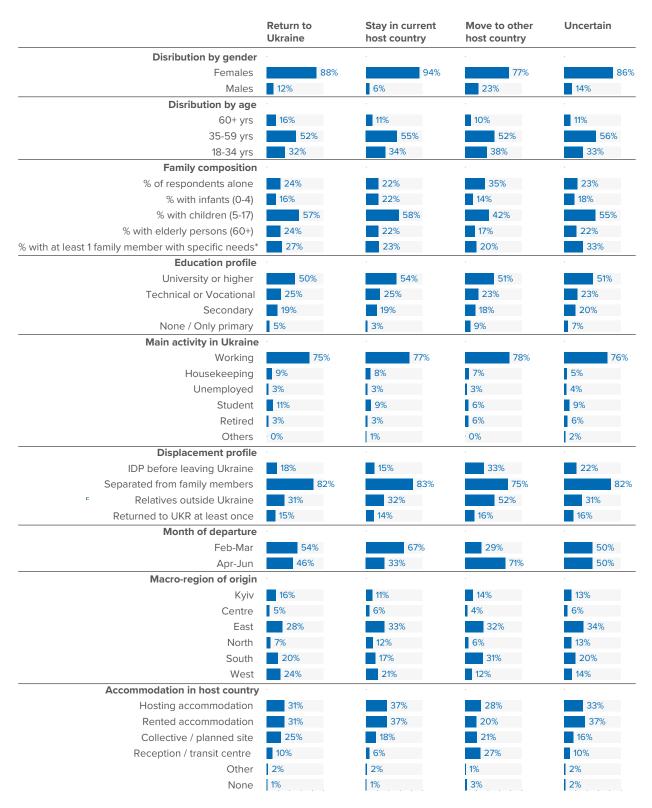


"I would like to move abroad but because of my hearing impairment it is very difficult to communicate in sign language in another country."

- Adult female (18), FGD participant, Poland.

### Annex 1

#### REFUGEE PROFILES ACCORDING TO PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE



# LIVES ON HOLD: PROFILES AND INTENTIONS OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania & Slovakia

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